

St. John Ambulance Saint-Jean

# Recruitment Guide



# St. John Ambulance Recruitment Guide

Volunteer recruitment is a strategic tool critical to the operation of all St. John Ambulance programs. Reliance on volunteer members is so extensive that loss of this resource would paralyze St. John Ambulance programs and services. It is therefore critical to ensure the continuity of volunteer resources at the local level while minimizing disruption of service.

In St. John Ambulance, *volunteer* refers to many different categories: patient care providers (“traditional” Brigade), Therapy Dog members, youth members, instructors, board members, volunteer fundraisers and more. As St. John Ambulance develops new community services, more types of *volunteer* groups will also emerge.

Low enrolment and a small core group of available volunteers pose challenges for offering a full program and meeting community needs. However, ensuring continued volunteer resources requires an understanding of the recruitment process, of its opportunities and risks, and of its operational realities.

The purpose of this guide is to provide guidelines and tips for persons involved in volunteer recruitment, and to help the reader develop strategies for strengthening and meeting recruitment challenges.

## What is recruitment?

Recruitment is often confused with Public Relations, or Marketing, but there are definite differences.

Recruitment is:  
*Getting the right person in the right job,  
with the right skills at the right time.*  
Ontario FACTSHEET, 1997, 96-005

Volunteer Recruitment is the ongoing process of identifying groups and individuals for service, and then actually asking them to take on an assignment. These assignments can be:

- individual or group activities
- direct or indirect service positions
- committee or advisory board tasks
- fundraising assignments or
- public relations and advocacy efforts

Public Relations is the art of helping the public understand what St. John Ambulance does in the community and encouraging them to see our efforts in a positive light. PR is

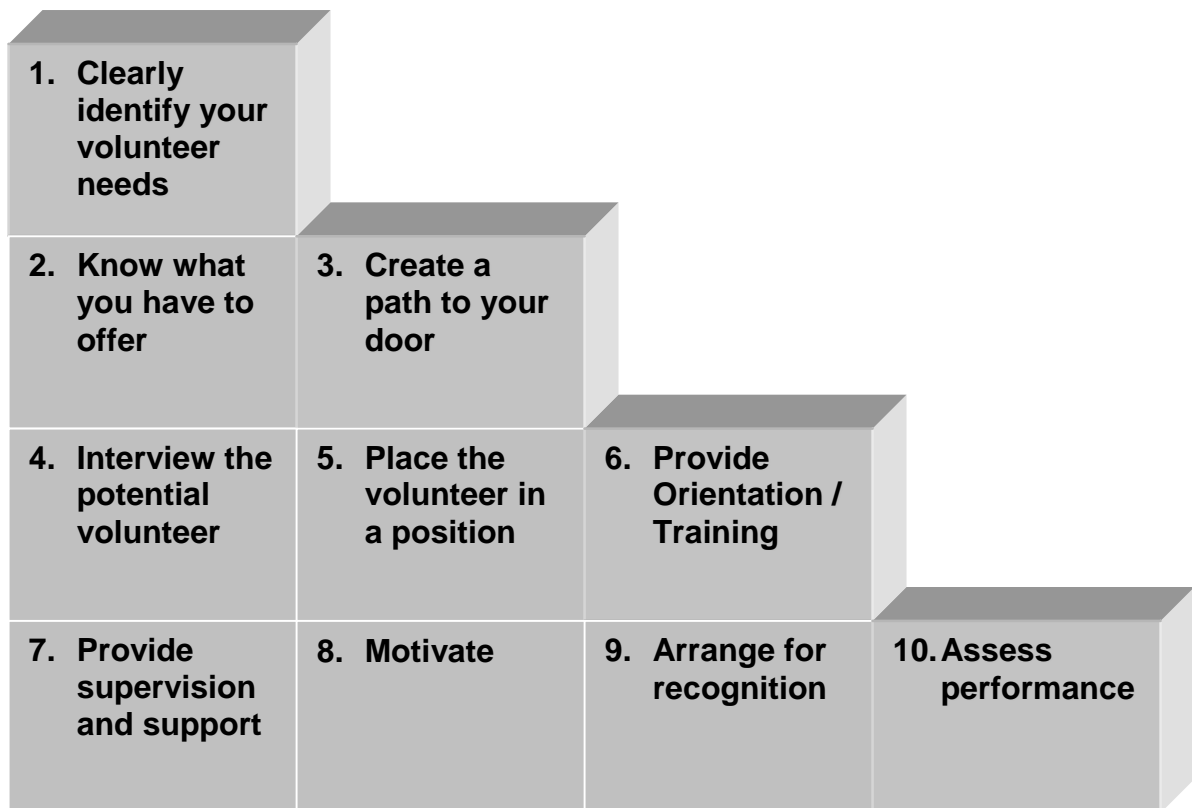
designed to influence as large a segment of the public as possible at any one time with the message you have selected to share.

*Marketing* is the act of determining the needs of select or target audiences and then designing goods, services and opportunities that respond to those needs. It is dependent on market needs, product, pricing, communication and distribution.

Even though public relations, marketing and recruitment are not the same, they do support each other and benefit the overall mission of St. John Ambulance. When the public recognizes the name and service provided by St. John Ambulance, people are more likely to remember St. John Ambulance when they think about serving their community. When used properly, marketing strategies can help target your recruitment campaign to the people who are most likely to say "Yes!"

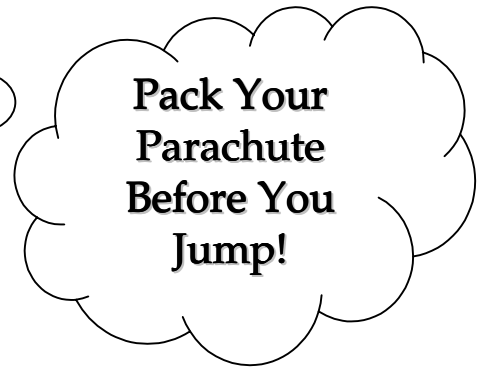
## 10 Steps In The Recruitment Process

Finding volunteers to meet your needs begins *before* an appeal is made. The whole recruitment process begins with identifying a volunteer position and continues throughout the volunteer's involvement with St. John Ambulance, building a strong foundation in the process:



## 1. CLEARLY IDENTIFY YOUR VOLUNTEER NEEDS

The first step in the recruitment process is to define what needs to be done. This helps to ensure you get the right person to fill the position. Recruiters should always have a clear understanding of what the job involves before asking someone to do it! (See Appendix 1)



Ensure volunteer assignments are not unfulfilling and/or menial.

When designing volunteer positions to meet your needs, it is important to take into consideration the realities of today's volunteer workforce. Create a diverse portfolio of volunteer opportunities.

Remember to include elements of enjoyment and challenges.

Different types of work attract different types of people. Some volunteers are looking for positions that tap their creativity, present a challenge or provide the opportunity to learn new skills. Other individuals may want to support your cause, but need a break from the demands of their "day jobs".

By identifying a range of positions requiring different skills, abilities, inclinations, backgrounds and levels of commitment, you will appeal to a wider array of potential volunteers.

In addition, your group's culture and work environment greatly influences the type of volunteer positions you will develop, the type of individuals you recruit and the way volunteer supervision will be handled. If your group is very hierarchical, for example, you will want to recruit individuals who are comfortable following policies and procedures. If your group is loosely organized and values humour and entrepreneurial ideas, you will want to recruit individuals who are self-starters and comfortable working with less structure and supervision.

### TIPs:

- Understand what volunteers have done in the past for St. John Ambulance
- Know how volunteers have felt about their experiences with St. John Ambulance
- Be aware of recent publicity - good or bad – that St. John Ambulance and its cause received that might impact your recruitment effort
- Ensure that the group is open and friendly to new volunteers

Know your volunteer opportunities, but do not over-recruit. Volunteers will lose interest if they have signed up to help and there isn't a job for them.

### TIPs on Speaking with Groups

- The speaker should be capable of speaking the “language” of the people you are trying to recruit.
- Send two or more volunteers who can talk about their own experiences and help you deal with interested applicants.
- When possible, utilize a visual presentation (slides, pictures, etc.). If your presentation is boring, the group may assume that volunteering with you will be too.
- Always recruit people on the basis of service to people. People work for people, not things.
- Avoid using guilt when trying to recruit.
- Be prepared when people offer their services. Take along brochures, examples of jobs for which volunteers are needed, sign-up sheets, etc.
- Never walk away without getting the name and contact information for everyone who was interested.
- Prepare for too much success. You may need to have a back-up plan to handle the entire group wanting to volunteer together to help you out, not just a few individuals. If several group members decide to volunteer, consider ways in which they might work together while performing the volunteer work.
- Directly ask the audience to volunteer. Very few people will volunteer without being asked to do so.

### Trends and Groups to Consider When Designing Position Descriptions:

#### a) Short-term or *Episodic* Volunteering

Episodic volunteer opportunities include both positions that are short in duration (with definite start and end dates) and positions that occur at regular intervals such as annual events. While some volunteer positions require a long-term commitment on the part of volunteers, many assignments can be successfully completed on a short-term basis. Making a commitment to a project that has a definite start and completion date gives busy individuals a better opportunity to arrange their schedules so that they can help. This allows people to see the job through to the “end” and have a sense of accomplishment. It also allows time-crunched people to see how they like working with St. John Ambulance and its members. Some long-term commitments can be broken into several short-term placements that can build on one another.

#### Today’s Volunteers

- Believe that their actions can make a difference
- Look for opportunities for personal growth and increased self-esteem
- May be ageing baby boomers, youth, or from an ethnic minority
- May engage in short term volunteer commitments and require flexible hours to accomplish tasks (evenings and weekends)
- Want to learn new skills, network, and develop new relationships
- Are interested in being leaders and decision-makers
- Want to be given the opportunity to provide input to decisions affecting the programs in which they participate.

## b) Family Volunteering

Increasingly, adults are looking for opportunities to perform meaningful volunteer work while spending time with their families and teaching them the value of service.

Parents are a great potential source for volunteer recruitment. Many parents welcome the opportunity to get to learn more about their child's activities and assisting wherever is needed.

### Obstacles to developing a Family Division:

- time constraints
- liability issues
- the challenge of finding volunteer tasks that are age-appropriate and meaningful for all family members.

### Consider the following when developing a Family Division:

- The activities must be safe for all family members*
- The risk and liability of these activities must be minimized*
- All members of the volunteer families must be able to benefit from this activity*
- Should a minimum age requirement be set?*
- How much training/supervision is needed?*
- Family activities may require flexible hours (e.g. weekends and evenings)*
- Connect with local volunteer programs that already have a track record of successful family involvement*

## c) High school, College volunteers and Interns

Volunteerism provides young people with the opportunity to develop an understanding of civic responsibility and raise awareness of community issues. Volunteerism promotes training for employment and assists students in meeting entrance requirements for colleges/universities and jobs where practical experience is required.

Research shows that young people generally believe in the value of volunteer work both for themselves and society.

Some young people at the high school level have done some form of volunteering, but for many, it is a new idea.

### Main reasons why young people volunteer:

- to gain work experience
- to gain qualifications and skills
- to build their resume
- to have fun
- to find opportunities to meet new people
- to find new friends
- to be part of a bigger cause such as changing the world and helping people

Adolescence is a time of change and transition. Research on adolescent motivation indicates that high school students are likely to be motivated by their peers. Young people particularly in grades 9 and 10 would be more likely to participate if their peers supported and participated in similar activities, which suggests that young members are the best source to recruit other young members.

#### **What motivates young people to volunteer?**

- ❑ *Legitimacy* - the variety of volunteer work and positive images help to make volunteering seem "normal" and "cool". If a lot of people do it, it looks normal, and it's cool because everyone's doing it.
- ❑ *Organisational flexibility* - young people want efficient, informal, relaxed environments that provide support but are not heavily supervised;
- ❑ *Relevant and interesting experiences* that will prepare them for personal and career development.
- ❑ *Incentives* - a tangible outcome in the form of a "reference" or "qualification" to validate their experience to potential employers and reimbursement for their expenses.
- ❑ *Laughs* - although volunteering can be work, young people prefer to share some laughs and have fun at the same time.

Many colleges and high schools have community service work within the curriculum. In addition, most institutions of higher education have offices that co-ordinate on-campus student organizations and activities, including service groups (for further information on recruiting youth, see *DID YOU KNOW?, Recruiting Young Members*, April 1996, Vol. 3, No. 4).

The volunteer rate among Canadian youth aged 15 to 24 years old has almost doubled, going from 18% in 1987 to 33% in 1997. *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians.*

See *DID YOU KNOW?* on *Recruitment*, March 1994, Vol. 1, No. 3.

#### **TIPS for recruiting volunteers from high schools, colleges, and universities:**

- Write a letter to the principals of community schools outlining your youth volunteer opportunities. Inquire about an invitation to speak to students about volunteering with St. John Ambulance. When possible, take a young member with you to speak about their experiences.
- Find out the schools' policies regarding flyers and on-campus recruitment.
- Contact the campus' office on student activities or your local volunteer centre to find out how to get in touch with volunteers, student organizations, and clubs on campus. Student government and on-campus clubs and membership groups are generally registered or co-ordinated through a central office.
- Post flyers where students hang out, such as the student union or local campus restaurants. Similarly, residence halls may co-ordinate volunteer opportunities for their students. There may be a separate section on job boards too.

### **TIPs for recruiting volunteers from high schools, colleges, and universities: (Con't)**

- Offer to write an article on youth volunteers for the school newsletter.
- Students are most likely to initiate new volunteer activities at the start of the fall and spring semesters. As the semester progresses, it can get harder to recruit volunteers. Remember: many students leave town during holiday breaks and the summer months.
- Colleges and universities often sponsor volunteer fairs. These are generally organized by the campus' office on student activities or a volunteer centre.
- Some classes and departments have well-established internship, field-study , or co-op programs and classes. Find out what types of placement opportunities they are looking for to determine if there's a match with your needs.
- If you are recruiting students with a particular expertise, initiate contact with the school or department that is most consistent with your volunteer needs. For example, if you need help with Web page design, contact the campus school or library and information science.

### **d) Virtual Volunteering**

Many people are looking for volunteer opportunities that they can complete via their home computers and the Internet. Family commitments, personal time constraints, a disability or other issues can all make it difficult for individuals to volunteer their services in person. Virtual volunteering allows anyone to contribute time and expertise without ever leaving their home. Virtual volunteering also help to create new opportunities for people with disabilities who may otherwise be unable to volunteer.

Check out the Volunteer Opportunities Exchange (VOE). It is an innovative Canadian Internet-based system that links volunteers with volunteer placements anywhere in Canada. (See *DID YOU KNOW?* on *Volunteer Opportunities Exchange*, July 1999, Vol. 6, No. 7.)

<http://www.voe-reb.org/welcome.jhtml>

In addition, the Virtual Volunteering Project, located on the WEB at

<http://www.serviceleader.org/vv/>

provides resources as well as technical virtual assistance to organizations wishing to involve volunteers via the Internet.

#### **Examples of virtual volunteering:**

- "visiting" via electronic mail someone who is housebound, in the hospital or in a nursing home.
- Helping to design Web pages, newsletters and brochures using their home computers.
- Answering managerial questions and conducting online outreach.
- Researching specific projects on the Internet.

### **TIPs on how to market your volunteer opportunities on the Internet**

- Only advertise for specific volunteer positions
- Write ads that appeal to the benefits of volunteering
- Always include your e-mail address
- Be sure to answer e-mail inquiries within 48 hours of receipt.
- Link up to St. John Ambulance's National Web page
- Use the VOE (Volunteer Opportunities Exchange)
- Consider local Newsgroups/Usenets where you can post a note (ask your computer store for a list of the many special interest bulletin boards in your city/town)
- Keep your information up-to-date (e.g., if you post the date of an orientation session and that was two months ago...)

## **2. KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE TO OFFER**

To attract and hold volunteers, you need to determine what you have of value to exchange with volunteers for the services they contribute.

### **Prepare Your Group for Volunteer Involvement**

To ensure that a potential volunteer's first impression of your group is positive, a volunteer management system must be in place.

Interview and screening procedures, orientation and training plans, evaluation processes, record-keeping and risk-management systems must all be established prior to making your appeal. Similarly, your current members must be trained and ready to work with new volunteers.

Even when no specific recruiting has been done, your group may receive inquiries from potential volunteers.

### **Pre-Recruitment Checklist:**

- current members are prepared to assist with and arrangements are in place to provide orientation, training, supervision, uniform, etc. for new recruits
- current members are fully trained and knowledgeable about their role in working with new volunteers and understand St. John Ambulance policies pertinent to recruitment (e.g. age, parental consent, screening, membership criteria, etc)
- volunteer materials (flyers, brochures, job descriptions, handbooks, etc.) have been developed and produced
- there is a place for volunteers to meet, work and receive training
- policies, procedures and record keeping systems are in place
- position descriptions exist for all new recruits
- legal and liability issues pertaining to volunteer involvement are understood
- volunteer recruiter(s) can speak knowledgeably and enthusiastically about the mission and work of St. John Ambulance
- all members are ready to and know how to handle and direct inquiries from potential volunteers
- systems are in place for evaluating the performance of volunteers and the outcome(s) of volunteer initiatives

Anyone who receives calls from people expressing an interest in volunteering should know who the key volunteer management members are and be prepared to transfer the call or forward a message. Never ask a potential volunteer to call back! Make sure that they know about the range of service opportunities available throughout St. John Ambulance and where to refer individuals who express an interest in volunteering.

Many St. John Ambulance members are in contact with potential volunteers every day.

### **Be prepared to answer questions regarding the costs and benefits of volunteering.**

Understand St. John Ambulance's mission, programs and services so you can communicate why a volunteer position is necessary to the work of St. John Ambulance. Be prepared to share why it is important and meaningful to you.

### **The benefits of volunteering**

Many factors motivate people to volunteer and individuals may decide to serve for several different reasons. People may be moved to volunteer by the cause or client being served, the type of work being performed, the opportunities provided to meet new people, and gain new skills - or all of the above!

#### **BENEFITS TO VOLUNTEERING**

People may decide to volunteer to:

- improve the quality of life of the community
- do something useful or enjoyable
- support something in which they believe
- explore new career options and network
- receive professional experience or training
- maintain skills during an interruption in paid employment
- acquire new skills to enhance their marketability
- fulfil the service requirement of a club, school, or church
- complete mandated community restitution requirements
- be creative, solve problems, perform challenging work
- make new friends and affiliations, to join peers, to belong to a group or community
- repay to their community what they have received
- develop and grow personally, to cultivate new interests
- contribute to a cause that is important to them
- explore their own strengths
- relieve boredom and monotony
- feel like they are needed
- have fun

### **The costs of volunteering**

Like the benefits of volunteering, the perceived costs of volunteering can vary according to the individual involved.

#### **COSTS TO VOLUNTEERING**

Some of the potential costs of volunteering include:

- time away from family and friends, hobbies and career-related pursuits
- travel, parking, childcare, meals and other financial expenses
- expenses related specifically to the volunteer position (uniform, gasoline, etc.)

In most successful volunteer initiatives, the benefits of volunteering outweigh the costs for both the volunteer and St. John Ambulance.

#### **COSTS OF HAVING VOLUNTEERS**

- advertising and recruitment, training, managing and supporting volunteers
- volunteer supplies and equipment
- travel expenses, accommodation and food
- administration costs (e.g. insurance, record-keeping, photocopying, telephone calls)
- recognition

#### **BENEFITS OF HAVING VOLUNTEERS**

- the unique qualities that volunteers bring to their work including their time and expertise
- volunteers extend St. John Ambulance's capacity, grounding its work in communities and promoting St. John Ambulance through volunteer ambassadors
- cost savings and income generation which can be attributed to voluntary effort
- recognition of St. John Ambulance by the public as a credible provider of community service
- provides further growth to St. John Ambulance's 900 year history
- charitable status

### **3. CREATE A PATH TO YOUR DOOR**

#### **Recruitment Strategies**

Once you have clearly identified your volunteer needs, created position descriptions, and weighed the costs and benefits, you are ready to develop a recruitment plan. This process begins with close examination of the volunteer assignments to be filled.

#### **TIPS:**

For each assignment, ask yourself:

- Who will be qualified for and interested in the position?
- Who will be able to meet the time requirements of the position?
- Where can these people be found? What motivates them to serve? What is the best way to approach them?

Remember: specific messages are needed for specific audiences. One blanket recruitment message will not successfully entice all potential volunteers.

In general, your recruitment strategy depends on the needs as specified in

**Before you begin to recruit, ensure you have a recruitment plan, screening process, training and placement procedure in place.**

your volunteer position descriptions. Compose a message which answers the volunteer's unspoken

question: "why should I volunteer for St. John Ambulance?" Include benefits to the community and to the volunteer.

Try to answer questions that potential volunteers typically ask. "What will I be doing?" "How often?" "Where" "When?" "What kind of training will I get?" "Why should I volunteer? What is in it for me?"

**TIPs:**

Would you be motivated to buy a car from a car dealership whose ad read "Please come and buy your car here because we have all these cars we must sell"?

Of course not. Most people respond to ads that describe how safe, reliable, dependable and reasonably priced their cars are, not to mention how great the service and follow-up is at the dealership. So, when seeking new recruits, sell your opportunities, e.g. "come and explore the wonderful opportunities offered by our volunteer program and learn about modern day heroism, people helping people".

Ask positively and enthusiastically. Don't apologize, distort the facts or ask negatively "You wouldn't want to volunteer would you?" or "You are the last person on my list, but would you consider volunteering?" And don't beg. Avoid phrases like "we are really desperate". Show your interest in this position and commitment to St. John Ambulance's mission. Be upbeat, informative and appeal to special skills of the potential volunteer.

Many recruitment ads talk about their organization and what *it* needs. "We need....". They ignore the simple truth that, however sentimental, volunteers come to St. John Ambulance because of something *they* want, not something the organization wants. The key to successful recruitment is figuring out what you have to offer volunteers and selling it.

Ask your current members what they get out of volunteering for St. John Ambulance. Ask yourself. What is unique about St. John Ambulance? Then, make sure you mention it prominently in your recruitment message.

**Making Volunteer Recruitment More Manageable**

Where do you begin? Think about your circle of influence beginning with your program, and include your members, your supporters and your clients. Who are you in contact with on a regular basis? What groups do you work with regularly? Share your volunteer opportunities with these contacts. You may be surprised at the number of recruitment ideas and sources that emerge. Encourage all active volunteers to think of new methods of recruiting. Collect these ideas.

Another place to begin your recruitment effort is within a short distance of your office or meeting place. Who are your neighbours? Do they know what you do? Do they share similar concerns?

**TIPs**

- Take advantage of your existing network of clients, and volunteers.
- Enter into collaborations and partnerships.
- Share your recruitment work with others.
- Explore joint marketing and public relations, particularly with a local business.
- Collaborate with internal contacts.
- Break large volunteer jobs into smaller components

Prepare a special flyer or letter introducing St. John Ambulance and address it to “our neighbours”. Explain the services and programs you offer and include a brochure. Go in person to deliver the material and follow up within a week by phone. Ask if they would they be willing and interested in helping with your program. A neighbourhood store or business may be willing to make in-kind donations to your program or to advertise your volunteer requirements in their newsletter or on their bulletin boards, or to offer a parking space.

Make it easy for people to follow up! Give them the information they need and clearly state what kind of help, how much help, who to contact and how to contact them.

Develop partnerships with other service organizations and institutions of higher education. Contact a local volunteer centre. Many corporate employees who want to volunteer register in these centres. Recruit through members’ day jobs. Many companies respond favourably when one of their employees suggests that a local charity deserves help in finding more volunteers, so ask your current volunteers to help.

Community colleges frequently engage students in workforce re-entry training programs. Do your volunteer opportunities offer work-related skills that would be valuable to one of these programs? Colleges, high schools and youth groups often have internship and service-learning requirements. Offer a service placement. Be creative as you explore partnership options. Once established, these relationships can become long-term sources of volunteers. Some of these organizations even provide administrative support, coaches, financial support and volunteer supervision.

Community groups such as corporations, civic, church, or student groups often have existing methods of mobilizing and supervising volunteers. Consider involving them in one-time and ongoing projects. In addition, many large corporations have full-time community relations staff that will actively recruit volunteers from corporate employees. It is important to nurture your relationship with groups that provide volunteers. Know their timelines and their needs. The collaboration will enable you to cover more territory and learn about other groups and organizations. To ensure the success of such collaborations, be sure to carefully outline expectations and duties.

Companies of all sizes want to be viewed favourably by the community. A local business may be willing to develop an advertisement that simultaneously promotes their service and your volunteer opportunities. They may also be willing to provide volunteer recognition gifts or supplies for volunteer initiatives. Remember that some services and companies may bring "baggage" to the venture as well as possibilities.

The primary reason people volunteer is because they are asked. So look around and ask!

Whenever possible, break the work into manageable components and recruit different people for less time-consuming jobs.

Internal collaborations are often overlooked but highly valuable. Make it your business to learn where your Superintendent has been invited to speak and encourage them to mention your recruitment effort. Sending recruitment brochures to such events can yield substantial contacts. Have current volunteers tell their story at orientation meetings. If you have a public

relations arm, explore ways that you can work together to gain visibility and community involvement.

### Rejection

Accept "No" graciously. The time and situation may not allow a candidate to accept the opportunity, even an opportunity that seems "perfect" for the individual. Determine if a follow-up invitation is in order and thank the person for taking the time to listen to your request.

### Best recruitment tool: ASK SOMEONE

*Caring Canadians, involved  
Canadians: from the 1997  
National Survey of Giving,  
Volunteering and Participating)*

### Targeted Recruitment

Targeted recruitment is used when the assignment requires a specific commitment, a high level of expertise or an ability that is not commonly available. It is specific, focused, and addressed to the audience with the skills, interests and availability needed for the position. It requires you to analyze the position and define, as clearly as possible, the type of person you are seeking and the type of message that will motivate them to serve. (See DID YOU KNOW?, February 1997, Vol. 4, No.2 on Targeted Recruitment)

#### TIPS:

Answer the following questions to plan your targeted recruitment strategy:

- What is the job that needs to be done?
- Who would do this job?
- Where will you find them?
- How will you communicate with them?
- What are their motivational needs?
- What will you tell them?
- Who is the best person to tell them?

### Broad-Based Recruitment

Broad-based recruitment is used when an assignment requires no special training or commitment and/or a lot of people, and is effective for positions that can be done easily with minimal training. It is particularly useful when you need a lot of people for a short-term event such as a fundraising event.

Materials you distribute are a reflection of your program and of St. John Ambulance.

Consider establishing a recruitment plan that combines these two approaches and provides multiple access or entry points. For example, in a broad-based recruitment plan, the goal is to keep St. John Ambulance's volunteer needs in

the public eye through media campaigns, public-speaking engagements, the distribution of recruitment brochures, and other methods geared towards the general public.

- *Keeping a high profile with the media.* What projects and fundraising events are you involved with that might qualify as feature articles? Who is working with you that might be considered newsworthy? Public Service Announcements (PSAs), may generate only limited response but they do keep St. John Ambulance's name and purpose visible. Present a clear and straightforward message and make sure that people are asked to volunteer. (See Appendix 2 for sample media materials)
- *Strategic distribution of quality print materials.* Brochures and flyers well placed in the community call attention to your efforts. Find innovative or exciting ways to spark an interest in supporting St. John Ambulance's work.
- *Use existing volunteer opportunity directories and referral services.* Be sure to register your volunteer opportunities with existing volunteer referral services in your community such as volunteer centres and university student volunteer centres. Your community library and city web site may also distribute listings of local volunteer opportunities.
- *Network with community groups and leaders.* Make it your business to know the service groups in your area, what they are interested in, when they meet and the type of programs they offer. Provide a program for one of their meetings and promote your service opportunities. School fairs, chamber of commerce events and community group gatherings may be good places to set up a display. Know who your community leaders are. Networking with these individuals can provide you with a support system to turn to for special projects and opportunities.

#### TIPs

Places to distribute recruitment information:

- Volunteer Centres
- Business and professional associations, corporations and small businesses
- Service organizations such as Kiwanis, Rotary Clubs and Junior Leagues
- Churches and religious groups
- Schools/Universities/Colleges
- Senior centres , student centres
- Libraries
- Community centres, events
- Public talks/education/service videos or demos, first aid education
- Parents' groups
- Public recognition of St. John Ambulance volunteers
- Volunteer fairs
- Realtors (welcome wagon packages)
- Military or Police units and retired military personnel
- Doctor's offices
- Internet
- Events where St. John Ambulance is providing community service

## Implementing The Plan

Someone has responded to your recruitment strategy, and you are now in a position to gain a new member. Before moving to the next steps, let them know what those steps are.

## Extending an Invitation

When you speak to a prospective volunteer it is important to explain the process of becoming a St. John Ambulance volunteer - and why that process exists. This includes a brief discussion about the steps involved in our screening process and our commitment to providing safe programs.

People expect organizations such as St. John Ambulance to exercise caution in selecting volunteers. Explain to candidates that we have a national screening policy and that we follow the required procedure for all new volunteers. See *DID YOU KNOW?* on *Screening*, July and August 1996, Vol. 3, No. 7&8.

Provide candidates with information on St. John Ambulance's mission and principles. Give them copies of the FACTs pamphlet, *St. John Canada Today* magazine, their job description and other relevant materials. This will help them prepare for the interview, for discussions about your expectations, and questions they want to ask you.

To be accepted as a St. John Ambulance Brigade volunteer, all applicants aged 18 years and up, and upon their first appointment to a leadership position, must be screened according to the following procedures:

- a. complete and sign an application form and authorization for police records check;
- b. undergo interview process.

(see **StJCI** 2-9-2)

## Points to keep in mind

- Do not let poor customer service ruin your recruitment efforts. Many volunteers report that a lack of response from an organization as the reason they do not volunteer. Try to return initial inquiries within 24 to 48 hours.
- Keep informed of what other local volunteer driven organizations are doing to recruit their volunteers. Find out from what works for them and what doesn't.
- Volunteers can have a range of abilities, and come from all backgrounds, races, nationalities, religions, political parties, and generations. Nearly equal percentages of men and women indicate they volunteer. Try not to limit your recruiting efforts. Build a diverse volunteer workforce.
- Recruitment is a year-round activity. Plan to keep St. John Ambulance's name and your need for volunteers in the public eye at all times. Cultivate friends, keep a finger on the pulse of your community, network, and keep written materials about your volunteer needs up-to-date and visible. People hear a lot of messages every day and while they may not initially respond to your appeal for support, they may remember St. John Ambulance when they are ready to volunteer.

### Points to keep in mind (con't)

- Satisfied volunteers normally make the best recruiters. Remember to look within – members and their families, current and former clients and other people already familiar with the work of St. John Ambulance can be great volunteer prospects.
- Not just anyone will do. Sometimes it is tempting to accept anyone who is willing to help, but remember that you are looking for people who have certain attitudes, skills and knowledge to perform specific roles.

## 4. INTERVIEW THE POTENTIAL VOLUNTEER

### Getting Ready

A screening interview provides an opportunity to verify a candidate's suitability and to inform potential candidates about the work of St. John Ambulance. This is your opportunity to provide a positive introduction to St. John Ambulance. Call ahead to set up the interview or confirm the time and date. Repeat your original invitation. Remind the person to bring the names and phone numbers of two references or their application forms if they have not already filled them out. Also, let the candidate know if there will be another interviewer present.

It is often useful to have more than one person conduct interviews and, if possible, to have different people conduct second interviews to provide a different perspective, to compare notes and to ensure that the same answers were provided. By having a clear image of the type of person who is 'right' for a job, you'll be better prepared to make a decision about each candidate.

Decide in advance who will ask which questions.

If you already have the candidate's application form, read it over. Note anything that requires clarification. Be sure to have all the materials you need for the interview (e.g. sample

**Volunteers MUST be interviewed for their position.**

### TIPs

To help ensure a good interview:

- Find a location where your prospective volunteer is comfortable.
- Prepare for the interview with a co-interviewer.
- Before you begin formal questions, try to break the ice and put everyone at ease. Exchange general comments about weather, work, vacations or the neighbourhood.
- If you know the candidate, list the reasons you believe they are a good match for the position. Also list any concerns or questions you have about their suitability.
- Review the questions you'll ask (see **StJCI** 2-9-2 for guidance).
- Bring to the interview a copy of the job description, an application, an authorization for police records check, and other resources such as prepared interview questions (see Appendix 4 to **StJCI** 2-9-2, Annex A)
- The majority of volunteers who make it to the interview will be acceptable.
- An interview should *not* become an inquisition.
- Most people have a great deal to offer St. John Ambulance. Expect success!

resources, forms, etc).

## Building the Profile of the candidate's suitability as a volunteer

As an interviewer you should:

- State your purpose.
- Explain your commitment to the programs and services.
- Ask a few questions to establish details such as length of time in the community, interests, relationships with adults and children, neighbourhood involvement, and employment history. Build on what you already know about the individual.
- Be prepared with a set of questions that will help establish suitability, but be flexible enough to follow a logical, naturally flowing discussion.
- Find out the applicant's motivation for becoming a volunteer, e.g. their brother is a Brigade member.
- Determine the applicant's previous volunteer experience or other current volunteer involvement.
- Ensure that all the questions are answered - the same information should be gathered about all applicants.
- Avoid close-ended questions that require only 'yes' or 'no' answers. Use open-ended questions that require thought and judgement by the applicant and draw out opinions, attitudes and reactions to typical situations.
- Explore areas such as the candidate's attitudes towards vulnerable people such as children, discipline strategies, reasons for volunteering, and expectations from St. John Ambulance.  
A person's motivations for giving up several hours each week can tell much about personal intentions.
- Balance your questions with feedback and answering the applicant's questions.
- Take opportunities to clarify misunderstandings about the nature of the volunteer role.
- If you find it difficult to picture an individual in a particular role, explore this impression with your fellow interviewer. Personal reference checks allow you to follow up on both good and bad impressions created by a candidate.

### TIPs

Ask questions such as:

- Have you been in \_\_\_\_ (place or residence) long? How long?
- What was it like living in \_\_\_\_ (place of former residence if applicable)?
- Did you get involved in the community while you were there?
- What did you like most about \_\_\_\_ (coaching Little League)?
- What didn't you like?
- Were parents very supportive?
- What experience do you have working with children/elderly people?
- You have a fair amount of experience working with kids. How would you describe children aged eight to ten?
- What did you do when kids acted up at camp?
- What did you enjoy about your previous volunteer work?
- What are you looking forward to about being a Brigade member?
- Do you have any concerns about....?
- What do you want most out of working with St. John Ambulance?
- What other benefits would you like to have?
- What would you like to accomplish as a volunteer with St. John Ambulance?

### TIPs

Reinforce valid expectations and positive answers with encouraging statements like:

- "I like your enthusiasm."
- "Your experience would be valuable in this area."
- "You seem to understand this age group."

See *DID YOU KNOW? Interviews*, June 1997, Vol. 4, No.6 and *StJCI 2-9-2 Screening Brigade Volunteers*, Appendix 7, *Sample Volunteer Interview*. (See also **St. John Ambulance Brigade Leadership Manual**, Exercise 9, *Asking the Right Questions*. 1996, stock item # 2194)

### Illegal Questions

Some questions violate the Human Rights legislation relating to employment and apply to volunteer positions as well (see *StJCI 2-1-1, Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities*).

You may not be aware that you are breaking the law. Protected subjects include race, religion, age, marital status, gender (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, family status, national or ethnic origin, handicap or disability (see *DID YOU KNOW?* on *Discrimination*, January 1997, Vol. 4, No. 1)

### Examples of questions to avoid

- What is your maiden name?
- Is your spouse subject to transfer?
- "What religious holidays will you be unable to work?"
- Are you planning to have children?
- Where did you learn to speak English?
- Tell me about the health problems you have had in the past.
- Where were you born?

Keep questions relevant to the volunteer position.

### Look for suitability indicators

When the interviewed candidate says something like, "I love being alone with

children. I think they are the only people who really understand me", probe into what the candidate means and do not let the comment end there. Eliminate all doubts in your mind about what the person meant before proceeding to the next question on your list. Be prepared for unexpected information that might indicate serious problems.

People who have something to hide may not answer your questions directly. They may avoid answering the question and steer the conversation in a completely different direction. If you feel the interview is being redirected, simply ask the same question again or rephrase it two or three different ways to detect inconsistencies in the answers.

### Warning Signs

- unaccountable gaps in personal history
- an avoidance to answering questions
- an over-interest in children, or a lack of adult relationships
- a belief that hitting is okay
- a greater interest in what they will get out of the program than in developing the program.

A potential candidate should make you feel comfortable in the way they interact with you, the way they describe their dealings with others and the level of responsibility they accept for their circumstances.

Body language and eye movements are common ways to assess a person's truthfulness. However, not everyone reacts in the same way to the same questions. Personal and cultural differences affect how we respond especially in intimidating situations such as an interview. Keep in mind that Canadian culture is comprised of many different ethnic and cultural populations and that

each is accompanied by its own behaviours relating to body language and eye contact.

Generally speaking, however, a person's facial expressions, head and hand movements mirror their words. Be on the lookout for situations where the body language doesn't match what the candidate is saying. It is interesting to note that people may say "yes" while shaking their heads "no". The subconscious headshake is most often the truth.

Look for eye movements. A person who is relaxed and telling a story tends to go into "auto-pilot": They look up to the right or left to recall information. They may not be

overly concerned with you, and will check back with you from time to time to make sure you're following what they are stating.

### Poor Suitability Indicators

- prejudice towards certain groups of people
- harsh or inappropriate language in conversation
- lack of time for volunteering and training
- inability to work as a member of a team

A person who is lying may maintain very intense eye contact. They follow *you* to see whether or not you are "buying" what they're telling you. Other people may have difficulty maintaining eye contact if they are lying. Observe the applicant and how they respond to simple questions and casual

conversation. This helps to determine if their reaction changes during the more informative questions.

Ask yourself "Would I be comfortable sending my own family member to a program involving this person?" Whatever your decision, be sure to ask "why" you feel that way. This process will help identify the source of those uncomfortable gut feelings so you can confirm or reject them.

If you feel uneasy about the answers you're getting, always follow up with additional questions until your doubts are cleared or confirmed.

## Gut Feelings

What happens if there is no concrete, tangible reason to screen someone out but your intuition, or a “gut feeling” tells you that something is wrong?

As the person responsible for screening, you must identify a logical, defensible, concrete, documented reason for your concern. Excluding an individual from a volunteer opportunity for reasons that are not relevant to the position being sought may result in legal action by the applicant.

One way to help ensure that your decisions are fair and reasonable is to document your concerns. For example, if you feel the applicant is vague or evasive, record the questions he or she did not answer. Bringing other people into the issue may help in either confirming the feeling or dispelling it. This is one of the most difficult issues in screening and may present situations where your moral and ethical responsibilities lead you in one direction while your legal obligations point in another direction. Remember that your primary concern is the protection of St. John Ambulance, its members, and its clients.

## Conclusions

At the end of a successful interview, you'll usually feel good; you'll be able to picture this person in a volunteer role because their answers matched with the attitude, skills and knowledge you were looking for. The candidate will often be excited about St. John Ambulance's mission and vision. At this point, checking the candidate's references may seem like an unnecessary formality, but remember: checking references is an important and necessary step. The information provided by the applicant should not be taken at face value. After the interview, the information must be verified through references. The individual's consent to do this is required in writing and is included on the application form.

In addition to gathering facts, the interview is an opportunity to assess the person's:

- maturity
- sense of judgement
- patience
- tact
- sensitivity to others
- prejudice
- rigidity or flexibility
- ability to work with others and handle problems.

Conclude the interview by thanking the candidate and explaining the next steps and timelines.

If you are recruiting someone for a position that must be filled by an election (example committee chairperson), remember to explain the situation carefully and ask if they would be willing to fill an alternative position if someone else is elected.

## 5. PLACE THE VOLUNTEER IN THE POSITION

Volunteers should be assigned to a specific placement, taking into account their stated preference as well as the needs of your group. Before placement, volunteers should sign their position descriptions. A probationary period is appropriate to give both parties an

### TIPs:

Be familiar with:

- StJCI 2-1-1 *Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities*
- StJCI 2-1-4 *Conflict of Interest*
- StJCI 2-1-6 *Harassment*
- StJCI 2-3-1 *Membership Requirements*
- StJCI 2-6-1 *Awards*
- StJCI 2-7 *Community Service*
- StJCI 2-9-1 *Responsibility Levels*
- StJCI 2-9-2 *Screening*
- StJCI 2-9-3 *Discipline and Grievance Procedures*
- StJCI 2-11 *Position Descriptions*

opportunity to see if they are a good match. This is an ideal time to set the new volunteer up with a “buddy”, to help with orientation. Once the volunteer has been placed in a position, ensure all paperwork is completed (see StJCI 2-8-1 and 2-8-2). The national insurance policy automatically provides coverage for volunteers once they are “counted”. National awards also depend on up-to-date record keeping.

## 6. PROVIDE ORIENTATION / TRAINING

Volunteers should undergo an orientation session and have ongoing support to ensure their effectiveness within St. John Ambulance. During the formal orientation process, the basic policies of St. John Ambulance should be outlined (see **St. John Ambulance Brigade Leadership Manual**, Samples, *Information Guide for Potential Members*. 1996, stock item # 2194). Also, see **DID YOU KNOW?**, *Orientation*, June 1994, Vol.1, No.6 and **DID YOU KNOW?**, *Creating an Orientation Manual*, July 1994, Vol.1, No.7.

Most volunteers already possess a variety of skills. To ensure their continued effectiveness, they will be afforded opportunities for further training. This will depend on available resources and the needs of volunteers and resources in your group. Ensure that initial training is specific to the function expected of the volunteer. Further training can be added later to enhance their skills.

### TIPs

The intent of an orientation is to:

- familiarize new volunteers with the way the group operates
- make them feel welcome
- provide some organizational background and highlight plans for the future
- review volunteer rights, responsibilities and expectations
- review communication procedures within the group
- highlight future training
- explain the monitoring and evaluation procedures including probationary period

Preparing new volunteers for clearly-defined roles helps if problems arise later on: it's much easier to remind a well-oriented volunteer of what we expect than to correct the activities of someone who was dropped into a position with little direction or support.

Orientation is the first step in a series of training initiatives that can lead to other involvement with St. John Ambulance.

## 7. PROVIDE SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

The key to a successful relationship is maintaining it. Maintaining a relationship with volunteers ensures that St. John Ambulance's mission and vision are being addressed competently and also helps to ensure that the person is getting what they came for.

Sometimes, no matter how good our policies and procedures are, someone might slip by. It is not enough for us to be cautious at the beginning and to stop screening people once they are on the job. Sometimes volunteers are placed into ill-defined roles, or mismatched to the role altogether.

It may seem difficult to ask someone who has already been accepted by St. John Ambulance to submit to further screening measures, but it is important to remember that St. John Ambulance's first duty lies with the safety and protection of its members and clients. Minimize the discomfort by informing new volunteers of our ongoing screening and by identifying our policy and procedures in your documents, orientation and training. Refer to **StJCI 2-9-2**.

### Supervision and support follow up:

- Review the risks and vulnerability of St. John Ambulance, its members and clients and the job description of the volunteer position. Identify if there is a need for increased supervision. People moving from one position to another (i.e. from a low-risk position to one of a higher risk) must be re-screened (**StJCI 2-9-2**).
- Use the buddy system. Team a new volunteer with one that has been with your group for awhile and understands the organization.
- Ensure that volunteers are appropriately supervised and that there are people who can observe what is going on.
- Establish a probation period for each position so that you can observe new volunteers in action.
- Investigate complaints and take necessary measures to address them (see **StJCI 2-9-3**).

## 8. MOTIVATE

Finding volunteers qualified to meet your needs requires work. Once a volunteer's interest has been successfully secured, it's important to ensure that the benefits of volunteering continue to outweigh the costs.

When volunteer initiatives are well managed and individuals are matched to service opportunities that are mutually beneficial to the organization and the volunteer, your recruitment job becomes much easier. Satisfied volunteers can be strong advocates for your mission and persuasive partners on your volunteer recruitment team.

### Successful Retention Strategies

#### Career Enhancement

- helping volunteers acquire new skills and relating these skills to the marketplace
- providing opportunities for advancement by building in 'career' ladders

#### Recognition

- showing your appreciation often, in many ways, and in ways that are individual-specific

#### Meaningful Work

- periodic orientations that link volunteer assignments to the broader mission of St. John Ambulance
- making the work meaningful and never wasting their time
- making good matches from the start
- creating positions which are diverse in tasks

#### Personal Growth

- letting them grow with the program
- giving them opportunities that they wouldn't get outside of a volunteer position
- giving volunteers the opportunity to be in charge can strengthen their commitment to the cause and give St. John Ambulance the opportunity to draw on the special skills and experiences that each person offers

#### Respect

- giving volunteers a voice within St. John Ambulance
- accepting their recommendations/taking their advice

There are many ways to cultivate volunteer motivation. Just as people are attracted to volunteer at St. John Ambulance for a multitude of reasons – career exploration, serve the public, free time, personal glory, free entertainment, addition to résumé, visibility, friendships, social interaction, employer or school requirement - there are many reasons why they continue to serve.

The best incentives are learned by listening to volunteers. Not every volunteer or group of volunteers will be motivated by the same set of incentives. Ideas that work with one group or individual may not appeal to another.

At the same time that you are listening for ways to keep volunteers, determine demotivators and try to correct them. Volunteers who leave for negative reasons may take others with them, leave a sour taste behind and make future recruitment efforts more difficult. Once you've 'lost' a volunteer due to program or organization inadequacies, it is hard to get them back.

### Factors that may act as turnoffs

- Disorganized management
- Lack of board support
- Management indifference
- Limited training and orientation
- Lack of contact and support
- Wrong assignment
- Perks that are withdrawn
- Insufficient funding

(Source: Volunteer Centre of Ottawa-Carleton & Heritage Canada)

See *DID YOU KNOW?* on *Motivation*, January and February 1995, Vol. 2, No. 1 & 2.

The trick to keeping people motivated and stimulated is to offer them an opportunity to do what they like to do.

## 9. ARRANGE RECOGNITION

St. John Ambulance volunteers donate their time and effort, and warrant special consideration. They should be encouraged to grow, learn and seek fulfilment as they help an organization and the people in their community. See *DID YOU KNOW?* on *Recognition*, May 1994, Vol. 1, No. 5 and April 2000, Vol. 7, No. 4.

### Recognition and encouragement are essential to stimulating and maintaining active members. You need to be:

**Spontaneous** – express your appreciation on the spot. If you wait until later in the day or year, you've lost most of its motivating force.

**Sincere** – phoniness is worse than saying nothing.

**Specific** – speaking in generalities doesn't let people know if you really are sure what they've done.

**Thankful** – a handshake, a pat on the back, or a "thank you".

**Use Non-Verbal Communication** – The expression on your face, all your body language should smile and applaud.

**Creative** – use a variety of approaches to find ways to recognize volunteers.

**Able To Laugh** – be human!

There are thousands of ways to recognize people for their efforts... a smile, a thank-you for..., newsletter/press releases, reimbursement of expenses when possible, name tags, letters of appreciation, banquets, special occasion cards, etc.

## Formal Recognition

St. John Ambulance has many Honours and Awards especially for volunteers. Remember to keep good records of volunteers and what they do for the organization so that they can be formally recognized for their efforts (see **StJCI 2-6-1**).

## Informal Recognition

Recognition has been likened to an iceberg. The formal recognition is visible by everyone above the waterline, but informal recognition is the large mass below the water. It is carried out in many ways – personal meetings, phone calls, letters, saying thank-you, etc.

### Taking Down the Barriers

- ❑ Fill the role of assessor by an external source thus creating a mutual, positive accountability between volunteers.
- ❑ Emphasize that the primary purpose of an assessment and development system is to help the entire group operate at both maximum effectiveness *and* competency.
- ❑ Recognize that the quality of the decisions taken by volunteers and the results of their actions have an impact on St. John Ambulance.
- ❑ Focus on the positive aspects of a good assessment and development system. This includes the sense of satisfaction gained through receiving concrete feedback and positive recognition.
- ❑ Address concrete, observable behaviours which relate to the position description.
- ❑ Provide positive recognition in those areas where they have demonstrated their strengths. For areas where development is needed, provide concrete, practical strategies for improving performance in a non-threatening manner and measure progress over time.
- ❑ Emphasize positive recognition and future development growth, *not* criticism.
- ❑ Provide for confidentiality of individual responses.
- ❑ Provide information on overall group results so that the group can focus on creating a plan for training and development which fully addresses the needs of the entire group.

## 10.ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

### Recognize Achievement and Guide Development

The issue of assessing volunteer performance is a very sensitive one for a few basic reasons. First, since some St. John Ambulance volunteers, especially those in leadership positions, are directly or indirectly someone's "boss," it can be very uncomfortable for certain members to take on the role of appraising their performance. In addition, since members are *volunteering* their time and effort, the thought of taking a "critical" look at volunteer performance can be viewed as being somehow ungrateful or unappreciative. Finally, many people are simply uncomfortable with initiating discussions in sensitive areas that may create the possibility of conflict.

However, since the impact of the decisions and actions of volunteers (or a lack thereof) can have such a significant impact on St. John Ambulance's program success, and even the division's long-term *viability*, the issue of volunteer performance should not be ignored.

Indeed, having one or more volunteers who fail to fulfil their responsibilities can jeopardize the entire organization. By addressing this issue, your group also gains the opportunity to provide concrete positive reinforcement and recognition for those aspects of volunteer performance where excellence is demonstrated.

A good system helps volunteers to understand *specifically* what behaviours or actions are expected of them, offers a fair and comprehensive assessment of past performance, and then provides concrete strategies for improving performance in those areas where they may need further information and training.

The assessment should not require an excessive investment of either time or money. Allow a maximum of 30-40 minutes for completing the assessment, reviewing the results and creating a development plan.

To provide the most complete and beneficial feedback, assessments must address key components of volunteer performance.

### **5 Key Components of Performance**

***Preparation & Participation*** - This includes attendance, punctuality, advance preparation, participation in meetings, community service and other scheduled functions. Do the volunteers demonstrate a real commitment to St. John Ambulance by being prepared and by participating in all appropriate activities?

***Relationships & Communication*** - The ability to work and communicate effectively with others. This includes relationships between volunteers, as well as with “supervisors” and outside parties such as the general public and other organizations.

***Knowledge & Understanding*** - This area deals with the degree of knowledge and understanding *demonstrated* by the volunteer. It includes understanding of their responsibilities, as well as general knowledge of St. John Ambulance-related issues and concepts.

***Leadership & Planning*** - Exercising appropriate leadership and planning skills appropriate to their role in St. John Ambulance.

***Commitment & Results*** - This broad category includes the results achieved, the degree of commitment demonstrated, and the exhibition of honesty and integrity.

## Writing Volunteer Position Descriptions

A volunteer position description outlines the work that needs to be done by the volunteer. The position description forms the basis for your recruitment effort because it defines the assignment, skills, abilities and interests necessary to perform the task successfully as well as the expectations and requirements of the position.

### **Position Title**

A specific, descriptive title that gives a sense of identity and helps everyone understand the assigned role. A title should reflect the function of the position.

### **Purpose of Position (volunteer impact)**

The purpose of the overall project and/or program and how the volunteer's work will impact the program's outcome, clients, or mission. Identify expected impact in both direct service and administrative assignments so that volunteers will be aware of the importance of their work.

### **Responsibilities and Duties**

List each responsibility and duty that is specific and clearly define what the volunteer is expected to do in preparation for and on the assignment.

### **Qualifications**

List qualifications required for the position. Include education, personal characteristics, skills, abilities and/or experience required.

### **Training**

Indicate nature and length of all general and position-specific training required for the assignment. Identify which training is provided by St. John Ambulance and which is the responsibility of the individual.

### **Relationships**

Identify who the volunteer reports to, is accountable to and liases with.

### **Time Commitment**

State the expected commitment in terms of the minimum length of service, hours per week, and any other special requirements. Be specific, e.g., weekly, monthly, long-term basis, flexible, self-determined. Include expectations for attendance at meetings.

### **Support**

Identify what kind of support the volunteer can expect, including an assessment of their performance after the probationary period and annually with concrete feedback and positive recognition.

### **Term of Office**

If this is a position filled by an election or appointment, indicate the length of time they are expected to serve in the position (e.g. one-year renewable at the time of the annual assessment of performance).

**Benefits**

Identify the benefits to be gained personally by performing this job. Include tangible (e.g. formal recognition) and intangible (e.g. advanced training opportunities) benefits.

**Costs**

Identify the potential costs of volunteering. List the expenses related to the volunteer position (uniform, gasoline and so forth). Explain briefly the policy relating to claiming expenses.

**Screening**

There is an obligation to clearly communicate to individuals what to expect in the application process. For example, applicants should be aware that they must undergo an interview process, complete an application form, provide references and agree to a police records check. Any other requirements should also be clearly stated in this area (e.g. volunteers must notify St. John Ambulance if they are convicted of a criminal code or other statutory offence relevant to their volunteer position.)

**Probationary period**

A volunteer who accepts or is promoted to a new position may be asked to begin a probationary period and may be placed alongside an experienced volunteer to allow for maximum training, support and supervision. The purpose of a probationary period is to provide a reasonable period of time on which to determine whether a volunteer is suitable and competent in the duties of the position and provides a volunteer with the opportunity to adjust effectively to the position. Identify the probationary period that must be served for each position (e.g. 3 months, 6 months, 1 year) and the possible reasons for rejection (e.g. unsuitability, incompetence, misconduct, etc).

**Evaluation**

Identify the process of evaluation and how often it occurs (e.g. after the probationary period and annually thereafter). Emphasize that the primary purpose of an assessment and development system is to help the entire group operate at maximum effectiveness and competency.

**Work Location**

The location where the individual will be working. Include information, where applicable, about parking, the nearest public transportation, intersection, etc.

**Date**

The date the position description was most recently updated.

**Signatures**

Provide a section where volunteers can sign to agree to the duties listed for the position and another place where the supervisor signs and agrees to provide specific training and appropriate supervision for the position.

**Contact Information**

Volunteer co-ordinator, recruitment officer or Divisional Superintendent and how to contact them (who to call for more information about the opportunity).

**Checklist:**

<i>(date)</i>		<i>(date)</i>	
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Application	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Received
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Interview		Volunteer Manual
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Police records check	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Uniform
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> References Checked	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Orientation
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Probation Period	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

(See **St. John Ambulance Youth Leader's Manual**, 1999, Sample 3 & 4)

**Note:**

Position descriptions should be developed for committees as well as for individuals. They are often referred to as Terms of Reference.

## Sample Recruitment “Blurbs”

-St. John Ambulance Letterhead-

### PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

#### 15-SECOND SCRIPT

Voice: Do you want to create a better life for our community? St. John Ambulance advocates for first aid training and is looking for a self-motivated individual to spearhead our public information campaign. We need your firm handshake, persuasive tongue and about ten hours of your time per month! Training provided. To learn more about this exciting opportunity, call Jo Committee at 123-4567.

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-St. John Ambulance Letterhead-

### PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

#### 15-SECOND SCRIPT

Voice: Every Canadian can contribute to a healthier community. At St. John Ambulance, we’ve been working towards building healthier communities in Canada for over one hundred years.

Why not take a few minutes and give us a call to find out how you can help through volunteering. Call St. John Ambulance at 123-4567.

-15-

-St. John Ambulance Letterhead-

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

30-SECOND SCRIPT

Voice: Earn the smile and appreciation from a homebound senior simply by stopping in once a week with your friendly dog and an hour of your time. St. John Ambulance in Anytown offers the St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog Program. We value our volunteers and provide them with all the training they need to bring companionship into the lives of lonely seniors and disabled people. Dogs and handlers are required to successfully complete an evaluation to determine their suitability for the program. For more information call Jane Debrigade at 123-4567.

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-St. John Ambulance Letterhead-

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

30-SECOND SCRIPT

SFX: (Light BG/Sounds of kids enjoying themselves)

Young VOICE 1 I like learning first aid and safety skills!

Young VOICE 2 I've picked up some great work experience!

Young VOICE 3 I've made lots of new friends volunteering!

Young VOICE 1 I like to help people, it makes me feel good!

Young VOICE 2 Catch some action. If you are between 6 and 20 years of age, try it out!

Young VOICE 3 Call St. John Ambulance today at 123-4567

-30-

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