



Review of Volunteerism in Peel

April 2007



United Way
of Peel Region

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I hope that this review can provide a successful roadmap for the provision of the additional supports for volunteerism and volunteers in Peel Region. The contributions of the many thousands of volunteers in Peel make this community a great place to live.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Huether
Huether Services

April 1, 2007.

Executive Summary

With the support of an advisory committee made up of representatives of community agencies, funders, and managers of volunteer programs, United Way of Peel Region initiated a review of volunteerism in Peel in November 2006. The need for this review recognizes the growing demands for volunteers and supports for volunteers in the community, the apparent decrease in numbers of volunteers and the recent suspension of services by the Volunteer Centre of Peel. The purpose of this review was to determine what community supports for volunteerism, volunteer programs and volunteers would strengthen them and to make recommendations to provide them.

To complete the review, United Way of Peel Region engaged the services of John Huether of Huether Services. The process for the review included: 1) a series of focus groups involving volunteers, coordinators of volunteers and volunteer suppliers and businesses, 2) research including available Peel-based information and interviews with volunteer experts and leaders of successful volunteer centres from other jurisdictions; 3) the development of proposals as a result of the focus groups and research; 4) consultations about these proposals with those involved in the focus groups and Executive Directors of Peel community agencies; 5) enhancement of the proposals based upon the feedback from the consultations and advice from the advisory committee.

Thirteen different focus groups were organized. Forty-two volunteers participated and completed surveys; 59 coordinators of volunteers and 14 volunteer suppliers including representatives of four large corporations. The participants represented a broad spectrum of agencies of different sizes, services and mandates. The volunteers ranged from 16 to 60 - plus years, came from all parts of the Region and performed a broad range of roles from fundraising, one-on-one service, board member and administrative responsibilities.

The focus groups all identified the importance of promoting volunteers and volunteerism using a variety marketing strategies. It was felt that the value of volunteers and their contribution to the community were not widely recognized. It was suggested that much more could be done to let people know about volunteer opportunities and the benefits of volunteering. There was very strong support for the creation of a user-friendly interactive central database on a well-advertised website that could provide information about volunteer opportunities throughout the voluntary sector and in the public service. The focus groups identified the importance of training and consultation for agencies engaging volunteers to ensure their ability to manage risks and potential liabilities, to provide competent supports for volunteers and to assist them in recruitment and recognition. There was good support for the creation of a centralized organization which could perform these roles, facilitate partnerships in support of volunteering and volunteer programs, and provide significant connecting support to businesses and corporations interested in employer supported volunteering on both a group and an individual basis.

Six interviews with persons with expertise in volunteerism and volunteer management and 14 volunteer centre programs were contacted to obtain information about their programs, structures, services and successes as well as the challenges they are facing. Based upon these discussions it would appear that there are more advantages for the Peel community to consider a centre that has a primary focus or sole mandate on the provision of volunteer supports to the community in line with the four competencies for centres identified by Volunteer Canada: promotion, connecting, strengthening capacity and leadership.

While a number of centres in Ontario are continually facing challenges of obtaining core sustaining funding, all of them expressed confidence about their future ability to broaden and strengthen their funding bases and to serve their communities through their promoting, connecting and strengthening roles. Most of the volunteer centres contacted were using very successful, user-friendly interactive database programs which performed the core of their matching role by informing potential volunteers about volunteer opportunities. In addition, the centres engaged in proactive connecting activities to strengthen the awareness of volunteering opportunities. These included outreach to new immigrant or special needs communities or targeted recruiting of highly skilled recently retired seniors, or youth. These centres provided training and consultation for voluntary agencies, coordinators of volunteers, senior managers and members of Boards of Directors in order to strengthen their capacity to support volunteers and fulfill their mandate. There were differences in emphasis with concentrated support for small volunteer-intensive organizations, for staff supporting volunteers or for senior managers. Volunteer centres demonstrated a great awareness of the changing needs and preferences of volunteers in the community. They saw it as their role to sensitize community agencies about these.

Almost all of the volunteer centres received funding from United Ways in their communities and about half of those contacted received funding from municipal or regional government. All had fundraising strategies and were the recipients of various kinds of foundation and project-based grants. The larger centres talked about the need for an entrepreneurial approach to securing funding by selling services provided by the centre and by the manner in which they approached funding from the corporate sector.

As a result of the focus groups and the research undertaken, a vision for a centralized organization providing concentrated support for volunteers and volunteerism in Peel was developed. Key success factors were identified. A tentative plan to create this organization using a building-block approach is presented. It is rooted in obtaining community support, diverse funding and collaborative partnerships and was developed to create a new organization providing supports to volunteers and volunteer programs using a phased-in building-block approach. The vision, key elements of success and the plan were presented for feedback to a series of consultations. A number of participants in the focus groups and Executive Directors from a variety of voluntary sector organizations (58 persons in total) participated in the consultations and provided positive feedback.

All of these steps have resulted in an ambitious but achievable vision of a non-profit charitable organization with a volunteer Board of Directors and a diverse and sustainable funding base. This organization will provide strong support to volunteerism in Peel, volunteers, volunteer programs and voluntary organizations across a wide variety of sectors: recreation, sports, culture, environment, social, health and education. Its main roles will be promotion, connecting, strengthening capacity and developing partnerships. It will create a high visibility for volunteers and their contributions to the community and the opportunities people have to volunteer. It will introduce an effective and highly successful user-friendly interactive database to promote volunteer opportunities in member community organizations, which will post these volunteer positions on the site. This new organization will introduce, according to community needs, specific connecting strategies to increase the availability of volunteers for specific roles and purposes. It will provide training and consultation for staff at all levels in community agencies related to the management of volunteers and volunteer programs, including risk management and liability, recruitment, screening, support, retention and recognition of volunteers. In addition, it will develop effective and appropriate partnerships with other capacity- building organizations to ensure coordination of effort and to strengthen approaches to the engagement of volunteers to address various community challenges. This new organization will undertake a proactive approach to engaging the business community and providing support to enhance its interest in employer-supported volunteering.

The proposed plan suggests a step-by-step approach that can generate community support, a diverse core funding base and a strategic initial emphasis upon the promotion and connecting roles. The plan suggests that a sponsoring organization provide oversight and support for a steering committee with broad representation from the community, which will assume the responsibility to create the new organization with a mandate to fulfill the vision outlined in this review. The steering committee will choose a name for the organization, develop a plan and budget and hire a Director with communication and fund development staff to focus on the promoting and connecting roles. It will develop a diverse funding base, a strategic plan and a set of partnerships that will strengthen its ability to support volunteerism and volunteers in the community. The steering committee will conduct its work over a 15-to-24 month period.

This review of volunteerism in Peel has provided the opportunity to examine the needs for additional community supports for volunteerism, volunteers, volunteer programs and voluntary organizations. It is clear that the Region of Peel could be well served by an effective organization focused upon promoting volunteerism, volunteers and volunteer opportunities, providing connecting roles and strengthening the capacity of community agencies to recruit, engage and support volunteers while developing a variety of partnerships to promote civic engagement and volunteerism.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This Review of Volunteerism in Peel was undertaken because of the recognition that volunteers are the backbone of the voluntary sector. Their many and varied contributions to the communities within Peel are essential to the maintenance of the health and well-being of the residents of Peel Region. They support and ensure the high quality of services provided across broad sectors of the community: recreation, culture, sports, the environment, health, housing, education and social services.

In recognition of the importance of volunteerism and volunteers in the community, United Way of Peel Region created an advisory committee representing service providers (large and small), funders and volunteer administrators in September of 2006. This committee recommended that a review of volunteerism and volunteer management in Peel Region be conducted with a particular but not exclusive focus on the human services sector. There were several reasons:

- growing demands for volunteers, volunteer services and supports for them;
- many community pressures, leisure time options, and socio-economic factors that are making fewer volunteers available to our community and
- the recent suspension of services at the Volunteer Centre of Peel.

The stated goal of this review, as developed by United Way and the advisory committee, was to determine the additional supports and strategies needed to strengthen the contributions of volunteers and enhance the work of individual organizations that have volunteer programs and engage volunteers to support them and their services.

United Way of Peel Region engaged the services of John Huether of Huether Services to undertake this review.

The Review was designed to include five major steps:

- a) Focus groups with groups of volunteers, coordinators of volunteers and volunteer suppliers;
- b) Research of selected material about volunteers and volunteer centres including the Peel experience and interviews with:
 - i) the President of the Board of Directors of Volunteer Centre for Peel and its former Executive Director (to Dec. 2006);
 - ii) key informants with expertise in volunteerism and volunteer centres and
 - iii) leaders of volunteer centres and volunteer support programs in other communities throughout Canada.
- c) Development of proposals for additional supports for consideration by further consultations;
- d) Consultations on proposals for additional supports with volunteers, coordinators of volunteers, volunteer suppliers and Executive Directors;
- e) Finalization of the proposals developed as a result of the above steps.

This report provides a summary of the results of these steps together with more detailed information in the Appendices. In Chapter 2, a summary and analysis of the input from the focus groups is presented. A total of 115 persons participated in the focus groups and their input from a significant variety of perspectives was very helpful. In Chapter 3, a summary of contacts with volunteer centres in other jurisdictions (14) and with key informants (6) is presented. Chapter 4 provides a summary of the results of the Consultations based upon a set of PowerPoint presentations shown in Appendices IX, X, XI and XII. These outline a summary of the information gathered and the proposals developed as a result of the research and focus groups. As the proposals were strongly supported and enhanced in the consultations, it was decided to present a detailed description of the proposals in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 to complete this report.

The vision in Chapter 5 for an organization that provides key roles of promoting, connecting, enhancing capacity and developing partnerships is based upon all of the information gathered in this review and the feedback from the Focus Groups and the consultations. The key elements of success in Chapter 6 have been identified as a reference point for those charged with the responsibility to implement the steps outlined in Chapter 7 to create a centralized organization providing strong supports for volunteerism and volunteers in Peel. As noted later in this report, the term Volunteer Peel was used to describe this organization during the review and in this report, but it may well be that a different name may be more appropriate and effective.

This review presents a comprehensive vision that when realized will provide very helpful and value-added supports to volunteerism and volunteers in Peel Region. Although there are considerable challenges that must be faced and overcome to achieve the vision, it is clear that there is considerable support in the community for it. The recommended steering committee with the support of the sponsoring organization will need to channel this support and broaden it considerably in order to create a successful organization that promotes, connects, strengthens and partners on behalf of volunteers and voluntary organizations in this community. The realization of the vision will be well worth the effort.

Chapter 2: Analysis of Input from the Focus Groups

1. Introduction:

During the course of the Review of Volunteerism in Peel, a series of 13 Focus Groups were held throughout the community. Five focus groups were held for volunteers, including one for secondary school students. A total of 42 volunteers including 17 students participated. Five focus groups were held for coordinators of volunteers. A total of 59 staff attended these, representing 54 different organizations, ranging from those with one staff or a couple of part-time staff to very large organizations such as the Region of Peel, and two of the three hospitals in Peel. The mandates of these organizations covered environmental, recreational, cultural, social, health and educational services. The three focus groups for volunteer suppliers and businesses involved 14 persons plus three additional interviews. These included Ontario Works (2), Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services (ICNSS) (2), Peel Regional Police (1), Humber College (2), Peel District School Board (4), Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board (1), Medtronics (1), GE Canada, (1), Baxter Corporation (1) and AstraZeneca Canada Inc. (1) and one freelance participant.

Each of the volunteers who participated in the Focus Groups were asked to complete a short survey, which is attached to this report as Appendix I (d). The results of this survey completed by 41 of the participants, demonstrate that the participants represent the broad spectrum of the community who volunteers and a wide variety of roles. More than 63% provide direct service while members of Boards of Directors and persons involved in fundraising, marketing and communications were represented by 31% and 26 % respectively. Nineteen per cent contributed to administrative tasks. Because many volunteers performed more than one role, the percentages total more than one-hundred. The participants represented the full range of volunteer experience from fewer than six months to more than five years and an age range from 14 to over 65. For a detailed view of the results of the survey, please see Appendix III.

The following analysis will not provide a full summary of the notes gathered from the focus groups. The full notes from each focus group are provided in Appendices II, IV and V. The focus of this analysis will be upon the themes that arose in the focus groups and their implication for the nature of additional supports that the community could provide or develop for volunteers, volunteer programs and volunteerism. It will be presented in three sections according to the participants in the focus groups.

Please note that the notes of the focus groups do provide useful information and key messages about volunteers, the volunteering experience and what agencies need to do to support volunteers. Thus it would be useful for coordinators of volunteers and their managers to review this material.

2. Analysis of the Input from the Volunteers

The volunteers were invited to describe their volunteer experience and then comment upon aspects of the following: volunteer motivation, recruitment, retention, training, support and recognition. They were also invited to make written comments on these topics in the survey. About 40% of the volunteers provided brief additional written comments; however, there were no new ideas presented in the written summary that were not raised in the discussions that are recorded in the notes.

a) Marketing

All of the volunteer focus groups identified the need for much more extensive and intensive marketing of volunteerism, volunteering opportunities and volunteers. Many participants gave voice to the perception that many people in the community did not know about:

- The need for volunteers;
- The value that volunteers bring to the community;
- How to find volunteer opportunities;
- What is involved in volunteering;
- What the benefits of volunteering are for the individual or for the community or the agency;
- The breadth and scope of volunteer opportunities available or
- Many of the agencies in need of volunteers and their respective mandates and missions.

A few of the volunteers described learning of volunteer opportunities from news- paper or television advertisements or stories about volunteering or about their agency. Many expressed the desire to see more of them.

Many ideas were presented about marketing strategies:

- Television, radio and newspaper;
- Web-based information;
- Bill-boards (the big ones and the portable ones);
- Notices on bulletin boards;
- Notices in places where people congregate: malls, libraries, recreation centres, supermarkets, places of worship;
- Public speaking to seniors, youth, faith groups and service clubs;
- Notice with the tax bill;
- Notices at the workplace;
- Provision of information about volunteering and volunteer opportunities to people considering retirement and being downsized through human resource departments;
- Volunteer job fairs;
- Bring a friend to volunteer events;
- Bring a parent to volunteer.

It was suggested that the strategies be multifaceted and coordinated and kept separate from fundraising. Suggestions were made to have the marketing strategy appeal to the motivations of potential volunteers: opportunities to give, opportunities to learn, opportunities to be part of a team; opportunities to make a difference. It was also suggested that governments should have a role to play in actively and consistently presenting the message about the value of volunteering and in contributing to the marketing efforts required on an ongoing basis.

It was noted that families, friends, teachers and employers are good sources of information about volunteering and that informal word-of-mouth advertising was very effective in attracting people to volunteering. Volunteers were seen to be the good ambassadors for agencies and their volunteering programs. The marketing should provide the backdrop for these informal discussions.

b) Use of the Internet: A volunteer Website for Peel

There was very strong support in all of the volunteer focus groups for a website for volunteerism and volunteering in Peel that was well known and well broadcast in the community. This site could have multiple links but should be easily accessible and simple for the user. It should provide information about volunteerism, volunteering, agencies that use volunteers and provide concrete, up-to-date and useful information about specific volunteer opportunities both for individuals and for groups. This site needs to be well supported.

Currently, the School Boards have a volunteer website and people can find volunteer opportunities on Charity Village and Pi-net; however, it was reported that these are little known, both among the students and the general public.

Participants talked about the kind of information they were looking for at the initial stage of their search for a volunteer opportunity:

- The expectations of the role;
- How much time was required;
- Training to be provided;
- Skills to be learned or acquired;
- Who to contact and how;
- Information about the screening process.

c) Additional Supports to Volunteerism and Volunteers

The participants talked about the kinds of supports that were helpful to them in the volunteer experience and what they thought would create more interest in others in volunteering:

- Having a person who was easy to talk with to support the volunteer in performing their role and to deal with questions and concerns as they arise;
- Being partnered with a “buddy”, an experienced volunteer at the beginning;
- Having regular and open channels of communication with the staff throughout their volunteer experience;
- Knowing that the service provided is of value (responses from the people being helped, informal thank-you from staff, information about the agency and impact of volunteer role, recognition);
- Flexibility and variety in assignments;
- Experiences that are “safe, open, exciting and interesting”;
- Being asked to undertake meaningful work and not “joe-jobs”;
- Being given the chance to fully use skills and experience;
- Being given the chance to learn new skills, gain new insight and information;
- Training that is accessible and relevant;
- A simplified and streamlined recruitment and orientation process, although it was recognized and accepted that for some roles considerable pre-training was necessary and valuable (e.g. hospice, distress line, victims services);
- Being organized and clear about the expectations for the volunteers so that the volunteer’s time is not wasted and its value is recognized;
- Having support for volunteers throughout the organization from the Board to each and every staff person;
- Being able to work in tandem with agency staff.

It was clear from some of the comments during the focus groups that some of these expectations of the volunteers were not being met in their current or previous volunteer experiences. It was also clear that in a number of cases where these kinds of supports were being provided, the volunteers were extremely positive about their experience.

d) Recognition

In all of the focus groups there was an interesting discussion about recognition. There were not a few who expressed the opinion that the volunteer received more from the experience than they gave and talked about the intrinsic value of helping others which led to good feelings. Some then expressed the opinion that spending money on recognition was not appropriate in the face of service demands requiring funding and that formal recognition was not necessary. Nonetheless, the majority saw it as valuable.

The participants strongly supported the notion that the best recognition came from the people being helped or their families. The value of informal and regular recognition from staff working with the volunteers was recognized and supported. Small tokens of appreciation like thank-you notes, pins, ribbons, certificates were also appreciated. Small inexpensive gifts such as a Tim Hortons coupon were also suggested.

A number of volunteers expressed appreciation for the agency’s efforts to formally recognize their contributions with special events or dinners and award ceremonies. There were mixed feelings about city volunteer recognition events, but a number of participants thought it was important and felt the additional recognition by the city was valuable.

Some volunteers, especially students and volunteers who were entering the job market, valued written letters of appreciation detailing the nature of their volunteer experience, from the agency or from the city or the provincial government.

e) Barriers

Participants identified a number of factors that created problems for the volunteer and often discouraged potential volunteers:

- Transportation and lack of accessibility
- Fear of what might be expected
- Fear of being required to take on too much in terms of time and responsibility
- Not feeling part of the organizations being served;
- No variety or opportunity to take on different assignments;
- Fear of being left on one's own to cope with situations that are new or uncomfortable without timely support;
- The bureaucracy, "hassle" and time required to obtain a criminal record check.

f) Agency Reputation and Viability

A number of participants indicated that the reputation and credibility of the agency for which they were volunteering was important to them. There was also a recognition that in some agencies there was not sufficient funding for staff to support the volunteers and the volunteer programs. A concern that agencies are spending more time trying to find dollars than volunteers was expressed. Volunteers, particularly those who were on Boards of Directors, recognized the limited resources available to agencies to fulfill their mission. The healthy viability of agencies was very important in terms of their capacity to make full use of volunteers and their contributions.

g) Role of Government in Volunteerism

Many programs within each level of government engage volunteers. In this sense, all of the above comments about support for volunteers and volunteer expectations apply equally to those programs.

There was a clear sense that all four levels of government could do more to support volunteers in the community. Some of the suggested strategies were:

- Provide a tax break for those who volunteer in the community for a defined amount or period of time;
- Provide adequate funding to voluntary agencies so that they can provide the necessary support to volunteers, and thereby leverage their dollars effectively;
- Provide on going and multi-tiered recognition of volunteers and their contributions;
- Contribute significantly to the marketing of the value of volunteerism and the value of the contributions;

h) The Need for a Volunteer Centre?

As is noted in the survey results, only a few volunteers (4) learned of their current volunteer experience through the Volunteer Centre of Peel. There were not many opinions expressed about the need for a central agency. Some participants did see the value in having a centre that could be the source of information about volunteerism and volunteer opportunities in Peel and supported this idea strongly. There was greater consensus that a website, as described above, could fulfill this function. There was not strong opinion among volunteers that the "personal touch" needed to be available in concert with the website in terms of providing initial referral advice or counseling about volunteer opportunities.

There was recognition that a central body supporting volunteers, whether at the town/city level or across the Region, could perform such valuable functions as:

- Leading the marketing initiatives required on an on going basis;
- Promoting inter-agency connections in support of volunteers;
- Supporting agencies to have the appropriate and necessary policies and internal infra-structure to support volunteers;
- Training volunteer coordinators, staff working with volunteers and others to manage and support volunteers;
- Working with agencies to streamline and simplify processes in relation to volunteering;
- Adding to the community recognition of volunteers;
- Informing corporations and their employees of volunteer opportunities for groups and individuals;
- Leading public education strategies regarding volunteerism.

3. Analysis of the Input from the Coordinators of Volunteers

The coordinators of volunteers were invited to describe the key success factors and the challenges of their volunteer programs. Then they were asked to suggest what additional supports from the community would be beneficial to support volunteerism, volunteer programs and volunteers. Further questions were asked to explore various aspects of this additional support: organizational options, cultural diversity, service linkages, role of government, connections with corporations and other related matters.

a) Agency Capacity:

The coordinators of volunteers identified that there is a clear link between agency capacity and its ability to provide competent and satisfactory support to volunteers and the management of volunteer programs. Sufficient funding for staffing to manage and support volunteers according to good practice standards and with an appropriate risk management framework are considered essential to successful volunteer programs. A number of coordinators of volunteers were carrying out their role on a part-time basis along with other assignments.

b) Components of Successful Volunteer Programs

The following components were identified as essential to successful volunteer programs:

- Clarity of expectations for volunteers;
- Well-organized to make good use of volunteers' time and skills;
- Appropriate policies and procedures for each stage of the volunteer process;
- Good communication with volunteers and staff working with volunteers on an ongoing basis;
- Training and support appropriate to the roles being performed by the volunteer and the skills the volunteer brings to the role;
- Training and support for the staff supporting volunteers at all levels;
- Staff dedicated to support volunteers;
- Sound risk management policies and practices;
- Recognition at all levels and stages of the volunteer experience with on going means of saying thank you;
- Sufficient resources to provide staffing, training and program support;
- Good accountability and quality assurance processes;
- Evaluation strategies to ensure programs are meeting needs of clients and of the volunteers;
- Inclusion of volunteers as an integral part of the agency;
- Organizational support for volunteers throughout the organization;
- Flexibility and ability to accommodate the needs of volunteers.

c) Changing Expectations of Volunteers

The coordinators of volunteers identified that they were perceiving changes in the expectations of volunteers.

Volunteers are:

- Clearer about what they want to do;
- Less willing to do "Joe Jobs";
- Desirous of using their specific skills and experience;
- Unwilling to make long term commitments;
- Expecting to be treated with respect on their terms;
- Expecting a well-organized, competent and professional approach of the agency;
- Wanting to know the impact and value of their volunteer contribution (i.e., what difference it makes).

On the other hand, a number of potential volunteers do not know what they want to do and may be afraid of taking on certain responsibilities, especially if not provided with appropriate support. Students provide particular challenges and opportunities for volunteer programs with their mixture of motivations and differing levels of commitment to the volunteer experience.

d) Barriers to Volunteering

A number of barriers to volunteering were identified by the coordinators of volunteers:

- Transportation
- Accessibility of programs requiring volunteers;
- Child Care support to volunteers;
- Costs associated with volunteering;
- Cultural understanding of volunteerism as there are some cultures that do not have the kind of approach to volunteering that we have in Canada;
- Language;
- Limited competency to cope with diversity;
- Limited understanding of how to use special skills.

e) Additional Community Supports to Volunteerism

The coordinators of volunteers identified a number of additional community supports which would be helpful to their programs. These are outlined below.

i) Training for coordinators of volunteers, managers of volunteer programs and staff working with volunteers

In the focus groups there was recognition that there is considerable turnover in the position of coordinator of volunteers, especially in the smaller agencies. Therefore the provision of some basic training for these staff at regular intervals is necessary. The need for training for those who have been exposed to the basic volunteer management courses to have more advanced training was also identified. More experienced coordinators continue to have particular staff training needs. Support for the deployment of volunteers with special skills or special needs is another area for which training could be useful both for coordinators and other agency staff and managers.

ii) Linkages and Communication among Coordinators of Volunteers

Although there is a network of volunteer administrators in Peel called PVAN, not all of the participants in the focus groups were aware of its existence or, if they were, they did not belong. Within the focus groups the desire for staff working with volunteers to be able to share and network with their peers was great. This contact could include learning about policies of other organizations, problem-solving, did knowing about opportunities for volunteers in other agencies, knowing about training and recognition opportunities for volunteers. It also could result in better collaboration among volunteer programs in relation to recruitment and referral, marketing and recognition.

iii) Peel Website for Volunteer Opportunities and for Potential Volunteers

The value of a well-supported, interactive, easy-to-use database for agencies to post their volunteer opportunities and for potential volunteers, including students, to explore their options for volunteering was strongly recommended by most participants in the focus groups. The ability of agencies to learn of corporations looking for volunteer opportunities for groups or individuals and to post opportunities for groups of employees and for families were among the advantages discussed. It was recognized that the matching and referring functions could be performed via the website for the vast majority of citizens and that this could facilitate informing significantly more people than current practices. The website could also provide information about volunteering in general and contribute to a much-needed consistent marketing effort. The website could also be structured to provide on going information exchange among coordinators of volunteers. There were some who felt that there needed to be customer service support staff to complement the existence of the website to support users who were not computer literate or who were not sure what they wanted to do as a volunteer.

It was also recognized that agencies needed to be prepared to support the existence of such a website by keeping the posted information up to date, ensuring that the descriptions of opportunities were clear with full information and being responsive to calls and enquiries arising from the postings on the website.

iv) Marketing and Promotion of Volunteerism

All the coordinators of volunteer focus groups articulated the need for additional promotion of the value of volunteerism to the community, the need for volunteers, the availability of volunteer opportunities and the benefits of volunteering. This support was seen to be particularly useful for smaller organizations with limited budgets but could be helpful to all. This would also require providing information about the services being

provided to the community by agencies employing volunteers. A good marketing campaign would be continuous and multi-faceted and also be able to address the many different cultural groups within the community. It could also coordinate the collective efforts of the different agencies, maximizing the impact. The creation of a speakers bureau to talk about volunteerism, volunteer opportunities and volunteer programs could be a component of this strategy.

v) Provision of Information about Volunteer Management, Programs, Policies and Risk Management

The value of having a central resource for information about volunteer policies, best practices and risk management for agencies to draw upon as needed was also identified as an important additional support for agencies and coordinator of volunteers. This could be coupled with the provision of custom-made expert consultation. Such a central resource could also develop and provide information related to special volunteer programs such as family volunteering, inclusion of new immigrants and persons with disabilities, and employee volunteer programs.

vi) Advocacy Concerning Volunteerism and Volunteer Issues

The need for a voice for volunteers and volunteer programs to urge the provision of adequate resources to support them with agencies and with governments was identified. Advocacy in relation to issues that are barriers to effective volunteering was also seen to be useful.

vii) Working with the Corporate Sector regarding Employee Volunteerism

There is a brokerage role that is not being met in the area of corporate volunteerism. This involves providing information to both agencies and corporations about the mutual needs and expectations of each other. It involves matching needs and opportunities and providing businesses with information and advice about options for effective volunteer programs that meet the needs of agencies and their clients. It could also mean providing management services to support large employee volunteering days.

viii) Working with the Boards of Education and Schools to improve the Student Volunteer Program

There were a number of coordinators of volunteers who felt that much more could be done to support both agencies and schools in the use of student volunteers. The provision of a website with special attention to opportunities for youth was a component of this. Having a central or common voice for volunteer programs to discuss improvements in the 40-hour community service hour program with the school boards and the schools was seen to be an important need that is currently not being met.

ix) Other Opportunities for Special Programs

Coordinators of volunteers suggested that increased interest in family volunteering and the availability of new immigrants interested in or available to volunteer were among recent trends that warranted particular attention. Research on similar programs in other jurisdictions, and coordination of efforts in concert with local agencies so that new programs could be developed without duplication of effort was seen to be a valuable additional support that could be provided to service delivery organizations.

f) A Volunteer Centre for Peel

In light of the above additional supports that were identified within the focus group discussions, the idea of a central organization for volunteerism and volunteers was put forward in each of the focus groups. It was supported by a majority of participants, but it was not a universally supported concept. Some of the coordinator participants expressed mixed opinions about their use of the previous Volunteer Centre for Peel, ranging from very positive experiences to those who did not find it helpful in providing them with volunteer referrals. This was particularly true for the Caledon agencies, which created their own coalition called Volunteer Caledon bringing Caledon coordinators together and also hosts a website of volunteer opportunities in Caledon. This coalition could benefit from additional support as it has good potential to support the volunteer programs in Caledon.

A number of agencies participating in the focus groups reported that they have been receiving a regular number of inquiries from members of the general public about volunteer opportunities.

The creation of a Volunteer Centre for Peel was seen to be a realistic strategy to accomplish the provision of the additional supports list in Section “e” above in a coordinated and cohesive manner. This could provide significant emphasis upon volunteerism and volunteering in Peel. The value of having a central “highway” of information for volunteers, coordinators of volunteers and agency leaders, and of having a community voice and focal point for themes and issues related to volunteerism was articulated strongly within the focus groups.

The Focus Groups identified a number of **critical success factors** for a viable Volunteer Centre:

- Sustainable funding (from diverse sources);
- High visibility and ability to promote volunteerism and volunteering opportunities;
- Accessibility throughout the Region (using satellite or virtual locations);
- Technological competence to maintain and sustain an interactive and user-friendly website;
- Ability to be accountable and to demonstrate outcomes;
- Proactive involvement in the community so can be responsive to community needs and trends;
- Capable of nurturing effective partnerships with governments, corporations and agencies and organizations across sectors of human services, the arts and culture, recreation, sports and the environment;
- Culturally competent with effective linkages to the various ethnic, cultural and faith groups in Peel;
- Responsive to the needs of volunteers, and agencies employing volunteers in the community and be aware of socio-demographic trends;
- Supported by community and agency leadership and recognized as an important partner in the voluntary sector network.

g) Alternatives

A number of suggestions for the accomplishment of the additional supports were made.

- The volunteer website could be managed in concert with Pi-net as the CIOC information system has a special program for the posting of volunteer opportunities and for searches. This has been developed with the support of some Volunteer Centres across the province;
- The integration of information provision about volunteer opportunities within the context of the coming 211 call centre could be explored;
- The training and information resource provision roles could be attached to Sheridan College or UTM or to a community-based organization performing such roles for a particular sector such as CDRCP;
- The training for volunteers could be combined with other community training initiatives for agency staff and Board members;
- Some marketing for volunteerism could be conducted by Peel Health and/or the Communication and Economic Development Departments of the municipalities. High profile public education campaigns similar to Heart Health could be conducted to promote volunteerism to the community;
- Volunteer Caledon could be strengthened and provide a centre for volunteers in Caledon by being located in one of the community agencies and/or more closely affiliated with the Town of Caledon;
- PVAN's role as a support to volunteer administrators could be strengthened to provide information sharing, training and problem-solving forums for Coordinators of volunteers and managers.

h) The Role of Government

The focus groups were asked to identify the advantages and disadvantages of either the regional or municipal governments fulfilling the role of a volunteer centre. The **advantages** were seen to be:

- The compatibility with the need for governments to promote and support civic engagement in the community
- The resources available within the governments: communications, information technology, and other infra-structure
- The provision of volunteer services for municipal and regional programs
- The potential commitment of these governments to additional resources to support and promote volunteerism.

On the other hand the **disadvantages** were seen to be:

- The voluntary sector should be providing this service
- The bureaucratic nature of governments, perhaps less open to change
- Less responsive to changing demands and to partnerships
- Not consistent with community capacity building
- Could undermine the need for partnerships
- May compromise the advocacy role for volunteerism

Notwithstanding these points of view, there was substantial agreement in the focus groups of the coordinators of volunteers that governments at all levels should provide more support to volunteerism, agencies in which volunteers are active, and volunteers. This support could take the following forms:

- Funding to support the infra-structure of community organizations so that they could support and manage the work of volunteers in an effective and productive manner;
- Assistance in promoting and marketing the value of volunteers in the community on a regular basis;
- Recognition programs that include but are not restricted to the once-a-year community volunteer recognition events held by the municipalities;
- Support for and participation in the community partnerships that promote and support the contributions of volunteers and the voluntary sector;
- Policies that are supportive of volunteer participation in the community.

4. Analysis of the Input from Volunteer Suppliers and Businesses

The focus groups for this group of informants were made up of representatives of five different types of suppliers each with its own unique characteristics, dynamics and needs from the community in terms of support for volunteers. The suppliers were the school boards, Humber Community College, Ontario Works, Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services (which provides new immigrants with Enhanced Language Training and prepares them for the Canadian workplace) and several corporations, including Peel Police Service, which support volunteerism among their employees. This summary analysis will not discuss the unique features of each of the suppliers, but rather concentrate on themes and issues relevant to how the community can support their interest in volunteerism.

All but the school boards undertake some level of organized searching for volunteer or student placements. (There was some discussion about whether community college students are volunteers. The college encourages students to see themselves as professionals in training at their placements, but their work is unpaid and many of the students do in fact contribute extra hours at their placement as volunteers.) However, all of the suppliers do encourage or support their potential volunteers to find their own opportunity to volunteer with an agency. Ontario Works, ICNSS and the school boards also have to help their students or clients overcome barriers related to perceptions about limited abilities and capacities of their clients: lack of experience in the workplace, limited skills, and language facility.

a) Additional Supports for Volunteerism

All the participants in these discussions identified the need for a common source of information about volunteer opportunities both for individuals and for groups. It was recommended that this take the form of a website and database that could be easily accessed by students, employees and clients.

For the businesses and employers, it was important that the process for potential volunteers and volunteer groups be kept simple and straightforward. It was also important that agencies were well organized and able to make good use of the volunteers' time and expertise. Good communication among the parties involved in organizing and supporting the volunteer experiences was also important. One of the businesses was very keen to make its support relevant to community needs and to the interests of their employees and the priorities of the corporation. Sharing community needs studies or analysis of high risk areas that might lead to the identification of group interventions or support for a community or a particular high needs school by the corporation was a useful suggestion to promote informed dialogue between the corporation and the community.

The participants also identified the need for training of staff within organizations to support the volunteers. Training for supporting volunteers, diversity and cultural competency were seen as valuable. The communication among the staff of the organization using the volunteers and the volunteer or volunteers was deemed to be very important. In addition, all the volunteer suppliers outlined expectations that the agencies using volunteers be well organized and able to provide appropriate support to the volunteers according to the requirements of the assigned tasks.

Programs for family volunteering were also recommended. Opportunities for parents and teenagers to volunteer together were seen as valuable both for agencies and for students.

In the discussions about the student 40-hour program, it became clear that the onus was on the student to find a volunteer placement. Different schools provided different levels of support for the students' search. They also differed in the kind and amount of information they provide to students about expectations of volunteers and in their approach to the recognition of volunteer contributions by their students. The availability of a website providing information about volunteer opportunities for students and the associated expectations and the wide and frequent advertising of its existence were seen to be valuable. More marketing about the opportunities and the value of

volunteer contributions beyond the completion of the requirement for graduation within the schools and in the community were seen to be desirable. There would appear to be some unmined opportunities for agencies to tap into this source of volunteers, but there are limits on the ability of agencies to spend the time to do so because of other priorities. Perhaps support to agencies in developing further strategies to make good use of the resources of student volunteers could be helpful. More dialogue and information-sharing among schools and agencies were seen to be helpful where possible within available time and resources.

For some participants in these focus groups, the process and timelines for obtaining a police check was seen to be a barrier to volunteering. The desire for a more stream-lined and timely process was strongly expressed.

There was a sense among the participants in these focus groups that the existence of a central resource to provide these identified needs would be helpful. These responsibilities would include:

- Promotion of volunteerism in the community;
- Provision of information about volunteer opportunities;
- Management of a user friendly website and volunteer database;
- Support to agencies to strengthen their capacity to support volunteers and volunteer groups;
- Development of programs for special groups: students, new immigrants, employee groups;
- Addressing issues of common concern to volunteers or volunteer programs to find possible solutions or bring various partners together to do so.

Chapter 3: Summary of Contacts with Volunteer Centres in Other Jurisdictions and with Key Informants

1. Introduction:

Members of the advisory committee for this Review of Volunteerism and Donna Lockhart of The Rethink Group who, as a recognized expert in volunteerism and volunteer management, provided selected advisory support to this review and made recommendations about successful and vital organizations providing community supports to volunteers and volunteerism. Twelve different volunteer centres were selected for contact along with two municipal volunteer programs. Hour-long interviews were conducted with the Executive Director or Director of the volunteer programs in each of these centres and the information available on their respective websites was reviewed. The results of this research are presented in this summary, identifying the key themes and features of the organizations and their services.

The following organizations were contacted:

- The Centre for Community Leadership Niagara College
- City of Kitchener
- City of Ottawa
- Volunteer Action Centre of Kitchener-Waterloo and Area
- Volunteer Bureau of Leeds and Grenville
- Volunteer Calgary
- Volunteer Centre of Southeastern New Brunswick Inc.
- Volunteer Cranbrook, CMHA for the Kootenays
- Volunteer Guelph/Wellington
- Volunteer Halton, Community Development Halton
- Volunteer Hamilton
- Volunteer Ottawa
- Volunteer Toronto
- Volunteer Vancouver

In Appendix VI, the names of the Leaders who were interviewed are listed. The results of most of these interviews are presented individually in Appendix VII.

Throughout this summary, periodic reference will be made to themes and ideas raised in separate conversations with additional key informants recommended by the advisory committee and by Donna Lockhart of the Rethink Group. These key informants were interviewed with an open-ended approach seeking their advice about providing community supports to volunteering and volunteerism. The key informants are listed in Appendix VIII. Three of them are providing teaching and consulting services to the voluntary sector with particular emphasis on volunteering and volunteerism and all three have been Executive Directors of volunteer centres in the past. One key informant is the Executive Director of the newly formed Centre for Civic Inclusion in Hamilton. Another was the Manager of the Ontario Network of the Canada Volunteerism Initiative, which has been terminated by the federal government. The final key informant is the Director of Volunteer Resources at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute and involved in the provincial association of volunteer administrators.

The key informants urged that additional supports to volunteering and volunteerism be provided in all communities in order to strengthen the voluntary sector in our communities and to ensure that effective use of volunteer resources is undertaken and developed. The stated preference among the key informants is that this be done through a single-purpose volunteer centre.

2. Background:

Volunteer Canada has identified four core competencies or roles for Volunteer Centres:

1. “Promoting volunteerism and raising awareness of the power of service”;
2. “Building capacity for effective local volunteering through management consulting on volunteer programs and training of volunteers and managers of volunteer resources”;
3. Providing leadership and advocacy on issues relating to volunteerism and volunteer programs”;
4. “Connecting people with opportunities to serve through recruitment and referral of volunteers to community agencies”. Volunteer Canada website: www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/vol-centres

This summary will make reference to these core roles throughout the analysis.

3. Governance and Mandates

a) Municipal

As noted above, two of the programs contacted were departments within large municipal governments: Ottawa and Waterloo. In both of these cities, there is a very small “volunteer secretariat” that develops policies and provides leadership to volunteerism internally within their municipal corporations. Each has numerous volunteer programs throughout their various departments, such as recreation, health and social service. In Kitchener there is an active community development role for this secretariat in support of local neighbourhood groups, which vary from annual event providers to formal community-based organizations with local goals and mandates. The city staff provide support to these local groups as requested. Both cities provide broad marketing support to their volunteer programs and volunteerism within the community. They engage in active partnerships with their counterpart voluntary sector volunteer centres and other community agencies.

These programs will **not** be included in the following summary.

b) Sole-Purpose Organizations

Of the 12 volunteer centres included in this review, seven of them are single-purpose non-profit charitable organizations with a Board of Directors made up of volunteers. One of them is attached to a community college for over-all governance and fiduciary purposes and has an active community advisory committee made up of leaders from umbrella groups from various sectors of the community: social, health, agriculture, municipal, environment, culture and recreation. All leaders interviewed indicated that having strong, diverse and progressive Boards of Directors with solid and varied community connections was crucial to their success.

c) Volunteer Centres as Part of an Organization with a Broader Mandate

Each of the other four centres are part of organizations that have broader mandates. One of these centres, Guelph/Wellington, provides the community information service role for its community. It added this function to its mandate once its volunteer centre role had been firmly established. The Volunteer Centre of Eastern New Brunswick is a multi-service agency serving a range of vulnerable persons. It recruits, trains and supports volunteers for its own programs and for the community while also providing community development and capacity-building support to grass- roots organizations or groups in the voluntary sector.

Volunteer Halton and Volunteer Cranbrook are volunteer programs with their own identity in the community but are part of larger organizations with broader mandates: Community Development Halton (performing social planning roles) and Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) for the Kootenays (serving persons with mental health challenges) respectively. In the Halton situation, the two community roles complement each other. In the case of Volunteer Cranbrook it was established to strengthen the CMHA programs that required volunteer support: a crisis phone line and a shopping assistance program as well as a volunteer centre function for the community.

d) The Pros and Cons of Single-Purpose Mandate

The multi-service mandate works well for each of the four centres in this review, according to the contacted leader. The Centre for New Brunswick has been organized from the beginning to have diverse programs and sustainable funding sources. The flexibility within the organization allows for staff to support each other across programs and services when necessary. The provincial government is the primary source of funding, but the agency’s contract permits them to use savings in one program for other programs, thereby giving them an incentive to be efficient and well managed. The programs complement and reinforce each other, although they serve diverse populations: respite care for children with special needs, a shared attendant care program, family support services, a volunteer

drive program for health and social service appointments and a reintegration program for persons completing their criminal justice sentences and for persons with mental health challenges.

In Guelph/Wellington, the combined roles complement each other. The Information Centre and the Volunteer Centre use the same computer program framework of Community Information Online Consortium. The staff are cross-trained so that there is a one-stop service regardless of the need of the “customer”. The agencies enter core information for both purposes once. Administrative costs are minimized.

For both Volunteer Halton and Volunteer Cranbrook, there are advantages in being part of larger organization in terms of administrative costs and support from the other staff in the organization. Volunteer Halton has been able to influence and benefit from the work of the Social Planning role. For example, Community Development Halton undertook an in-depth and comprehensive labour study of the voluntary sector in Halton and one of the first preliminary reports published was an examination of volunteers and their contribution to voluntary sector agencies. However, both Directors of the volunteer programs talked of some limitations on the development of a broad identity for their service in the public eye. They also found it difficult or at least complicated to raise funds specifically for their service, as the broader agency’s needs had to be given priority.

A number of the key informants encouraged that a single-purpose agency be created to support volunteering and volunteerism in the community. Without an exclusive focus on the role, it was felt that there was a danger of volunteerism not getting sufficient priority. In the face of increasing pressures on the voluntary sector and the on going need to find effective ways of matching potential volunteer needs to agency requirements, this lack of sufficient emphasis was seen as a problem.

e) Additional Services

A number of the organizations with a single purpose have undertaken service delivery contracts that are related to the volunteer centre mandate in order to strengthen their funding base. Volunteer Hamilton has a \$100,000 contract with the City of Hamilton to provide volunteer resources to shovel snow for seniors and disabled homeowners. This Snow Angel program is a direct service using volunteers. Volunteer Hamilton is also involved in a collaborative community safety and community development program in which their service contribution is the support of small groups in a particular neighbourhood to organize themselves to support community improvements through volunteer efforts. The Volunteer Centre of New Brunswick has organized a large conference for a national association with a different mandate and the Volunteer Bureau of Leeds and Grenville has partnered with community organizations hosting provincial and national events as a way of increasing their profile and generating additional revenue and in-kind contributions. Volunteer Toronto has provided the ABC’s of Fraud program for a number of years.

4. Services and Programs

Most of the centres perform elements of each of the four core roles described in the background section above. The extent and nature of these services varied according to resources and community needs.

The Centre for Community Leadership of Niagara College does not provide any volunteer recruitment or matching service, as the Community Information Service provides information about volunteer opportunities in Niagara. The centre sees its focus on capacity building in the voluntary sector.

a) Training and Consultation Services

Training programs for coordinators of volunteers and for agencies establishing volunteer programs are common among most of the centres. They also organize special training programs for the community on subjects of interest related to volunteer management. Consultation services are provided to organizations in relation to risk management, volunteer policies and processes and volunteer management themes and issues. Some of these are part of the membership service or offered to strengthen new and emerging agencies while others are provided for a fee. The Volunteer Bureau of Leeds and Grenville has provided support to a small local municipality to develop its policies and procedures for its recreation programs that engage volunteers and is hoping to market this expertise to other local municipalities.

A number of centres (Vancouver, Toronto, and Calgary) have partnered with Altvest Board Match to provide training to both potential board members and to agencies as well as a matching service. Calgary and Vancouver also offer other training programs and services for Boards of Directors related to a variety of governance themes and issues. Guelph/Wellington and Ottawa have delivered special programs funded by the Trillium Foundation and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services respectively to strengthen the Board governance competencies of agencies

in the voluntary sector. Other centres have not provided supports to Boards of Directors, as this service is provided by another organization in the community.

Volunteer Vancouver no longer provides training to coordinators of volunteers or managers of volunteer programs. Its focus is on the senior leadership of organizations at the Board, Executive Director and Senior Management levels. The purpose of this change in focus is in recognition that the needs of the volunteers in the present and foreseeable future are different from those of the past and that if agencies are going to benefit from the contributions of these highly skilled volunteers, they are going to have to adjust their approach to the engagement of volunteers. Volunteer Vancouver is working with agencies to help them understand the current motivations of new volunteers and to plan to make use of their skills and talents differently. They are using staff and highly skilled volunteers to do this. Specific examples are outlined in the Go Volunteer Pro Bono section of their website (www.volunteervancouver.ca). Currently there are four newly retired senior volunteers with experience in organizational change and work process reviews who are assigned to agencies at the senior levels to evaluate how the agencies could engage a variety of highly skilled volunteers to contribute to the achievement of their operational goals.

Volunteer Calgary has developed a similar project and assigned a researcher to document the process, the outcomes and the potential learning from the experiences.

b) The Connecting Role (General Recruiting of Volunteers and Matching to Opportunities)

i) Website and Interactive Database Programs

All of the Centres with the exception of Cranbrook and Niagara are utilizing or upgrading to user-friendly, interactive and sophisticated websites and computer programs that allow member agencies to enter volunteer opportunities directly and enable detailed tracking of differing utilizations of the site. This information can be utilized to educate agencies about how to write their ads for various volunteer opportunities that will attract the interest of volunteers visiting their positions. For example, in Kitchener-Waterloo, a seniors program that advertised for a volunteer position requiring a year's commitment received no calls. But when they were informed of the socio-demographic characteristics of potential volunteers who had visited the opportunity on the site, they adjusted their expectations of the position and reduced the required commitment to three months. As a result, they received 13 enquiries and were able to fill the position with a number of volunteers, many of whom have stayed much longer than three months.

Quality assurance, outcome measurement and accountability are being enhanced by the new website and program frameworks. Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary and Kitchener-Waterloo have each developed their own matching programs and report very positive results. Several centres such as Guelph/Wellington, Halton and Hamilton are making use of the Ontario Community Information Services CIOC program, which has an improving volunteer matching component. The costs cited for development of these programs range from \$22,000 to \$60,000 and included significant consultation with users to ensure the various constituents' needs were being met. In addition Volunteer Energy and other organizations have developed effective volunteer interactive matching programs that have been successfully introduced in different communities.

It is important to note that these programs and sites need to have staff with expertise to manage and monitor them and ensure that agencies are effectively and appropriately making use of the resource. Agencies using the sites need to be committed to keeping their section of the site up to date and to responding to the contacts and enquiries arising from the posted volunteer opportunities. The presence of these sites needs to be well-marketed in the community so that agencies across the voluntary sector, potential volunteers and corporations interested in supporting employees volunteering are aware of what they can offer them in terms of information about community need and volunteer opportunities.

ii) Individual Interviewing and Matching

For the most part, these up-to-date websites and interactive matching programs can replace face-to-face general volunteer recruitment, referral and matching processes that historically have required considerable staff, volunteer time and commitment. According to one key informant, only 5% of active volunteers come through the volunteer centre process. It is noteworthy that in our small survey of volunteers, there were only four of 41 volunteers who found their volunteer position as a result of contact with the Volunteer Centre of Peel. In Hamilton, with the introduction of a new matching database and website in the spring, they are also going to introduce computers into a number of local libraries where people will be invited to

“Point, Click and Volunteer”. This will provide broad access to the new computer program and Volunteer Hamilton website from various locations in the community that are easily accessible.

Having said this, there are a number of centres that are maintaining this service by engaging volunteers to be referring advisors to interview and support persons with disabilities, new immigrants and others with special needs who require support to find volunteer opportunities. Both Kitchener-Waterloo and Guelph Wellington have new downtown locations that are suitable and accessible for drop-in clients. The amount of emphasis placed upon the provision of this service on an individual, personal basis will probably lessen as the technology continues to improve and be more accessible to more people. For example, Volunteer Ottawa is reviewing the effectiveness of this component of its service.

iii) Special Target or Niche Volunteer Groups

Currently the proactive connecting role performed by volunteer centres appears to be more focused on what Volunteer Calgary calls niche populations for volunteering. As a result of a recent study of volunteering in Calgary, Volunteer Calgary has identified 13 niche markets for potential volunteers. They are developing specific strategies to appeal the motivations and interests of each group. These groups include families, aboriginals, highly skilled new retirees, new immigrants, employer-supported volunteers, youth and persons with special needs and disabilities. Other centres have undertaken similar approaches with specific target groups by developing special programs or using particular strategies often in partnership with other community agencies: Halton (persons with developmental disabilities), Ottawa (new immigrants and persons with developmental disabilities), New Brunswick (vulnerable and marginalized persons), Vancouver (highly skilled volunteers from the “boomer” generation and from Generation X).

Within Ontario, different Centres have adopted different approaches to high school students who are required to complete 40 hours of community service beyond making them aware of their website and identifying special youth volunteering opportunities. In Leeds and Grenville, the Volunteer Bureau conducts volunteer job fairs throughout the secondary schools within their jurisdiction while Waterloo is much more selective about their outreach to secondary school students, prioritizing other areas that have greater results for their member agencies. Ontario also requires persons receiving social assistance to participate in volunteer activity. Volunteer Toronto works closely with the City of Toronto in support of this program while other programs are more passive.

Volunteer Calgary is also adopting a planned aggressive approach to specific religious and cultural communities to encourage members of their communities to reach out to the broader community and respond to needs beyond their immediate circle. This approach involves meeting with community leaders to understand the interests of these specific communities and to apprise them of opportunities for the members of their community to contribute to the general well-being of the city. Volunteer Calgary matches ethnic or religious communities with appropriate agencies according to the agreed-upon preferences. The community leaders then negotiate with the community agency and recruit for the agency or cause chosen. This strategy is now being pursued in a planned and proactive manner.

iv) Employer-Supported Volunteering

Finally, in the area of connecting, it seems to have been recognized for some time that the business community and various corporations are interested in supporting volunteer activities by their employees, either as individuals or in groups. More and more employers are interested in promoting team volunteer activities among their employees and/or providing incentives such as paid days leave to volunteer or a contribution to a charity for which an employee has volunteered a set number of hours in a year. Volunteer Calgary appears to be most advanced and sophisticated in its approach to corporate volunteering. It is marketing and delivering revenue-generating programs to corporations to: 1) help them establish employer-supported volunteer programs and volunteer friendly policies and: 2) manage employee group volunteer events at various community agencies.

A number of the volunteer centres have identified the desire to become more active in this area of volunteerism but have not yet been able to free their resources to do so in a concerted or proactive fashion. Some have initiatives underway to make connections with their local businesses and corporations to help them engage and support civic contributions by their employees. There is also the need and opportunity to help agencies understand the needs of corporations and businesses and to look for new ways of engaging volunteers that fit these expectations and requirements. This may mean redefining roles for volunteers and

looking at different ways of addressing particular challenges within a community-based organization. Volunteer Toronto is developing a calendar in which corporations can post their interest in holding employee volunteer team events and/or agencies can post their interest in having groups of volunteers for particular periods of time. Volunteer Canada has published a paper on employer-supported volunteering called “Volunteer Connections: The benefits and challenges of employer-supported volunteerism” and there are considerable resources available at the Volunteer Canada website on this topic: www.volunteer.ca.

v) Promoting and Marketing

All of the Volunteer Centres in this review undertake various strategies to market volunteerism, volunteering and volunteer opportunities. Most of them have an on going relationship with local newspapers and other media outlets to provide the public with regular information about specific volunteer opportunities on a weekly basis. Most of the volunteer centres have staff and volunteers who speak about volunteering at service clubs, faith groups, local community meetings and forums. Effective websites also attract considerable attention to the volunteer centre and the services and opportunities it offers. As agencies have moved to new programs and sites, they report significant increases in visits and hits to their sites. There would appear to be considerable marketing value in having a website for volunteers within a defined community or jurisdiction.

All the volunteer centres have special approaches to National Volunteer Week, which may include sponsoring volunteer recognition awards in the name of a prominent citizen, hosting a recognition dinner or reception for volunteers or conducting special training activities for volunteers. These events are often sponsored by corporations or done in partnership with municipalities or other community agencies.

Volunteer Vancouver is planning a different approach this year. Instead of holding a special recognition event, it is planning distinctive marketing program using a variety of media over a defined period of time to espouse the value of volunteerism and in particular focus on the roles of highly skilled volunteers. The projected cost is \$100,000 and they expect to secure the funding for this from various corporate sponsors. They also plan to evaluate the impact of the campaign with the help of a volunteer from Ipsos ASI.

vi) Information Resources regarding Volunteering and the Voluntary Sector

A number of centres have developed considerable resource libraries in partnership with Imagine Canada and others to provide members with access to an extensive range of resource material. These are related to volunteerism, volunteering, volunteer management, risk management, board development and governance and other topics of interest and concern to the voluntary sector. Access to the hard-copy and online material is often offered as a benefit to member agencies.

vii) Community Involvement and Partnerships

Many of the leaders interviewed during this review emphasized the importance of the volunteer centre having a contributing presence at community tables where inter-agency and cross-sectoral planning and initiatives are undertaken. Developing close working relationships with local United Ways and umbrella agencies in various sectors allows for effective use of resources without duplication. Being part of partnerships tackling various community issues such as poverty or emergency response planning enables volunteer centres to make positive contributions to community well-being and problem resolution. It also raises the profile of the centre and the contributions its volunteers and services can make as well as the contributions of volunteers of other agencies.

Understanding the needs of community-based agencies both large and small and staying in touch with their challenges and concerns can enable the Volunteer Centre to be responsive and take advantage of opportunities to expand its services and networks.

viii) Research and Understanding Volunteer Needs and Desires

With the recent program reductions at Volunteer Canada and the loss of the work being sponsored through the Canada Volunteer Initiatives, there will be a greater onus upon local volunteer centres to develop strategies to understand the trends of volunteering within their communities. The centres have been able to draw upon the Imagine Canada and Volunteer Canada studies of giving and volunteering to increase their understanding of socio-demographic trends underlying interest in volunteerism. But more will have to be done locally as changing demographics in large urban and surrounding areas where the population growth

is occurring will create both challenges and opportunities for the voluntary sector. It is a legitimate role for volunteer centres to promote local understanding of the needs and desires of people who could be volunteers.

Volunteer Calgary undertook an extensive study of volunteering in Calgary with the help of Ipsos Reid in 2005. They found that 70% of the population was involved in some form of volunteering at least 14 hours per month. The findings of this study have informed their existing programs, their agency consultation and their new proactive emphasis on their connecting role, focusing on niche markets of volunteers and on a broad approach to religious and cultural communities. The labour market study of the voluntary sector in Halton has provided that community with a good understanding of the profile of those who are volunteering in that community. This is an area of responsibility of the Volunteer Centres that will become more important as historical strategies of engaging volunteers and utilizing their services become less effective for voluntary agencies.

The process will be greatly assisted by the data available from the new interactive websites, which will provide the volunteer centre with information about those interested in volunteering and what their limitations and expectations are. The challenge will be to focus on collecting the right kind of information and understanding what it means for individual agencies and for the community. This will require dedicated resourcing and expertise to be done well.

5. The Changing Needs and Interests of Volunteers

The key informants along with several of the leaders interviewed stressed the importance of understanding the changing desires, needs and expectations of persons interested in volunteering today compared to 10 or 15 years ago. As the baby boomers age and move into a retirement life style, their interests in volunteering are different from some traditional volunteers. Youth, new immigrants, settled new Canadians and members of Generation X all have different interests and motivations to volunteer. Many are highly skilled and want to use their particular expertise to make a difference. They are specific about their expectations of the agency engaging their volunteer effort. They tend to be more episodic in terms of their involvement and less willing to make long-term commitments. Youth and new immigrants are interested in experiences that will enhance their employability and other new immigrants are interested in contributing their skills and talents while awaiting formal Canadian accreditation. More families are looking for opportunities to volunteer together. These are just some of the changes in volunteering that were noted during the review.

Volunteer centres can lead community agencies in understanding the implications of these changes and in developing strategies to respond to them in ways which will engage more people in volunteering on their terms but are supportive of meeting community needs. The larger volunteer centres such as Calgary, Toronto and Vancouver are in the forefront of these efforts but it is a role that all volunteer centres must play in order to keep themselves relevant.

Memberships

Almost all of the volunteer centres offer memberships to individuals and agencies in the community. The agency membership requires the payment of a fee and the agreement to make use of the VC website and database according to specific terms and conditions. The volunteer centres also have expectations of member agencies in relation to their organizational approach to volunteers, including such things as appropriate insurance coverage. In turn, the volunteer centres offer a range of benefits that include the ability to post volunteer opportunities on the website and interactive database, the opportunity to have their positions marketed by the volunteer centre in various media, access to the resource material compiled by the VC, cut-rates on training and consultation programs and services, newsletters, and recognition opportunities. The costs range from \$35 to as much as \$250. Most centres have different membership fees for agencies with different sizes of budgets and most seem willing to make special exceptions for small volunteer-driven organizations that have limited funds. Vancouver has 500 members and Guelph/Wellington 90 members. Most Volunteer Centres offer memberships across the full spectrum of the voluntary sector, including culture, sports, social, health, recreational and environmental groups.

6. Size and Staffing

Of the 12 volunteer centres that were part of this review, the largest is Volunteer Calgary with 22 staff. Volunteer Vancouver has reduced its staff from 12 to eight over the past three years by changing roles and responsibilities and incorporating more senior, highly skilled volunteers into the core of their operations. This has enabled Volunteer Vancouver to increase the salaries of the staff. Most of the Volunteer Centres have small staff complements of one and a half to five staff and added more staff for particular projects and programs which are often time-limited. Staff roles

include training, communication and marketing, funddevelopment, consulting regarding volunteer management themes and issues, research and website management.

It should be noted that Volunteer Centre for Eastern New Brunswick has a much larger staff (40 to 50) and budget (\$2.7-million) because of the programs it delivers beyond its volunteer centre mandate.

7. Funding and Funding Sources

With the exception of the New Brunswick Centre, all the other volunteer centres were dependent upon voluntary sector sources of funding for the large proportion of their funding. The budgets range from \$1.6 million in Volunteer Calgary to \$136,000 in Leeds-Grenville to about \$100,000 in Volunteer Halton. (The budget of Volunteer Cranbrook with one person within a larger agency was not specified for this review.)

United Way Funding

Ten of the 12 centres received funding from United Way in their area. This funding ranged from \$1000 in Cranbrook and \$22,000 in Leeds-Grenville (16% of the budget) to \$225,000 in Toronto (28%) and \$360,000 in Calgary (20%). Volunteer Ottawa receives \$240,000 from the United Way and this will make up approximately 40% of the core budget when a major current contract for a special program ends in 2007. Volunteer Hamilton receives \$110,000 of a \$400,000 (approx. budget) and the Kitchener-Waterloo VAC receives \$64,000 of a \$200,000 budget from United Way.

a) Fundraising and Earned Revenue

All of the centres raised funds through fundraising strategies and events, obtaining donations from corporations. Many centres generated earned revenue through their training and consulting services with Vancouver and Calgary raising in the neighbourhood of \$350,000 from this practice.

b) Project Funding from Foundations

Many centres also obtained funding for specific projects from various local, provincial and national foundations. Many of these are for time-limited periods such as two or three years. They provide, the Centres with new opportunities but create challenges in terms of obtaining on going sustainable funding. With its size, Volunteer Calgary has adopted a position that it will not accept funding grants for less than two years and it attempts to stagger the start and conclusion of projects to allow for a more stable funding base. Other organizations have adopted the strategy described above in Section 3c of this chapter on pages 21 and 22, whereby they provide programs that are complementary to their mandate and generate funding for their core administrative requirements.

8. Municipal or Regional Government Funding

Municipal or regional governments make contributions to Volunteer Hamilton (\$16,000 from the city), Volunteer Action Centre of Kitchener-Waterloo and Area (\$23,000 from the Region, \$15,000 from the City of Kitchener and \$7,000 from the City of Waterloo), Volunteer Vancouver (\$24,000) and Volunteer Toronto (\$167,000). Community Development Halton receives a grant from the Region of Halton for its volunteer centre and social planning roles. Niagara, Ottawa and Guelph-Wellington do not receive funding from their municipal or regional governments.

On the other hand, the City of Ottawa does provide considerable funding support to community agencies in the voluntary sector. In 2006, this grant program included contributions of \$20-million per year to these agencies for various programs and services.

In Vancouver, there is an amenity program that the City of Vancouver has initiated in which developers who wish to have zoning density and height restrictions lifted for new projects are asked to contribute rent-free space in prime locations to community non-profit organizations as part of their development agreement with the city. Volunteer Vancouver will have a design-built space in downtown Vancouver for which they will not have to pay rent for 20 years. VV has a plan to position itself to be able to pay the going rent and other operating costs at that time as a result of a trust fund built with the money that would have gone for rent in a previous budget and with rental revenue from renting some of the new space.

9. Provincial Government Funding

Funding for the services of Volunteer Centres is not provided by any provincial government outside New Brunswick, with two exceptions. Volunteer Ottawa is completing a contract with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to deliver a specific Board Development program to its transfer payment agencies. Volunteer Toronto has a substantial contract from the Ministry of Health and Long, Term Care for a preventive program supporting volunteer contributions by seniors. But this is the only example of such funding within the limits of this review.

10. General Considerations re Funding

Volunteer Vancouver and Volunteer Calgary have very large budgets and appear to have established relatively stable funding bases. Much of this has been accomplished on the basis of an entrepreneurial spirit and a proactive connection to the corporate world. Volunteer Calgary has been particularly strategic in identifying services, markets and products in order to generate funding support for new initiatives and programs. It has adopted a systematic approach to ensuring a diverse funding base that has enabled them to establish a credible reputation as an organization that delivers on its commitments and achieves results while learning from its mistakes. Volunteer Calgary has also been very assertive and positive about the role it plays in the community, proudly and clearly identifying its key roles and the benefits that it provides the community.

Most of the volunteer centres in Ontario reported various degrees of uncertainty about their funding and about their ability to find sustainable funding. This is a common issue among them. The leaders interviewed saw this as both a concern and an opportunity. They identified areas where they would like to expand their services but acknowledged that priority setting was important as time and energy had to be devoted to raising the necessary funds. All indicated the value of diverse sources of funding and of building positive partnerships in the community to generate at least some of these funds. The leaders acknowledged that their challenges in this regard were similar to those of other agencies in the voluntary sector. The lack of organizational infrastructure to support expansion of services and to undertake fundraising efforts are common to many agencies. The lack of a core source of funding to provide organizational stability for many volunteer centres compounds these challenges. It is clear that future leaders of volunteer centres not only need to have an understanding of volunteerism, volunteer management and volunteering, but they will also have to possess entrepreneurial, marketing and communication skills that allow them to be comfortable in a variety of sectors of society, especially the business community. Boards of Directors can be of assistance in this regard as well.

11. Conclusion

From this review, it seems clear that volunteer centres can provide a value-added set of services to a community. With creative and entrepreneurial leadership that understands volunteerism and the voluntary sector, volunteer centres can be viable and enhance the capacity of communities to engage all members of the community in civic and voluntary activity. Further support to people interested in volunteering, recognition of their needs and expectations and the development of strategies to connect these volunteers to meet important community needs remain important roles that a volunteer centre can provide. This review suggests that there are significant opportunities that can be pursued in this regard.

Volunteer centres that provide positive results for their members and participate actively in strengthening the voluntary sector's contributions to a healthy community can be sustained. The 12 centres that were included in this review offer tangible evidence that additional organized supports to volunteers and volunteerism in a community is an asset that is worth nurturing and making it a part of the network of services offered within a thriving community.

Chapter 4: Discussion of the Results of Consultations held from March 19 to March 22, 2007

1. Overview of Consultations:

All persons who participated in the focus groups for this review were invited to participate in a consultation to discuss a proposal to provide additional supports to volunteerism, volunteers and volunteer programs. This proposal was based upon the results of the findings from the focus groups and from the interviews with other jurisdictions and key informants and discussions with the advisory committee. In addition, the Executive Directors and senior managers of the organizations who participated in the review were invited to participate in one of two consultations organized for them.

In total, 58 persons participated in six consultations. They came from 48 different organizations including one each from the environmental and cultural sectors, six from community funding organizations and the remainder from both the health and social service sectors. Large and small organizations with large and small volunteer programs were well represented. Four Volunteers participated in the consultations along with 34 coordinators and managers of volunteers. Thirty Executive Directors or senior managers participated in the consultations.

The agenda for the consultation is presented in Appendix XIII. Presentations about the vision for Volunteer Peel, Key Success Factors and the Steps to Create Volunteer Peel were made during each of the consultations. These presentations are included in Appendices X, XI and XII respectively. They reflect a coherent set of proposals for a single organization because of the feedback from the research and the focus groups as well as the advice of the advisory committee. The participants in the consultations were asked to provide their comments on the proposals presented by identifying areas of concern, disagreement, clarification and additional ideas to strengthen the proposals.

2. General Feedback:

In general the discussions at each of the consultations were very positive about the ideas being presented. Questions of clarification about the proposed database and website and its possible contents were the subject of considerable discussion. A question was asked about whether the proposals presented would successfully overcome the issues faced by the Volunteer Centre for Peel at the time its services were suspended. While this review was not an evaluation of VCP and the reasons for its suspended services were a result of unique circumstances, the proposals being presented would overcome the challenges faced by the Volunteer Centre for Peel over the recent past prior to the crisis that resulted in its closure.

There was considerable support for the vision. It was suggested that recognition and attention to retention be included in the vision. It was also suggested that Volunteer Peel could have a role to play in responding to public emergencies and as well as in executing plans for pandemic diseases. Supportive discussions in the consultations encouraged a healthy focus on community partnerships, accountability and multi-lateral communication to ensure that the services of Volunteer Peel did not create duplicative or competitive situations.

In the key elements discussion, the addition of marketing competence, excellent fundraising capability and a strong and responsible membership base were suggested. The other key elements presented were supported and reinforced in the discussions.

The discussions of the Steps to Create Volunteer Peel provided very helpful feedback, reinforcing the recognition that these steps were not sequential but interactive with components of one step being carried on over a period of time and overlapping with others. Again suggestions about partnerships and creating supportive alliances were made. Ideas about the creation of a youth and seniors advisory committees were presented and linkages with provincial volunteer initiatives and groups were suggested.

It was recommended that considerable emphasis be placed upon the development of a diverse funding base and that the leadership of Volunteer Peel needed to have expertise in fund development. Most of the steps presented were seen to be logical. Interpreted broadly and interactively they were supported by the participants.

Finally, it would be important to note that the use of the name Volunteer Peel is for discussion purposes only. There will need to be a discussion about the name for this new organization among the members of the steering committee. In one focus group, the idea of having three names was suggested. Volunteer Brampton, Volunteer Mississauga and Volunteer Caledon might be more appealing to potential volunteers who more readily identify with their local municipalities. In

addition, another participant reported that there is a youth group that has organized itself as Volunteer Peel to provide support and information to other youth who have to complete their community service obligations of 40 hours before they graduate. Furthermore, it was suggested that whatever the name, the creators of the new organization would have to examine the implications of creating a new agency with much the same focus of a previous organization that is no longer operating.

Because of the general overall support for the directions presented in the consultations, the next sections of this report will incorporate the feedback and ideas from the consultations into the discussions of the vision of Volunteer Peel, the key elements for success and the steps to create Volunteer Peel without specifically identifying where the idea came from. These sections will present the recommended directions to be pursued as a result of this review.

Chapter 5: Vision for Volunteer Peel

1. Introduction:

The vision for Volunteer Peel has been developed based upon the suggestions and ideas presented during the 13 focus groups held for this review and described earlier in this report (See Chapter 2 and Appendices II, III, IV, and V). Additional elements have been included or enhanced as a result of the interviews with leaders of other jurisdictions and key informants (See Chapter 3 and Appendices VI, VII and VIII). With further advice from the advisory committee, a vision for Volunteer Peel was developed and presented to a series of Consultations with representatives of a broad range of agencies from the voluntary sectors and other organizations. This vision developed for discussion purposes is presented in Appendix X and the results of the consultations are discussed in general in Chapter 4 and presented in detail in Appendix XIV.

The following vision is the result of these processes and incorporates the feedback provided in the consultations. There was agreement among the participants in the consultations that this vision should form the basis of further work on the development of centralized community supports for volunteerism, volunteering, volunteers and volunteer programs.

As was noted in the consultation chapter, the name Volunteer Peel is being used for discussion purposes. A final and formal decision on the name of the organization providing the necessary centralized supports can be undertaken as part of the implementation plan.

Volunteer Peel will make this vision a reality for the entire Region of Peel. It will be very in tune with the special and different dynamics of each of the constituent municipalities and the local neighbourhoods within them. It will be a non-profit, charitable organization with a volunteer Board of Directors and a diverse and sustainable funding base. All agencies and organizations throughout the community and across sectors such as recreation, sports, social, environment, health and culture and others will be invited to be members who participate in the programs of Volunteer Peel and benefit from its services and the roles it performs. There will be a very modest membership fee for these agencies. The vision assumes Volunteer Peel will be a competent organization well able to justify the expense of the membership fee by the value of its services.

In general terms, the vision includes key roles of:

- Promoting;
- Connecting;
- Strengthening Capacity;
- Developing Partnerships.

These roles are consistent with the core competencies for volunteer centres identified by Volunteer Canada. There is more emphasis in the Peel Vision on partnership, but it does incorporate the Volunteer Canada role of leadership and advocacy. While the components of the vision are presented according to these four key roles for ease of organization of the material, the assignment of components of the vision to one key role in the following discussion does not mean it does not have a contribution to other roles.

2. Promoting:

a) High Visibility for Volunteerism and Volunteers throughout the Community

Volunteer Peel will develop a marketing and communications program that will keep the concepts of volunteerism and volunteering in the public eye and engrain it in the culture of all communities throughout Peel. A variety of mechanisms will be employed within the context of a plan that will be multi-faceted. The program will be year around and make use of the media, outreach, events, and advertisements. It will make good use of partnerships with the region, municipalities, community agencies and corporations. A high visibility marketing strategy will also provide information about volunteer opportunities, the accomplishments and contributions of volunteers, and the benefits of volunteering.

Marketing and communications must be part of the planning for all aspects of the work of Volunteer Peel.

b) Recognition

Recognition of volunteer contributions both on an individual basis and on a community level will be an important element of the support provided by Volunteer Peel. This will complement what individual agencies do and could include the provision of recognition materials, ideas about strategies and/or the creation of community-wide

volunteer awards. Although recognition events are often a valuable component of promotion strategies, it is important that they be placed within the context of the overall plan to draw attention to volunteers and volunteerism rather than be the primary vehicle of promotion.

c) A High Profile Website and User-Friendly DataBase

To support the promotional role and to contribute significantly to the connecting and partnership roles, Volunteer Peel must develop a well-supported, interactive, user-friendly and up-to-date website and database that will become an online focal point for persons looking for volunteer opportunities in Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon and for organizations providing these opportunities. It is envisioned that the website will provide information about and connections to volunteering in all parts of the community: environmental, cultural, health, social, and recreational within local neighbourhoods and communities or on a city-wide or region-wide basis.

The website will have links to its member agencies and other key community sites and will provide an emphasis upon the promotion of volunteerism and current community activities that support volunteers and volunteerism. It can also provide access to resources for volunteer managers and coordinators of volunteers and promote collegial exchange among these professionals. Furthermore, the site can provide support to community strategies being pursued to improve the quality of life and to strengthen the voluntary sector.

3. Connecting

a) Interactive Database:

The website of Volunteer Peel will include an interactive database that will provide information about volunteer opportunities posted by the agencies directly. A number of other volunteer centres have developed their own programs and others are using the volunteer matching component of the CIOC database that is used by Community Information organizations in the province (Hamilton, Halton, Guelph-Wellington). Volunteer Energy, which had begun to do some work for the Volunteer Centre of Peel before it suspended operations, also has a database that has sophisticated and user-friendly features. Volunteer Peel will create its own website and incorporate one of these programs that best serve its purposes based upon a local consultative process.

The vision is that this database will provide the core of the individual matching strategy employed by Volunteer Peel. Individual interviewing of potential volunteers will not be a major activity of Volunteer Peel unless it is in the context of a specialized or targeted connecting strategy described below. There is an expectation that the database will provide information to Volunteer Peel and the posting agency about those who visit ads for a volunteer position and about those interested in volunteering within the community in general. Some of this will be based upon the use of a simple set of demographic and non-identifying questions that potential volunteers will be invited to complete. This will assist the understanding of trends in volunteering and in providing accountability to the members and the community about the connecting role of Volunteer Peel.

A significant component of a heavily used and successful interactive database is the role of the member agency which posts volunteer opportunities on the Volunteer Peel website. It requires that these agencies ensure that the information on the website and database is kept up to date and changes are made on a just-in-time basis. It also means that these agencies respond to enquiries resulting from the posting of volunteer opportunities on a timely and professional basis. The way in which one agency responds to contacts from potential volunteers has an impact upon the credibility of Volunteer Peel and other agencies in the voluntary sector. Consideration about how to promote cooperative compliance with these kinds of expectations and mutual accountability will become part of the dialogue between Volunteer Peel and member agencies.

b) Proactive Connecting with Targeted Groups of Potential Volunteers

There are many proactive strategies to reach out to potential volunteers that can be adopted based upon an understanding of the differing interests and motivations that different socio-economic groups may have in volunteering. Among others, youth, new immigrants, new retirees, highly skilled seniors, young entrepreneurs, families and persons with special needs or special experiences all have an interest in volunteering. But their motivations to volunteer, their expectations of the volunteer experience and the benefits they seek to derive are different and require particular or targeted recruitment strategies or approaches.

Volunteer Peel will understand the needs of potential volunteers and develop strategic, proactive and targeted approaches to attract members of these groups to volunteer, according to the needs identified by member organizations. This will include dialogue with the agencies and the provision of support to agencies to help them understand the needs and strengths of potential volunteer groups and to develop programs or volunteer job

descriptions that can both fulfill the needs of the agency and meet the expectations of the volunteers within each group.

This connecting strategy will also involve developing supportive partnerships to strengthen the proactive connecting with particular groups. For example, if it is determined that a special outreach to youth is to be undertaken, then effective linkages with the boards of education will be developed; or if there is interest in engaging new immigrants, then linkages with settlement and ESL services will be developed. Support for volunteers with special needs will also require special partnerships.

Of further note, there are specialized areas where volunteer activity is required as a part of a program, such as youth justice community service orders and Ontario Works. Over time, Volunteer Peel will examine how and in what manner it provides support to these volunteers and the participants and deliverers of these programs.

This connecting activity may also involve planned and sustained connections with various faith groups, service clubs, neighbourhoods and cultural groups with potential to undertake group volunteer assignments or to be an on going source of potential volunteers for individual assignments or special projects of particular interest to the community group.

c) Retention

Through its research and awareness of volunteer needs and knowledge of best practice in the management of volunteer programs, Volunteer Peel will provide support to organizations in retaining volunteers. It will also promote cooperative approaches among organizations to provide experienced volunteers with information about new volunteer opportunities to keep volunteers within the voluntary service sector. There were a number of participants in the focus groups who felt this ability to offer volunteers different experiences would help deal with volunteer burn-out and provide them with an opportunity to refresh their commitment and interest in supporting the community and making it a better place.

d) Active Linkages with Businesses and Corporations

Volunteer Peel will develop an expertise in promoting employer supported volunteerism and provide leadership in the community to take advantage of the increasing interest of corporations in group volunteering and in supporting individual volunteer activity. This connecting role involves working with individual corporations to develop policies and programs that will encourage volunteerism in ways that are supportive of the voluntary sector. It will also involve working with agencies and communities to help them make the best use of this resource.

4. Strengthen the Capacity of Community Agencies in the Voluntary Sector

a) Training Services

Volunteer Peel will develop a range of training programs for coordinators of volunteers, managers of volunteers and senior managers of organizations supporting volunteers. Some of these training programs will be offered on a regular basis and others opportunities will be provided on an as-needed basis. It is recognized that there is considerable staff turnover in some coordinator positions or that many of these positions have additional responsibilities attached to them. Both of these realities make it important that basic training for volunteer managers be made available on a regular basis. In cooperation with the Peel Volunteer Administrators Network, further professional development opportunities need to be made available to those coordinators who have been in their position for a lengthy period of time. Training of senior managers and leaders in relation to volunteer trends, risk management themes and new approaches to capturing the expertise and contributions of volunteers from different groups will also be an important component of the training offered by Volunteer Peel.

Discussions with Leadership Peel, the Peel Mentoring Network, the Peel Learning Institute and United Way will be held to determine what, if any role, Volunteer Peel will provide in providing training for Boards of Directors and/or volunteers interested in performing this governing role.

The training services provided by Volunteer Peel will be sold to generate revenue for Volunteer Peel. Members of Volunteer Peel will be offered a cut rate and training for staff or volunteers from small grass roots organizations with very limited budgets will be negotiated in a mutually acceptable fashion.

b) Consultations

Volunteer Peel will offer a range of consulting services to agencies throughout the voluntary sector to support their development and maintenance of quality volunteer programs and to provide advice about risk management and

policy-related matters concerning volunteers and volunteer programs. Volunteer Peel will also offer consultation to corporations or faith groups to help them develop strategies and policies to encourage volunteering and community involvement. These services can also be revenue-generating, provided they are delivered with professional competence and meet the expectations of those being served.

c) Research of Volunteer Trends

As part of its role to support the capacity of community agencies and their ability to support volunteers and effectively engage them, Volunteer Peel will ensure it is aware of trends in volunteering within the community. Using the information that can be obtained from the database, engaging in particular research and working in partnership with other organizations who track community trends and dynamics, Volunteer Peel will provide the community with information that will help promote an understanding of what people are expecting in volunteer roles and what the needs various groups interested in volunteering are.

d) Outcome Measurement, Quality and Accountability Strategies

Volunteer Peel will develop sound internal accountability mechanisms and engage in a quality improvement process that will include identifying and tracking key community outcomes that result from its services and supports to the community. Volunteer Peel will develop partnerships with its funders and with others in the community to enable it to understand and demonstrate the value of its services and supports to the community. It will also develop and share expertise in this area of management as is helpful to its members. This should include an understanding of the concepts of social accounting to enable Volunteer Peel and its members to articulate the economic value of volunteer contributions as a part of its presentation of the value of volunteerism and volunteering. At the same time it will not underestimate or ignore the moral, ethical and priceless value inherent in people giving of their time, energy and talents to contribute to the collective good.

e) Capacity Building Support to Organizations in the Voluntary Sector

Volunteer Peel will offer support to small organizations within the voluntary sector to support their ability to engage volunteers, to organize and to structure volunteer activity and programs. This may take the form of support to fledgling-cause-specific, local or neighbourhood based organizations that are emerging to improve the community. The support for small and/or new volunteer-driven agencies and volunteer-related activities and policies within these organizations will clearly fit within the mandate of Volunteer Peel.

Other capacity-building activities, including advocacy or research related to themes and issues affecting the viability and health of the voluntary sector, may be undertaken and pursued in partnership with other organizations in the community. Within the focus groups the issue of sufficient resources for community agencies to fulfill their mandate and support their volunteers was raised. It was suggested that Volunteer Peel could have a role to provide support to community processes to address this issue and others of a related nature. Volunteer Peel will engage in such activity on a collaborative basis.

5. Partnerships

a) With Volunteer Caledon

Volunteer Peel will engage in an active and on going partnership with Volunteer Caledon which has developed an effective local group that is supportive to the Caledon-based agencies and their volunteer programs. Volunteer Peel will adopt a supportive and inclusive approach that will identify areas where it can strengthen the work of Volunteer Caledon and possibly enhance its functioning. Volunteer Caledon will benefit from the broader connections and perspective of Volunteer Peel.

b) With Peel Volunteer Administrators Network

In Peel there is an active network of volunteer administrators from a wide variety of sectors and organizations that provides a monthly opportunity for professional development. It supports professional dialogue about common issues and challenges facing the administrators and provides them with peer support. Volunteer Peel will undertake a supportive relationship with this network to strengthen its work and to increase awareness about its existence and role. It will engage its members in discussions about volunteer trends, needs and the challenges and themes being addressed among volunteer programs on a day-to-day basis in order to strengthen "Volunteer Peel's" ability to be responsive to its membership and the community. Volunteer Peel will also establish constructive relationships with Professional Administrators of Volunteer Resources - Ontario, the provincial association for volunteer administrators.

- c) With the Region of Peel, the City of Mississauga, the City of Brampton and the Town of Caledon**
Volunteer Peel will establish on going and effective partnerships with each of the municipal governments within the region. This will result in the identification of how the region and municipalities can be supportive of volunteering in their respective communities and jurisdictions and of Volunteer Peel. Each of these governments has significant volunteer programs. Each also provides recognition to volunteers and volunteering during Volunteer Week. It is desirable that each of the municipalities consider funding support for Volunteer Peel, as it will be making a significant contribution to each municipality and the region as a whole. It is also possible that the municipalities can contribute significantly to the promotion and marketing of volunteerism and volunteering through their economic development and communication departments. Supports to neighbourhoods and the promotion of civic engagement are also areas of common interest that may be explored through effective partnerships.
- d) Participation in Community Initiatives**
Volunteer Peel will become an active partner and participant in collaborative community initiatives that have been undertaken to address various issues. It will be able to bring knowledge of what volunteers and volunteer programs can bring to the development of solutions to community problems. Success by 6 Peel, the new immigrant initiative, the various strategies to prevent youth violence, and the new seniors centres envisioned in the proposals being supported by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are examples of coordinated efforts among various voluntary sector organizations that could benefit from a perspective that Volunteer Peel can bring. This could also include environmental challenges or emergency response to crises or for pandemic diseases.
- “Volunteer Peel’s” approach to this type of partnership will be collaborative in nature.
- e) Partnerships with and Mutual Supports of its Members**
As a member organization that will provide value-added services to community agencies, Volunteer Peel will rely upon mutually supportive relationships with community agencies that will see the value of the contributions of Volunteer Peel to the community and support its contributions to the community. As noted above, a collaborative approach will underlie all of its services and partnerships.
- f) Partnerships External to the Community**
Volunteer Toronto has identified the potential value of a collaborative approach to businesses whose boundaries overlap between the regions and whose employees live or work in either Peel or Toronto and may be interested in volunteering in the community where they live but do not work or vice versa. A joint approach to some of these corporations might result in more people volunteering. This is an example of an external partnership that could be pursued by Volunteer Peel. It will also be important for Volunteer Peel to establish an active connection with the Provincial Association for Volunteer Centres to enable it to share information and address common problems in a joint fashion.

Chapter 6: Key Elements of Success

1. Introduction:

To bring the vision articulated in Chapter 5 to full realization, considerable effort and dedication over a number of years will be required. To guide this development, a number of elements for success have been identified. These are based upon the ideas of participants in the focus groups (See Chapter 2 and Appendices II, IV, and V) as well as the information gathered from the leaders of volunteer centres in other jurisdictions and the key informants as described in Chapter 3 and in Appendix VII.

As the development of Volunteer Peel progresses, these elements of success can serve as a reference point to evaluate progress for those responsible for executing the plan for the creation of Volunteer Peel.

2. An Effective Funding Plan and Competence in Fund Development Leading to a Diverse and Sustainable Funding Base

Volunteer Peel will need to have a diverse funding base with contributions from various sources:

- Earned revenue from services offered and products;
- United Way funding;
- Funding from regional and municipal governments;
- Funding from foundations such as Trillium;
- Funding from fundraising events and strategies;
- Project sponsorships;
- Donations or contributions from individuals and corporations.

It will be important for Volunteer Peel to have competence in fund development from the beginning. A separate but complementary plan for revenue generation will need to be maintained and executed in concert with the strategic and operational plans of Volunteer Peel on a long-term and annual basis. Volunteer Calgary which has demonstrated considerable entrepreneurial competence in generating a diverse and sustainable funding base has some valuable lessons to provide Volunteer Peel as it develops its approach to obtaining the necessary funding.

3. A Strong Board of Directors with a Broad Skill Base and Diverse Connections

Volunteer Peel will need a well-functioning Board of Directors that is passionate about volunteerism. It will be important that this Board of Directors has a broad range of appropriate skills and knowledge that are the “sine qua non” of effective Boards for organizations in the voluntary sector. Directors with good connections with community leadership in various sectors being served by the centre and with the business community will also be important to the success of Volunteer Peel.

4. Marketing and Communication Competence to Sell the Contributions of Volunteer Peel

Given the importance of promoting the value of volunteerism, its benefits to the community and to individuals, and the needs for volunteers and volunteer contributions, expertise in social marketing will be key to “Volunteer Peel’s” success. It is recommended that the Volunteer Peel be direct and clear about the positive difference it makes in the community. Achieving small and strategic successes and communicating them to the community, to governments and to the business community will be crucial to generating public support for the role and mission of Volunteer Peel. On going promotion of volunteerism will require a well-developed and well-resourced plan and staff with the required skills to execute the plan.

5. Broad Community Support

This will be rooted in the provision of value-added services and the promotion of volunteerism and volunteer opportunities. Volunteer Peel will earn the respect and support of its members and the community by establishing a creditable presence. It will work in effective partnership to support the growth of volunteerism and increase the number of volunteers being effectively engaged to make their community a better place. The support will need to come from all sectors and can have ripple effects upon the value assigned to volunteer contributions. Strategic efforts must be undertaken to ensure broad support from the environmental, health, sports and arts, and social service and recreational communities as well as governments and others in the public sector.

6. Strong and Broad Membership Base

Agencies from all sectors of the community with both large and small volunteer programs will be committed members paying a reasonable membership fee. They will participate in Volunteer Peel programs because the programs add value to the agencies' ability to recruit, support, retain, train and recognize the volunteers engaged with their services or activities. The members will assume their responsibilities to keep the interactive database up to date and to respond in a timely fashion to persons enquiring about volunteer opportunity postings and agree to be held accountable for doing so according to policies developed in consultation with the membership as the program is developed.

7. Strong Links to Regional and Municipal Governments

It is anticipated that all four governments in Peel will determine it will be in their best interests to have a close working relationship with Volunteer Peel. All four are interested in enhancing the quality of life within their communities and in promoting civic engagement. A partnership with Volunteer Peel as a funder, as a user of its services, and as a strong and active supporter of volunteerism through its policies, programs and marketing strategies will strengthen the capacity of Volunteer Peel to generate voluntary participation in community efforts to create well-being among all residents. Understanding the value of volunteer participation and engagement in promoting and contributing to healthy community life and addressing community problems can result in mutually supportive roles among Volunteer Peel, the region and the three local municipalities.

8. Key Competencies and Characteristics Which Will Contribute to Success

The following competencies will be developed and seen as key components of Volunteer Peel's success:

- **Technological competence** to support and make the best use of the database and website;
- **Cultural competence** to enable Volunteer Peel to embrace the diversity of the Region and to reach out and respond effectively to different communities and cultures within the region;
- **Understanding of Volunteer Trends** to facilitate creative and sustained engagement of as many residents and members of the community as possible;
- **Collaborative Ethic** to inform its participation in partnerships and community initiatives and its approach to new services or strategies;
- **Commitment to Quality Assurance and Accountability** to strengthen its ability to improve its services and to demonstrate the benefits of them to the community;
- **Strategic Focus** to guide its planning, organizational development and priority setting;
- **Strong Leadership** to bring volunteers, volunteer programs, voluntary-sector organizations, corporations and others together in pursuit of the fulfillment of the mission of Volunteer Peel.

Chapter 7: Steps to Create Volunteer Peel

1. Introduction:

With the vision of Volunteer Peel in the forefront along with an understanding of the key success factors, a high level implementation plan to create Volunteer Peel as a separate, non-profit voluntary agency within 18 to 24 months of the completion of this review was developed for discussion during the consultations. The feedback from the participants is presented in detail in Appendix XIV and in summary in Chapter 4 above. Generally the plan was seen to be a reasonable one.

It is important to note that the plan needs to be implemented in a building block fashion that generates a widening circle of support including sufficient funding commitments to ensure its success. While the plan is presented in a sequential manner, it is recognized that there will times when two or three steps will be undertaken simultaneously or parts of one will be set aside while other steps are undertaken. As well, some steps will be on going. The identified partnership developments and the discussions with community agencies about their needs and priorities for “Volunteer Peel’s” services are examples of such steps. It is understood that the steering committee that will be created and the staff to be hired will re-evaluate this plan as it unfolds and will make adjustments to ensure the goal of the creation of a well-supported Volunteer Peel is achieved and the vision realized.

2. Obtain Community Support

As a result of the consultations conducted for this review described in Chapter 4, there is significant support for the development of Volunteer Peel. Further community support is desirable. To provide further information about this review and its results and to obtain this additional support, the United Way and the advisory committee have undertaken to support meetings with the following groups with the assistance of the consultant who has completed this review:

- i) Senior managers within the region and the three municipal government;
- ii) The Mississauga Arts Council, the Brampton Arts Council and any umbrella arts group in Caledon;
- iii) The umbrella sports councils or organizations in each of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon;
- iv) The conservation authorities/organizations in Peel;
- v) Volunteer Caledon and the Peel Volunteer Administrators Network.

In addition, United Way will begin preliminary discussions with other funders about providing support to the implementation plan for the creation of the Volunteer Peel and commitments in principle to longer-term support. This will include discussions with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, the region, the three local municipalities and the Trillium Foundation.

3. Report to the United Way Board of Directors

This review was sponsored and funded by United Way of Peel Region. A report on the process and results of the review will be presented to Board of Directors of the United Way in order to inform them of the findings and recommendations and to obtain the support of United Way of Peel Region in providing leadership to the next steps in the process in the creation of Volunteer Peel.

4. Recommended Structure for Initial Steps in the Development of Volunteer Peel

a) Sponsoring or Lead Organization

It is proposed that an organization within Peel, committed to strengthening volunteerism and volunteering in Peel Region, undertake to oversee the development of Volunteer Peel as the sponsoring or lead organization. This role would entail providing supportive oversight of a governance and fiduciary nature for the work of a community steering committee with a mandate to create Volunteer Peel. This role would also include serving as the banker for the steering committee. (It is suggested that this arrangement parallel the kind of arrangement that exists between the United Way of Peel Region and Success by 6 Peel. The difference is that the goal of this arrangement will be the formal creation of a new organization with responsibility for the provision of community supports to volunteerism through promoting, connecting, strengthening capacity and building partnerships.)

During one of the consultations, it was suggested that United Way was the logical organization to perform this role. However, after careful consideration, United Way and the advisory committee have agreed that it is advisable to seek a community agency to perform this sponsoring role through an RFP process. This recognizes United Way’s role as community capacity builder and funder rather than service provider. Since the following staged

implementation plan does include the provision of services, it was felt that another organization could and should provide this sponsoring role.

United Way supported by the advisory committee will undertake an invitational RFP process to find a community organization to sponsor the work of the steering committee to develop Volunteer Peel on behalf of the community.

b) Steering Committee for Volunteer Peel

The sponsoring agency with support from United Way will develop the terms of reference for the steering committee for Volunteer Peel on the basis of the concepts presented in the vision, key elements of success and steps chapters of this review. The steering committee will be charged with providing leadership to the creation of a separate non-profit charitable organization with a mandate to realize the vision for Volunteer Peel outlined in this review. The steering committee will set the direction and oversee this work over a 15-to-21 month period. It will plan, obtain funding, hire and supervise staff and define the parameters for the new organization, resulting in its incorporation and the establishment of a Board of Directors with a strategic plan and an operational plan including sustainable funding.

It is suggested that the steering committee have a range of competencies based upon the terms of reference that will be identified by the sponsoring organization based upon the terms of reference. It is also suggested that the steering committee be made up of representatives from the Sponsoring organization, the advisory committee of this review, the region and the municipalities, and from the voluntary agency community across the health, social service, arts, sports, education and environment communities. In addition, representatives from corporations who have volunteer leadership experience will be recruited. The steering committee will be comprised of 14 to 16 persons, with a smaller Executive selected by the steering committee.

Some of the members of the steering committee will be asked to serve on the founding Board of Directors of Volunteer Peel.

c) Decision about a Name

In order for this new organization to establish an identity, it will be important in the early stages that a name be selected. As noted in the feedback from the consultation, Volunteer Peel may not be the best way to brand the new organization, given residents' tendencies to identify with their municipality. Something like Volunteers for Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon may be better. A naming process may be part of the process to raise the profile of the new organization once staff has been hired by the Steering Committee. But it may also be valuable to protect some options for a website domain name from the outset. If a decision is made to conduct a feasibility study for funding, this topic may be a component of such a study.

d) Plan and Budget for the first Year

With the support of the sponsoring organization, a critical path and budget for the work of the steering committee will need to be created. This will include an initial identification of its priorities, its own decision-making process and the resources required for at least the first year of operation. As noted above, efforts to secure initial funding will be undertaken prior to the issuing of the RFP.

The funding for the work of the steering committee and the initial development of Volunteer Peel must be obtained with an understanding that there will be a further request for sustainable funding as the work of the steering committee produces a strategic plan with both a fund development and an operational plan while putting the first components of service provided by Volunteer Peel in place. So the funding requests may be for a two- or three-year period with conditional milestones to be met.

e) Seek and Confirm Funding Sources

The implementation plan for the creation of Volunteer Peel will require staff support almost from the beginning to establish a credible and viable organization. Therefore, the steering committee will need to obtain funding to support the early stages of development with a view to a longer-term funding base that can be sustainable as long as Volunteer Peel fulfils its mandate and realizes the articulated vision for its role in the community. As noted above in the budget development section, this may require obtaining three-year funding, conditional upon milestones being met to warrant continued and expanded funding.

f) Hire Staff

The steering committee will undertake to hire a Director for Volunteer Peel. This leader will become the Executive Director or CEO of Volunteer Peel when its existence is formalized. This Director will report to the Chair of the steering committee and be expected to implement the critical path established by the steering committee and to provide leadership to the establishment of Volunteer Peel so that it can realize the vision articulated in this review. It is recommended that this Director have strong leadership skills, significant experience with and commitment to volunteerism and volunteering, and an entrepreneurial spirit with knowledge and skill in fund development.

In the initial stages, it is also recommended that staff with fund development and communications expertise be hired. This will support the promotion of Volunteer Peel and its roles from the beginning and provide effective staff support to the initial development of the website and database. It will also make it possible for Volunteer Peel to obtain the necessary diverse funding base.

g) Develop Strategic Plan

As part of the initial work of the steering committee, it will be important for it to develop a strategic plan for Volunteer Peel. This could also include a strategic plan for fund development. It may be valuable for the Steering Committee to undertake an inclusive process for this work and to undertake a feasibility study for fund development. Both of these could be supported by external consultants with defined and limited mandates or a decision may be made to make the development of this plan the highest priority for the Director in the first stage of the assignment.

h) Initial Focus of Volunteer Peel

It will be important that in the early stages of its formation that Volunteer Peel determines a set of priority services. Based upon the discussions during the Focus groups in this review it is recommended that the emphasis be on the connecting role of Volunteer Peel.

It is suggested that this would have three key components that will be pursued somewhat simultaneously.

i) Development of the Website and Selection of an Interactive Database

As has been noted, a user-friendly interactive database will become the primary support to the connecting role performed by Volunteer Peel. There are a number of difference programs that have been developed by other volunteer centres and so it is not anticipated that Volunteer Peel will have to go through a “start from scratch” process. Rather it is recommended that Volunteer Peel undertake a process to choose the best program for its use and implementation. This process should include selective consultation with volunteers, coordinators of volunteers and with Volunteer Caledon, which has an existing program. It should explore all options including Volunteer Energy, which has done some work in Peel and the different programs that have been developed by other volunteer centres: Volunteer Hamilton, Halton or Guelph-Wellington, which are using the CIOC program, Volunteer Toronto, the Volunteer Action Centre of Kitchener Waterloo and Area, Volunteer Vancouver and Volunteer Calgary. It is recommended that the steering committee consider creating an IT Advisory Committee to support and oversee this process.

This development will also involve developing the parameters for **membership** and the development of the expectations about the management of the website and database.

ii) Understanding Community Need for Volunteer Support

To build upon the information gathered during this review, the Director will need to engage in a consultation process with voluntary agencies from across the sectors to determine their priority needs for the connecting role and their expectations of Volunteer Peel. This would also include reaching out to the business sector to understand their needs and expectations of a volunteer centre and the supports they need to maximize their employer-supported volunteer programs and to find out how they can make group volunteering contributions. There may be merits in establishing advisory committees for each of these constituencies to provide on going input into the development of services.

iii) Begin the Connecting Role

Based upon the suggestions and ideas presented in the above “understanding” step, Volunteer Peel will undertake a prioritized set of connecting strategies that will provide voluntary sector organizations with the support they are seeking and begin to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by the corporate sector’s interest in promoting volunteerism.

i) Develop and Begin to Implement a Promotion Plan

From the outset, Volunteer Peel will need to create and sustain a high profile for its work and for volunteerism. Attention to the development of a marketing and sustainable promotion plan that will build visibility and credibility over time is an important component of the early development work. Communication with members and agencies in the voluntary sector will be part of this planning as will partnerships with others who can support the promotion and marketing efforts to draw on going and constructive attention to volunteering and volunteerism.

j) Develop Supportive and Collaborative Partnerships

Given that the vision of Volunteer Peel is strongly rooted in the development and maintenance of a variety of partnerships with a collaborative ethic, it will be important that attention be devoted to these relationships:

i) With the Region and the Municipal Governments

It is important to ensure the efforts in support of volunteerism, civic engagement and volunteering by Volunteer Peel and the respective regional and municipal governments are coordinated and that they are mutually supportive of each other. As noted, this can involve strategic initiatives, marketing and public education strategies, funding support, recognition and information-sharing activities.

ii) In Relation to Training for the Voluntary Sector

Discussions with the Peel Learning Institute, United Way's Training and Consulting Services, Leadership Peel, the Peel Mentoring Network as well as the school boards, UTM and Sheridan College will be important so that the training and consulting services of Volunteer Peel will fill current gaps and not be duplicative of or competitive with other programs supporting voluntary leadership.

iii) In Relation to Capacity Building of the Voluntary Sector

The role of Volunteer Peel in supporting organizations within the voluntary sector will evolve as the consultations with agencies provide information and direction to Volunteer Peel. As Volunteer Peel develops, it will engage in constructive relationships with various organizations and coalitions that are providing support and leadership for the voluntary sector. These will probably include the United Way, the arts councils, the conservation authorities, the Fair Share Task Force, Metamorphosis and the Diversity Roundtable.

iv) With Corporations and Businesses

For funding, marketing, service and resource reasons, Volunteer Peel will need to develop effective partnerships with individual businesses and corporation as well as with the Boards of Trade in Brampton and Mississauga and the Caledon Chamber of Commerce. These partners can provide support in a variety of ways.

v) With Provincial Organizations for Administrators of Volunteer Programs and Other Volunteer Centres

It will be valuable for Volunteer Peel to become connected to the provincial networks of volunteer administrators and of volunteer centres. These connections will enhance the knowledge base of Volunteer Peel and provide a key source of information and support for problem resolution. In addition, Volunteer Toronto is interested in exploring joint strategies to various large corporations that have employees living in both Toronto and Peel, as there may be some benefits to combining resources and approaches to encourage volunteering in both communities.

k) Recruit Board of Directors and Obtain Incorporation

Using some members of the steering committee as a starting point, the steering committee and Director will recruit a Board of Directors for Volunteer Peel that will have the appropriate skills and effective connections to and understanding of the diverse communities and agencies being served.

l) Development of Year 2 and Year 3 Operational and Fund Developments Plans and Budgets

Within the context of the strategic plan, the steering committee and the Director will develop an operating plan and a fund development plan for years 2 and 3 of Volunteer Peel. The goal would be that by the end of year 3, a staffing complement of five to six professionals would be hired. They would perform functions that would enable Volunteer Peel to achieve its objectives: leadership, fund development, promotions and communications, technology support, training and consultation, community, agency, corporate and members relations and corporate relations and administration.

m) Obtain the Funding Commitments to Sustain the Organization

This step is mentioned last in the sequence, but it will be part of earlier activity and an on going focus of the steering committee, the Director and the Board of Directors to ensure a healthy start for the organization. An entrepreneurial approach will be important to these efforts.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This review, conducted over a four-month period, has been very extensive and inclusive. Input from volunteers, coordinators of volunteers, volunteer suppliers and senior managers and leaders of voluntary organizations was received during both the focus group and consultation stages. The perspective provided by these persons was broad, including that of large and small agencies with a variety of mandates including public education, fundraising, social and health services, and cultural and environmental groups. The vision presented in this report is reflective of the significant input provided in the focus group. The proposals include the constructive feedback to the Key Success elements and the plans for the development of Volunteer Peel.

The research undertaken provided considerable support for the kind of proposals that emerged during the review. Successful volunteer centres have achieved good results in promoting volunteerism, establishing effective and efficient connecting strategies, enhancing community organizations' capacity to support volunteers and providing leadership for volunteerism. While some centres in Ontario are experiencing challenges in sustaining on going funding, their leaders all expressed confidence in meeting these challenges and in providing supportive services for volunteers and voluntary organizations, and volunteer programs in their communities. There are important lessons to be learned from the experiences in other jurisdictions and the proposals included in the key elements of success and in the steps for the creation of Volunteer Peel reflect some of these lessons.

The Vision for Volunteer Peel is one that will enhance the profile of volunteers and volunteerism in this community in substantial ways through:

- Promotion and high visibility of volunteerism and volunteers;
- Targeted connecting with an effective, user-friendly and interactive database to inform residents of volunteer opportunities;
- Strengthening capacity through training and consultation support;
- Partnership development with funders, a committed corporate sector interested in expanding opportunities for employer-supported volunteering, other community agencies and the regional and municipal governments.

The key elements of success are important for the long term viability of Volunteer Peel and include competent and entrepreneurial fund development and marketing, a diverse funding base and the delivery of quality services to support volunteerism and volunteer programs through proactive connecting, capacity building and partnership strategies.

The proposed plan for the development of a strong organization in Peel supporting volunteerism and volunteers is a realistic one that requires a strategic and phased building-block approach and the on going support of the many sectors in the community, both public and voluntary. It also requires an entrepreneurial and collaborative approach to its development.

This review of Volunteerism in Peel suggests that there is support for an organization in Peel that provides centralized and proactive supports to volunteerism and volunteers in Peel. The emergence of a strong volunteer organization within Peel will add value to the quality of life within the community and strengthen civic engagement in support of a wide range of services. It will be worth the investment of time and effort.

Respectfully Submitted,

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