

# DID YOU KNOW?

AN INFORMATION SHEET FOR ST. JOHN AMBULANCE MEMBERS



## SURVEY ON VOLUNTEERISM IN CANADA

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**DID YOU KNOW** that Canadians donated 1.11 billion hours of voluntary service during 1997? That is equivalent to 578,000 full-time jobs, which is more than the entire labour force of Manitoba.

In the fall of 1997, a *National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating* was conducted by the non-profit sector in partnership with four federal government departments. The results, which compare to a similar survey done ten years earlier, are now available. This information sheet highlights the section on volunteering.

Looking at trends in volunteering can help guide your recruitment plans. The survey showed that:

- more people are volunteering now (31.4%) than in 1987 (26.8%),
- Canadian youth (age 15 to 24) is the fastest growing group of volunteers. From 1987 to 1997, the percentage of young people who volunteer grew from 18% to 33%;
- the average number of hours donated per person dropped from 191 in 1987 to 149 in 1997; and
- there is a higher percentage of women than men who volunteer, but this gap is declining.

More people are willing to volunteer, and many of them are young people. This coincides with St. John Ambulance's goal to expand the youth program. Focus on the young people, and ask them to participate.

Survey participants were asked why they did (or did not) volunteer. This information is useful in planning how to recruit new members. The survey indicated:

- 44% of volunteer activities began as a result of being asked by someone in the organization
- almost one third of volunteers approached the organization themselves
- less than 5% offered to volunteer as a response to a public appeal
- 33% of people who do not volunteer said one reason was because they were not personally asked, 18% of people who do volunteer said they didn't volunteer more because they had *not* been personally asked

The message here? Don't wait for responses to brochures left behind. Talk to people! Tell them about our programs. ASK them to participate! And then follow up personally!

The most popular reasons given for volunteering were:

- ⇨ to help a cause in which they personally believe (96%)
- ⇨ to use their skills and experience (78%)
- ⇨ have been personally affected by the cause the organization supports (68%)
- ⇨ to explore their own strengths (54%)
- ⇨ because their friends volunteer (23%)
- ⇨ to improve job opportunities (22%)

Make the volunteer experience a meaningful one - one that relates to people's reasons for joining. Focus on new community services to take advantage of different skills and experience brought by new people.

The results of this survey help us to understand who volunteers and why. Use them to plan your recruitment strategies. For more detailed information about the survey, check the web site for the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy: [www.ccp.ca](http://www.ccp.ca)