

VolunteerConnector

2023

IN REVIEW



VolunteerConnector (Volunteer Centre of Calgary)

is a registered charity CRN 108 186 305 RR001

WWW.VOLUNTEERCONNECTOR.ORG

802 5920 MACLEOD TR SW, CALGARY AB | 403-265-5633

2023

OVERVIEW OF US



Our story

- We are a charity that has been on the forefront of community building for over 65 years. We are the Volunteer Centre of Calgary and have transformed into working with regional partners across Canada. Our commitment to providing digital solutions for volunteer engagement comes from our understanding that volunteers need to be engaged in a way that is consistent with the rest of their online lives.

We put volunteers at the center

- This platform is free for volunteers to get connected to their favourite causes so they can use their skills. It has been designed by volunteers for volunteers with the support of a volunteer centre that has decades of experience. If you are every wondering why the platform works the way it does, a volunteer made that choice!

We actively support grassroots and social justice movements

- Volunteerism has social justice and change for good in its heartbeat. This is why, in addition to supporting organizations, we encourage many grassroots initiatives to make use of this platform. We see positive societal change being rooted and activated in a whole new wave of formal and informal volunteering efforts. These efforts range from racial justice and anti-racism to environmental justice and education.

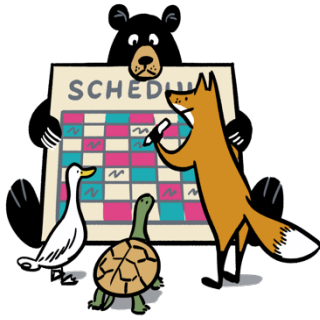
We care about community

- It is important to us to democratize volunteer engagement. This means providing access to simple, affordable solutions for volunteer engagement to grassroots, nonprofit and charitable groups everywhere. Typically, an organizing group uses either an excel spreadsheet or a complicated CRM to engage volunteers. In order to make the whole system of volunteering better we need everyone to have access to the same great tools and that is what the VolunteerConnector provides!

We acknowledge that Indigenous peoples are the traditional guardians of this land that we call Canada

- We believe that acknowledging the land we are fortunate to live and work on, and the people who came before us, is an important step toward reconciliation. We encourage everyone to educate themselves on land acknowledgments, Canada's history with Indigenous peoples and the 94 calls to action in the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Report. We remain committed to our ongoing anti-racism and decolonizing journey personally and in volunteerism.





2023

STRATEGY UPDATE

STRATEGY

SERVED

FUN FACTS

Putting the **volunteer at the center** of the system of volunteerism by leveraging an online platform that supports the existing framework of Promote-Connect-Strengthen-Lead

654,092
individuals

15,800,000+ hours of
volunteering

Volunteers applying to volunteer positions increased **38%**

Strengthening the system of volunteerism to grow the subscriber base of the VolunteerConnector to create organizational sustainability

5,497
organizations

17,096 individual capacity
building supports provided

Organizations calling for volunteers increased **6.4%**

Building community through volunteerism and partnership by nurturing a network of support for volunteers and volunteer organizations to enable volunteers, volunteer organizations and regional partners to better inform the future of volunteering through collecting, owning, and sharing data

61
partners

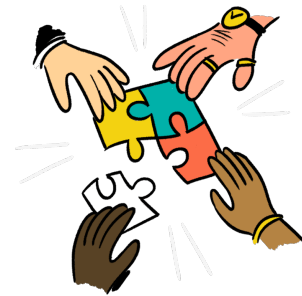
The most searched for causes on the Connector continue to be

Diversity/Anti-Racism
and
Environment/Advocacy

ADAPTIVE ORGANIZATIONS

An organization recruited volunteers to support tent developments and low-income housing policies in their community, leading to the building of tiny homes in that community. This kind of direct support for community building is typical of the volunteer engagement happening because of the direct connections made by the VolunteerConnector platform.

2023



KEY MESSAGE

Why volunteer?

Volunteers continued to pour into the VolunteerConnector looking for new opportunities to connect with their neighbours. Top three reasons for volunteering as reported by volunteers include:

- Wanting to be connected to a larger cause and make an **IMPACT**.
- To meet to people a create new **CONNECTIONS**.
- To find a new or renewed sense of **BELONGING**.

Emerging Volunteerism

Volunteer Demographics continue to shift from boomers to gen z. This generation, Z, is cause focused vs org focused, specifically causes of social and environmental justice. Formal volunteer programs that rely on an aging volunteer base that is stepping back are struggling to adapt.

Barriers To Volunteering

We need to pay attention to issues like inflation. Affordability factors affect individual's ability to volunteer. This makes affordability a top barrier to volunteering where institutional barriers persist for marginalized people.

Volunteer Burnout

Volunteers are crisis ready. We see immediate response every, single, time to the emerging crisis in communities across the country. This is admirable as humans seek to help their neighbors navigate difficult situations. Increase levels of volunteer burnout may be coming particularly in light of the continuing echo of the pandemic.

INFECTIOUS VOLUNTEER ENERGY

“When I first signed up to volunteer at the Calgary Comic and Entertainment Expo back in 2007, I’ll admit, I was skeptical. The thought of giving up my time for free made me question my decision. The experience was so much fun that I volunteered at the Expo for two more years. It wasn’t about the event but the connections I built and the community I became a part of. I even ran into Brent Spiner wandering around by himself and saying hello to everyone! This newfound love for volunteering led me to other volunteer opportunities, including the Calgary Drop-In Centre.”

– Kathy Enrique-Nyguyen –



2023

BUILDING CAPACITY

WORKSHOPS

training virtual/in person, hosted/co-hosted in partnership

TOPICS

Recruiting Volunteers in Tough Times
 Volunteer Recognition Learning Circle
 Bridging the Gap - Helping Orgs Connect
 Managing Stress and Burnout for the Non-profit
 Post-Secondary Student Volunteer
 Data Tells a Volunteer Story
 Volunteering for the New Canadian
 Resources to Shift Perspective
 Can I ask you a question?
 Board Governance Recruitment
 New Volunteer Ideas
 Next. Symposium
 Volunteerism and Seniors
 Trends in Volunteerism
 Next. Community Reflection
 Getting the Most Out of VolunteerConnector
 Tapping into Volunteer Motivation
 Building Community Through Volunteerism
 Volunteering Year In Review
 Celebrating Volunteers

DRILLING DEEPER

- Platform review and intro when applicable
- Risk Management Practices
- Volunteer Policy Practices
- Using your data to ask for internal support
- Using your data to ask for funder support
- Using your data to measure the impact of volunteering in your organization
- Measuring your mission with volunteer involvement
- Understanding your data
- Advocacy based on your data in your region
- Sharing success stories from other regions
- Policy changes in light of current restrictions
- Risk management considerations for pandemic practices
- Understanding and identifying burn out
- Understanding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in a volunteerism perspective
- Removing barriers in place for volunteers to access volunteer programming

COACHING

sample of the topics

dismissing a volunteer – hiring diverse board members – diversity policy for board members – hiring a treasurer for the board – transitioning a recognition program from an in-person event once a year to an ongoing results-based celebration – dealing with absences due to illness – inclusive screening practices – creating flexibility in a program traditionally delivered in a more rigid manner – recruiting diverse volunteers – help with advocating for a budget for volunteer program

firing a board member – reducing the screening burden on volunteers – casino volunteering – creating equity in a volunteer program – skilled volunteers and the board – board support to hire new staff – policy development for volunteer programs – starting a volunteer program from scratch – managing volunteers in a one-person organization – rural volunteering – transitioning board meetings online during the pandemic – volunteer pronouns

VOLUNTEER VOICE – SERVING SANDWICHES, DISARMING ANXIETY

“My group and I were responsible for making sandwiches for individuals experiencing homelessness. To say I was nervous would be an understatement. To all those struggling with anxiety and low self-confidence, I implore you to seize the opportunity to volunteer. It may seem daunting at first, but through the act of giving back, you will discover strengths and capabilities you never knew existed within you. Sign up and volunteer today and watch as your perspective on life begins to change. – Josie Simon –



2023

BY THE NUMBERS

each **\$1** spent on the VolunteerConnector
=
a value of **\$665** in community impact

You can view our [2023 Audited Financial Statements](#) and you will note that we had a positive year and that includes modest surplus in relation to a balanced budget approved by the board of directors.

This will have a positive impact on the day-to-day operations of the organization as it remains focused on the key strategies and removing barriers to volunteering for everyone. Furthermore, we begin 2024 with 11.2 months of cash on hand for operating costs and sustainability reserve.

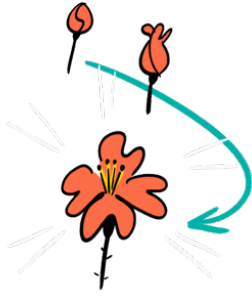
You can also view our [2024-2027 Strategic Direction](#) for VolunteerConnector. It includes our ongoing commitment to providing our services digitally through the framework of Promote-Connect-Strengthen-Lead.

IGNITING PASSION

“Looking back, Jeff realized that his decision to volunteer at the Loose Moose Theatre Company was a pivotal one. It had ignited a passion he hadn't known existed and led him down a path of artistic exploration and personal growth. Through the ups and downs, the laughter and the challenges, he had discovered a place where his human spirit could truly be set free, unburdened by his insecurities and the trivial annoyances of everyday life.

And so, the curtains fell on the story of a volunteer named Jeff, whose journey with the Loose Moose Theatre Company was a testament to the transformative power of embracing the unknown, learning to embrace failure as a tool for development, nurturing one's passions, and finding a second home in the most unexpected of places. Also, he learned how to make Lime Rickey, a healthy beverage that he uses to nourish his children to this day.” – Jeff D'Silva –

Jeff D'Silva is a [regular contributor](#) on the Connector



Thanks to all our Supporters in 2023!

Alberta Culture, Community Engagement Branch

Anonymous Donor

Google

Government of Canada, CSRF

Individual Supporters

Suncor Energy Foundation

The Calgary Foundation

QUESTIONS?

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