



St. John Ambulance

SAVING LIVES
at work, home and play

Getting Work Experience Through Volunteerism

The Canada Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating 2010, reported that 47% of Canadians volunteer. Volunteers devoted 2.1 billion hours in 2010, equivalent to 1.1 million full time jobs or 8% of the full time jobs in Canada. According to TD Economics this is a contribution of around \$50 billion.

Undoubtedly, the contribution to the economy is significant. Many people in our country benefit from the invaluable work done by volunteers. But what is becoming more recognized, is how volunteer work contributes to a person's professional development and ultimate career success. The Ministry of Education has recognized the valuable experiences that volunteer opportunities provide by including it as a graduating requirement for high school. Many in the corporate world have recognized the value of volunteer experience and have developed programs to encourage employees to get involved in their communities.

For youth who are just starting out in the workforce, volunteering is a gateway for work experience on a resume and for workplace references. Volunteer work can also be very influential to youth who are exploring career paths, helping them to make better decisions on what careers they would like to pursue and perhaps those they would prefer to avoid. For very highly competitive career paths, volunteering in the field demonstrates to postsecondary educational institutions and potential employers that the candidate knows what they want based on experience.

For those that are already in the workforce, volunteering can expand professional networks and business opportunities or provide an opportunity for leadership training and experience, enhancing a resume for future promotion. Volunteer work takes many forms, including the donation of intellectual expertise. Non-profits are overseen by a Board of Directors, consisting of business professionals from a variety of backgrounds, contributing to the success of the organization by sharing their knowledge, expertise, skills and decision making abilities. If you are looking to serve on a Board of Directors but there are no suitable positions available, don't

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St. John Ambulance is an international humanitarian organization and is a foundation of the Order of St. John 

overlook Committee positions. Committees serve the non-profit and the Board and this is a great way to start to be ready when a Board position opens up.

There are many career building volunteer opportunities available. Non-profits are always looking for new volunteers to help them deliver their services to the community. The best experiences will be with organizations whose values closely match your own. It is possible to have a disappointing experience, but don't let it discourage you from trying another organization. Just like in a career search, you may have to try a few different opportunities before you find the right match for you.

Submitted by Dianne Rende, Executive Director, St. John Ambulance Peel Dufferin Branch. St. John Ambulance is a not-for-profit organization and Canada's leading authority in first aid. St. John Ambulance has over 700 volunteers that provide over 70,000 hours of service in Peel and Dufferin County each year.

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