

E-Newz Summer 2011



Branching Out and Learning Together

CAVR CONFERENCE REPORT

Taking virtual suitcases of inspiration and information with them, volunteer professionals from across Canada left the Vancouver Coast Coal Harbour Hotel, site of the CAVR (Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources) Conference, on June 15, to return to their homes and regular lives.

Almost 200 CAVR members attended the conference, *Branching Out – New Directions in Volunteer Management*, which was hosted by AVRBC (Administrators of Volunteer Resources of British Columbia) in Vancouver. The event blended learning opportunities with social gatherings, fine meals, an evening reception, a wrap-up dinner at the Stanley Park Pavilion and city tours – all planned and delivered by an outstanding team led by AVRBC's president, Clare O'Kelly.

Several CAVR members became certified or re-certified, (see follow-up report) and CAVR president Debbie Kennedy passed the torch to Suzie Matencheck, from Manitoba.

Vancouver and the concurrent mania over the Canucks and the hockey play-offs, were part of the setting of the conference. It was also a 'green' conference with handouts provided on USB's and nametags made out of recycled paper stuck with seeds. "Plant them for an ongoing reminder of the conference," said O'Kelly.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: The registration crew; reception speakers; sampling the appies at the reception; hospitality gals; hungry Canucks fan.



Continued on Page 2



LEFT: Conference organizers; RIGHT: CAVRs Suzie Matencheck, left, and Debbie Kennedy.



Workshops and Presentations

Workshops that Work – Lee-Anne Ragan, Rock.Paper.Scissors Inc



Lee-Anne Ragan was highly entertaining and engaging as she led us through discussions about learning principles and methods. Diverse presentation/learning methods should be mapped into the workshop. We tend to teach using the methods that work for us when in fact, a “dog’s breakfast” of approaches is a good thing! Lee-Anne certainly demonstrated what a powerful learning experience can be.

Making the Volunteer Manager the Hero of Your Story – Stacy Ashton, Executive Director of Community Volunteer Connections



Everyone loves a story and Stacy showed that telling and making the most of the volunteer manager’s story is a powerful tool in engaging and inspiring volunteers to participate. Participants learned to use the key elements of a story – a hero, a goal, and a barrier – to tell their own stories. When you “save the

day,” people want to help you. “The less humble you are, the stronger we are as a profession,” she said. Stacy’s points were insightful and she is an accomplished and genuine speaker

Reinventing Our Advertising – Carol Dixon, Director, Volunteer Resources, Providence Health Care

Carol, also Program Chair for the national conference, was informative and engaging as she addressed the topic of how to advertise and recruit volunteers. One thing she cautioned was, “before you recruit volunteers, take a look at who you have already,” because sometimes what you are looking for is right under your nose. Carol made good use of stories, examples and plenty of humour and the audience responded enthusiastically.



Bridging the Gap – Ruth MacKenzie, President & CEO Volunteer Canada

Ruth discussed the report produced by Volunteer Canada, *Bridging the Gap: Enriching the Volunteer Experience to Build Better Communities for our Future*. Looking at changes in volunteer demographics she identified various gaps to be filled, especially the one between what volunteers are looking for in their experiences and what organizations are offering them. Clearly this report is packed with useful information for the future of volunteer management!



Get Your Tech On - Chryssa Koulis & Karin Davis, Little Engine Consulting



Using Prezi and giving Power Point a rest, Chryssa and Karin delivered an engaging presentation on new techy tools (for online surveys, newsletter publishing, brainstorming, mind mapping, etc) and exciting ways to use them. The

presenters were charming and fun and the audience loved the way they ended with a graphic brainstorming game. Everyone had questions and there was a lot of energy in the room.

Engaging Volunteer Talent: How to adapt to the latest trends in volunteering – Rosemary Byrne, Centre hospitalier de St. Mary

We all know that volunteers and volunteering are changing and we have to adapt to new realities. At the same time, non-profits are increasingly taking a results-based approach and volunteer programs need to be a part of that. Rosemary showed that one



way to interest the kind of volunteers organizations need is by focusing on skills-based volunteering. Examples of skills-based jobs would be editing a newsletter, advising on a purchase and developing policy. It was entertaining and educational to play a card game that helped us practice the skill of finding skill-based jobs for individuals.

Change is Inevitable: Growth is Optional – Valerie Pearson, Executive Director 4-H Saskatchewan



While a lot of traditional service oriented organizations are experiencing a decline in volunteer interest, 4-H in Saskatchewan managed to reverse that trend. Valerie kept people spell-bound as she told how she implemented a new strategic plan and secured funding and grant opportunities that turned things around and helped make the organization one of the best run in Canada. Challenging current practices, embracing technology and downsizing in some areas while expanding in others,

were some of the methods that worked. “There’s always room for improvement... we must take the opportunities to expand our reach,” she said.

Modernizing the Volunteer Program – Rena Chiovelli, Community Involvement Coordinator, City of Edmonton

Status quo is not the goal when you want a successful and growing volunteer program. Rena brought experience and examples from her work with the City of Edmonton’s recycling program to illustrate this. Today’s volunteers want and need to deliver “outcome” not time. Managers need to expand volunteer roles and link them with volunteer skills and interests. They need to develop more opportunities for youth, families and employee groups to volunteer together and also grow more short term and micro-volunteering opportunities. Although a lot was crammed into this session, there was still time



for interaction and group work. Takeaway – don’t be afraid to brainstorm and try something new.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the following roving reporters and photographers who contributed to this report, including Sydney Kuo, Daniel Cayer, Jane Balfour, Judi Reed and Carmen Bressanutti.



Scenes from the conference wrap-up dinner at the Stanley Park Pavillion in Vancouver.

