

Volunteer



voice

**Volunteerism at the MS Society of Canada,
Alberta Division & Edmonton Chapter**

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The MS Society Volunteer: An essential part of Alberta's strong sense of civic responsibility

Scott Robson, Manager, Volunteer Resources

Despite turbulent economic times, Alberta Division fundraising dollars are up from last year and the MS Society is once again extremely grateful for all of the amazing volunteers and participants who helped make this possible. Many of this year's successes and of course the successes of years past can be attributed to the strong sense of civic responsibility that MS Society volunteers and Albertans as a whole consistently demonstrate. Recently released reports on national volunteerism rates indicate that between 2004 and 2007 the number of Albertans who volunteered their time increased by 4% from 48% of all Albertans to 52% of all Albertans. Alberta's volunteerism rate of 52% also exceeded the national average of 48%. The benefits and reasons for volunteering that Albertans provided included an increase in interpersonal skills, an increase in communication skills and an increase in knowledge.

So what do all these statistics and reports mean? First they indicate that a great many personal

growth benefits actually come from volunteering and secondly these statistics show that there still remains a large potential volunteer base in Alberta (Approximately 48% of Albertans) who are not yet volunteering and receiving these benefits. But how can this be; why would some people simply not want to volunteer, you might ask? Well according to reports by Statistics Canada, two of the most common reasons people do not volunteer are that they are "unable to make a long term commitment to volunteering" or because "they were not asked in the first place."

Nearly everyone knows someone who has never really considered volunteering and if you do great, now is your chance to go ahead and ask them to join you in one of your volunteering adventures. You will likely be surprised at the number of people willing to begin volunteering, but don't because they were never asked. So go ahead and ask some people to volunteer with you because both the individual and the community as a whole will likely benefit.



"MS Golf Volunteers, Volunteers Are Our Good Fortune"

You Are Invited!

Volunteer Appreciation Evening

“Volunteers Are Our Good Fortune”

Thursday November 19th
Old Timer's Cabin (9430 Scona Road)
Supper: 6:30 p.m.
Program 7:30 p.m.
RSVP to Crystal Tracy by phone - (780) 463-1190 or
by e-mail abvolunteers@mssociety.ca by November
6th.

Please join us for an evening where we celebrate our good fortune – YOU, The MS Society Volunteer. Your hard work, dedication and talents are greatly appreciated by the MS Society and we would like to take this opportunity to say, “Thank-you.”

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” – Winston Churchill

MS Society's New Volunteer Coordinator



Crystal is excited about her new role as Coordinator of Volunteer Resources with the MS Society! She's worked as a volunteer coordinator with a midwifery and natural childbirth advocacy group, ASAC (Association for Safe Alternatives in Childbirth). She has also been a volunteer with various groups including the U of A campus radio station, CJSR FM 88.5. She is looking forward to working with the volunteers at the MS Society and can be contacted by email at crystal.tracy@mssociety.ca or by phone at (780) 463-1190.

Note: Changing Roles

Just to let you know, Julie Kelndorfer has moved into the position of Director of Government and Community Relations for the Alberta Division, so you'll continue to see her “smiling” face at the MS Society.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



2009/2010

“And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years.” - Unknown

Mark your calendars!

September 26 & 27, 2009	Edmonton Chapter Casino
October 23 & 24, 2009	Connections 2009 Conference
<i>We are currently seeking volunteers to help the MS Society with this event. If interested please contact Crystal Tracy, by email at crystal.tracy@mssociety.ca or by phone at 780-463-1190</i>	
November 19, 2009	Volunteer Appreciation Evening
April 25, 2010	St. Albert Enerflex MS Walk
May is MS Awareness Month!	
May 16, 2010	Edmonton Enerflex MS Walk
June 12 & 13, 2010	The RONA MS Bike Tour

Check out the volunteer website:
<http://www.mssociety.ca/alberta/volunteer.htm>

MS Society Volunteers Assist in Supporting People of All Ages

Jennie Malone, Recreation & Youth
Coordinator, Edmonton Chapter

The Edmonton Chapter is proud to celebrate yet another year of successful Kids Kamps. Kids Kamp is a program offered to children ages 6 – 12 with a parent or family member living with Multiple Sclerosis. The program offers children education on another year of successful Kids Kamps. Kids Kamp is a program offered to children ages 6 – 12 with a parent or family member living with Multiple Sclerosis. The program offers children education on MS, peer support and recreation opportunities. Kids Kamp is a week long day program with mornings spent at Montrose Community Hall and afternoons spent around the city participating in various recreation activities. The mornings begin with games and fun activities as well as an education session. The education sessions vary from learning about MS and its symptoms to the structure of the central nervous system and neurons, to the emotional impact MS can have on families. The afternoon outings this year included the Valley Zoo,



Young Chef's Academy, climbing at Vertically
Inclined, swimming at Millennium Place, voyageur

canoeing on the North Saskatchewan River and playing sledge hockey.

Kids Kamp provides a wonderful opportunity for kids to learn, to make new friends, to have fun, and to realize that they are not alone in the experiences they have. Of course we would not be able to run this program without the support of some wonderful volunteers who help to assist in leading activities and supervise the participants.

Thank you to Michelle Bischoff, Gina Bischoff, Ellen Feron, Kirstin Barrett, and Denise Thompson for volunteering at this year's Kids Kamp.

Connections 2009 Conference

This year the MS Society is proud to announce the first MS Connections 2009 Conference being held on October 23rd and 24th at the Century Casino in Edmonton. As the name indicates, the objective of this conference is to connect individuals affected by MS with leading researchers and individuals in the field of MS research and healthcare. This means that for a fee, MS Society volunteers are also welcome to attend this conference if they would like a more in depth understanding of MS and current research and healthcare trends. The conference will have numerous keynote presentations from leaders in the field of research, as well as a tradeshow component that will provide conference goers with access to a variety of healthcare organizations. For more information about the conference and some of the speakers that will be attending, please visit the website at:

<http://www.mssociety.ca/alberta/Connections2009.html>.

The MS Society requires some wonderful volunteers for this event, so if you are interested in volunteering please contact Crystal Tracy by email at crystal.tracy@mssociety.ca or by phone at (780) 463 -1190.

"My formula for living is quite simple. I get up in the morning and I go to bed at night. In between, I occupy myself as best I can." ~Cary Grant

MS SOCIETY VOLUNTEER REACHES OUT TO AFRICA

Crystal Tracy, Coordinator, Volunteer Resources
Michelle & Gina Bischoff, MS Society Volunteers

In this issue of Volunteer Voice we wanted to bring you the story of two fantastic MS Society volunteers, Michelle and Gina Bischoff, who expanded their volunteer experiences by volunteering abroad. They traveled to Africa to work with impoverished children at a Kenyan orphanage. Here's their story as told by Michelle:



Michelle Bischoff

It had always been a dream of mine to travel to Africa and work with children. My dream came true this past spring, when my sister and I spent two months in Nairobi, Kenya, where we volunteered at an orphanage called St. Paul's Children's Home. We fell in love with the kids

who ranged in age from a few weeks old to late teens, most orphaned or abandoned as a result of poverty. They were deprived of not only physical necessities but emotional support and love, since there were only a few caregivers and close to 70 children. Although they had nothing, they were still unbelievably happy. We were in awe. It really puts life into perspective.



Gina Bischoff

"It really puts life into perspective."

We also spent time volunteering in Kibera, the largest slum in Africa, with an organization called Good Life for All. Good Life is comprised of just a few hard-working and compassionate individuals who have devoted their lives to working with the poorest children in Kenya. Our role was in helping to run feeding programs in schools where Good Life distributes hot meals, often the only food the students receive in a day. Hunger is the biggest obstacle for these kids. If they can overcome hunger, then they may be in the mindset to properly learn. And for them, education is the only ticket to a better future.