



Update – Initiative to Increase Volunteerism August 3, 2009

It started in 2006 with the launch of a Montreal “Initiative to Increase Volunteerism” and the efforts of a concerned group of community and charity organizations to increase awareness, funding and participation in volunteering. For the past three years we have been emailing and writing federal and provincial governments with our request – To increase recognition, rewards and promotion to foster more volunteerism in Canada. To this end, we suggested the following measures:

1. Increase the tax credit for charitable organizations.

2. Recognize and quantify the time given by an organization or a volunteer to a registered NPO - with a tax credit charitable

3. Provide more incentives for all schools to include volunteer work in their curricula.

We have heard from many government leaders from across the country with regards to their thoughts on our proposals as well as their existing measures. While current measures do some good, we need a stronger voice and commitment not only from our leaders but more from our entire national community. There are tough economic times and with the loss of jobs, savings and retirement plans – community and charitable organizations are under more pressure than ever to help out. Longer lines at food banks, more kids needing free activity and sporting programs than actually exist, seniors in distress, families in crisis – it is the Volunteer groups that are on the front line to solve these problems. *For many years, I have worked alongside such amazing groups like: “The Shield of Athena”, “Playmas Cultural Association”, “Dreams Take Flight”, “Sun Youth”, “Freedom from Poverty Foundation”, “Generations Foundation” and more. It is thanks to Volunteer Heros in these organizations that those less fortunate and in crisis – have a chance for a better, brighter future.*

However, the fact remains that many groups are not being infused with new “fresh blood”, and the increasing strain on these organizations is causing more volunteer “burnt outs” facing. Basically we are looking at less people and decreasing funding to help out growing problems. So now, we need to add a request to our first three proposals and that is: **That all our government leaders on every level from municipal to provincial to federal – publicly make the call for more people to join in public service.**

We recall the famous words of the late President John F, Kennedy: “Ask not what your country can do for – ask what you can do for your country”. Those words still stir strong sentiments today and we see that under the current leadership of American President Barak Obama, the message is working south of the border. There is a greater belief and activity in many community groups in the US and we would like to see that mirrored here in Canada.

We need our leaders to raise their voices in the encouragement to provide more public awareness and more funding for training. We need to help our volunteers increase their ranks and their positive influence in their communities. We also need the media to contribute to this cause by promoting volunteerism and its miracles in all forms of print and electronic media groups – thus encouraging every citizen across this country to get involved. We need everybody’s help NOW!

For more information on how you can get involved please go to: www.productionsboquer.com and click on “advocacy. Or please contact Eramelinda Boquer at: snmnstr@sympatico.ca