

Our Voice



Are You Scaring Away Volunteers? Five Recruitment Tips that Treat, Not Trick

Your organization is great, right? You serve a worthwhile cause and do many exciting things. So why don't more people want to volunteer with you? Halloween is a great time to ask: *Are we scaring away potential volunteers?*

Susan J. Ellis, president of Energize, Inc., the internationally-renowned volunteerism training and publishing firm, notes that there are many things organizations do or say that can "haunt" prospective recruits! According to Ellis, author of the best-selling *The Volunteer Recruitment Book*: "It's hardly surprising that people shy away from desperate pleas for unlimited help in unknown situations. We ask people to plunge into a bottomless pit with a monster that takes your arm when you raise your hand!" She offers these five simple recruitment tips to en-"treat" volunteers without "tricking" them:

Don't just ask for "help" or "volunteers." This vague approach leaves everything up to the prospective volunteer's imagination...and YOU ought to be frightened at that! Design a different recruitment message for each specific assignment you need to fill—including an appealing job title. Give potential recruits enough information to be able to say "that's for me." Challenge people and they'll rise to the occasion.

Specify up front how many hours a week or month a volunteer assignment requires—and for how long you hope the volunteer will remain in the position. Be honest! Then someone who applies to become a volunteer already knows what you expect. (Besides, you may surprise some people by being reasonable and flexible!)

Be perceptive about what someone might fear about your work and address these things in your recruitment message. Is personal safety a concern? Note the well-lighted adjacent parking lot or the buddy system you use. Are there unknowns about how your facility looks? Add lots of photos showing bright spaces and smiling faces. Might there be some out-of-pocket costs? Explain your reimbursement policy.

Talk about the training you give all newcomers, so that no one has to worry about not being skilled enough or unprepared. Assure prospects that they'll be supported while learning how to be good volunteers and even after.

Show that volunteering can be fun! It's ok to enjoy community service activities... or the other participants...or the experience itself. If people are going to choose volunteering for you in their spare time, it ought to sound like something they wouldn't want to miss.

For more information about volunteer program management, visit the Energize Web site "*For Leaders of Volunteers*" at: www.energizeinc.com This free site offers more than 1000 pages of practical, up-to-date material plus a complete Online Bookstore with over 70 different books, videos and training resources. Click on www.energizeinc.com/total/volrb.html to learn how to order Susan Ellis' *The Volunteer Recruitment Book* for your library today. For a free "*Volunteer Energy Resource Catalog*," call 1-800-395-9800 or write to Energize, Inc., 5450 Wissahickon Avenue, Box C-13, Philadelphia, PA 19144.

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Celebration of Literacy Volunteers Conference October 18-21, 2001

Community Literacy of Ontario would like to extend thanks to the many participants who attended the **Celebration of Literacy Volunteers Conference**. This conference was co-hosted with Laubach Literacy Ontario to commemorate the International Year of the Volunteer and the powerful achievements of literacy volunteers. It was an empowering experience for the dedicated volunteers to be recognized for their great contributions to the field of literacy. Close to 300 participants in total attended the CLO and LLO joint celebratory conference.

According to the evaluations, all of CLO's workshops were resounding successes! High praise was received for the following workshops: *Volunteer for the Health of It; Selection and Recruitment of Board and Committee Members; Ethical Approaches for Volunteer Involvement; Avoiding Burnout: Keeping the Fires Bright; The Math Kit and Link & Think: The New Technology of Connecting*. Participants appreciated the expert facilitation skills and the opportunity to network with others from across the province.

At the opening dinner on October 18, 2001, CLO was proud to honour the five founding members of Community Literacy of Ontario - Carynne Arnold, Lindsay Kennedy, Doug Rankin, Vicki Trottier and Sheila Vlachos. In keeping with the theme of volunteerism, this was the perfect event at which to recognize their significant contribution to and on behalf of the literacy field. CLO's founding five were given a portfolio inscribed with the following words: *"When a collection of brilliant minds, hearts, and talents come together, expect a masterpiece."*

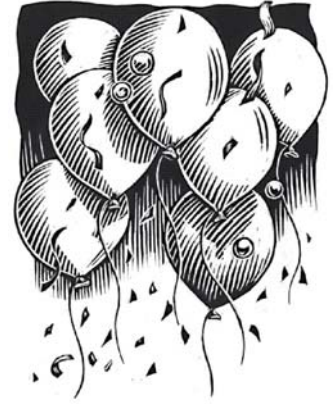
CLO's Annual General Meeting was held on October 19, 2001 with impressive representation from our member programs. CLO's past board members were honoured for their important contributions. CLO's board of directors for the 2001/2002 term are: Debra Barrett, Joyce Bigelow, Laurie DesLauriers, Betty Ffrench, Jan Goatcher, Margaret Maynard, Dan McGibbon, Valerie Sadler, Penny Smith-Jensen, Lee Torvi and Denise Tremblay.

At the Gala evening on Friday, October 19, 2001, the Honourable Dianne Cunningham, Minister of Education, sent words of encouragement and gratitude to the multitude of literacy volunteers in Ontario. These sentiments were echoed by Senator Joyce Fairbairn, who delivered an impassioned speech that embraced the cause of literacy and the volunteers who champion that cause. Sandie Birkhead-Kirk, Senior Manager, Workplace Preparation Branch of MTCU and Lianne Vardy, Director of the National Literacy Secretariat, also addressed delegates. We were honoured to have special guests attend from the Ministry of Citizenship, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Ontario Literacy Coalition and the AlphaPlus Centre.

CLO and LLO were awarded with lovely, etched glass plaques from the Ontario government in honour of The International Year of the Volunteer. These plaques were presented to celebrate the work of dedicated volunteers and literacy practitioners with CLO and LLO who strengthen the resolve of adult learners to make important and courageous changes in their lives.

The awards continued with personalized plaques from CLO and LLO being presented to each community-based literacy agency in Ontario. This is in recognition of the tremendous contributions of their volunteers to the literacy field. Programs who did not have a representative present will receive their plaques in the mail.

CLO would like to again thank the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the National Literacy Secretariat for their funding and support of this memorable event.



**"We make a living
by what we get,
but we make a life
by what we give"**

Sir Winston Churchill



ONTARIO EARLY YEARS CENTRES... COMING SOON TO A COMMUNITY NEAR YOU

Source: Ministry of Community and Social Services

TORONTO - Minister Responsible for Children John Baird today announced the location of the first 41 Ontario Early Years Centres, part of the third phase of the Harris government's Early Years Plan.

The centres, to be up and running by April 1, 2002, will be located in 15 communities: North Bay area, London area, Niagara, Hastings/Prince Edward, Grey Bruce, Peterborough area, Sudbury area, Windsor area, Leeds-Grenville, Halton, Brant, Thunder Bay area, York, Ottawa area, and Simcoe.

"Our government recognizes the importance of focusing on a child's first few years of development," said Baird. "In order to support parents and their children, we are developing Ontario Early Years Centres which will be gateways to a variety of programs, services and information."

A network of Early Years Centres will eventually span the province, providing answers to questions parents may have about their children's learning, behaviour and health. They will provide a set of core programs such as early literacy services, as well as programs to reflect the unique character of each community. The centres will be accessible to all parents, regardless of socio-economic background, culture or special needs.

Ontario's proactive early years initiatives reflect the new way of thinking outlined in the Harris-government commissioned Early Years Study, co-authored by Dr. Fraser Mustard and the Honourable Margaret McCain. Today's announcement comes a year after the release of the First Ministers Communiqué on Early Child Development. At the First Ministers meeting, the federal, provincial and territorial leaders, led by Premier Mike Harris, established a national agenda recognizing the importance of the years zero to six in a child's development.

Today, the Harris government also announced the names of Ontario's Community Champions. These people are experienced in the early years field and will lead the community planning process for the Early Years Centres. This fall, the champions will bring together key sectors to develop the individual plans for each centre that will include: location in an existing facility, the identification of other community needs, professional and volunteer staffing requirements, and information and resources for parents.

An additional 62 Ontario Early Years Centres will be opened by April 1, 2003, bringing the total network of Early Years Centres to 103. For more information, visit: <http://www.childsec.gov.on.ca/>

The Learning Edge

The Wellington County Learning Centre has developed an innovative online resource to be used by adult literacy students. The "Edge" is an interactive online newspaper that will feature articles for and by students. This resource is receiving rave reviews from the field and is definitely worth checking out!

Visit <http://www.thewclc.ca> and follow the link to "The Learning Edge".



CLO's Board of Directors

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Foundational Training in Family Literacy

The Centre for Family Literacy in Edmonton, Alberta, with the assistance of a cross-country advisory committee and St. Francis Xavier University, has developed a *Manual for Foundational Training in Family Literacy* and an accompanying *Facilitator's Guide*. In October 2001, a team of 45 people (including seven Ontarians) from across the country received intensive five-day national training in foundational literacy. Offering training which had continuity across Canada is an innovative and important approach.

The *Manual for Foundational Training in Family Literacy* currently covers the topics listed below. However, it is being refined and reworked based on feedback from the national training session.

- ⇒ Understanding Family Literacy
- ⇒ The Practice of Family Literacy in an Unjust World
- ⇒ The Dynamics of Working with Parents / Adults
- ⇒ Understanding Children: A Complex Relational Dynamic
- ⇒ Understanding Emergent Literacy
- ⇒ Working with Families in a Family Literacy Setting
- ⇒ Working with Communities
- ⇒ Administering a Family Literacy Project
- ⇒ Evaluating Family Literacy Projects
- ⇒ Best Practices in Family Literacy



The Ontario delegates found the national foundational training to be excellent. Currently, this dedicated group is exploring options for delivering this training more widely throughout Ontario. CLO has submitted a proposal to deliver this foundational training online, while the seven Ontario trainers, under the umbrella of the Ontario Literacy Coalition, has submitted a proposal to hold a summer institute on foundational training in family literacy.