



## **Risky Business – You and Your volunteers**

Derek Zulesky of the Education Safety Association of Ontario and Greg Kelner of the Toronto Public Library worked together to explain why volunteers in libraries need a health and safety orientation program, and provided an example of an established program

An orientation program has a number of benefits, relating to providing services and public relations. A health and safety system which is part of your orientation program is used to recognize, access and control hazards in order to reduce or eliminate injuries.

A question at the end of the session confirmed what many had come to realize – Can a Friends group be sued? The answer is yes.

A good orientation brings a good return on investment. Your volunteers come to believe that you are concerned about their safety, by making them aware of health and safety issues, providing consistent information and wanting them to be part of a productive and profitable team.

## Due Diligence

The concept of “due diligence” means that the organization’s Board members understand their duties under the law and take reasonable steps to carry them out, being proactive in taking all reasonable care.

Due Diligence requires you to:

- develop specific procedures & practices
- train the volunteers in the procedures/practices
- monitor adherence
- enforce compliance
- communicate the procedures/practices

## **Risky Business – Volunteers and Due Diligence**

### Orientation

There can be general orientation, such as that offered to all new volunteers. This could include policies and procedures, reporting relationships, facility tours, policies about fire safety, first aid and workplace hazardous materials, emergency procedures, ergonomics, injury prevention to list a few.

Specific jobs can have their own orientation, with a detailed job description and a job hazard analysis. Derek provided an example for a snack bar clerk, and gave an outline of the content of the job description, as well as a job hazard analysis. This analysis includes the steps of the job, tools and material needed, a review of health and safety hazards and control measures in place.

### Resources

A number of resources were highlighted during Derek's presentation:

*H&S and the Volunteer* Publication of the Education Safety Association of Ontario ESAO. Price \$10.00 (<http://www.esao.on.ca/scriptcontent/index.cfm> > Resource Books)

WSIB site - description of health and safety orientation:

[http://www.oshforeveryone.org/wsib/osh\\_pgm/training/orientation.html](http://www.oshforeveryone.org/wsib/osh_pgm/training/orientation.html)

The Ministry of Labour provides an excellent site for general information. It provides guides for understanding the Occupational Health & Safety Act, a guide for JHSC, smoking in the workplace, etc. This is one site that is useful as a resource - <http://www.gov.on.ca/LAB/ohs/ohse.htm>

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety is also an excellent resource site especially for JHSC guidelines and formation as well as having a large inventory of very good safety material. <http://www.ccohs.ca/>

The Education Safety Association of Ontario, links to other sites, safety information <http://www.esao.on.ca> "Resources", "Related , Links"

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Visit the FOCAL website for full-text documents and PowerPoint presentations of the full presentation. In addition, the website links to many resources, sample documents, policies and related topics:

**Risky Business: you and your volunteers** - <http://www.friendsoflibraries.ca/volunteer.htm>

## Toronto Public Library – Volunteer Management Planning

Greg's presentation went on to describe the volunteer management program at the Toronto Public Library. There are over 1000 volunteers involved in key programs such as reading, homework clubs and adult literacy. They experience a 40% turnover of volunteers every year.

Greg shared with us a volunteer manual, and documents from a training program that took one to two years to develop. Each volunteer position has a profile, outlining their responsibilities and qualifications. The profile also describes orientation and training sessions, the supervision and assistance provided by the library, and the location of volunteer-client meetings.

Volunteers fill in an application form and provide references. An interview is conducted, and a police records check takes place. One listener asked how to turn down a volunteer, and a number of strategies were suggested:

- offer opportunities in other locations
- explain qualifications do not match skills in the job description
- describe other volunteer opportunities
- be objective and fair
- suggest training they could easily get

The training program for volunteers at Toronto Public Library contains elements of due diligence and includes steps to show reasonable care as described by Derek. A volunteer does not receive a placement until they have completed the training program. Onsite supervision and ongoing training continue after the placement.

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Visit our website (<http://www.friendsoflibraries.ca/volunteer.htm>) to find volunteer management ideas and documents, including those handled out at this presentation. The Southern Ontario Library Services maintains a comprehensive resource list on this topic - [www.sols.org/links/clearinghouse/hrresources/index.htm#Volunteer](http://www.sols.org/links/clearinghouse/hrresources/index.htm#Volunteer)

Barrie Public Library - Volunteer Policy  
Camrose Public Library - 18.0 Volunteers Page 43-44  
Chatham-Kent Public Library Policy: VOLUNTEERS  
Chinook Regional Library Role of volunteers  
Cobourg Public Library Volunteer Program  
Hamilton Public Library. Secondary School Students Volunteer Commitment Guidelines.  
Kingston-Frontenac Public Library. > About Us > Volunteering Volunteering at KFPL.  
Lacombe Public Library Personnel Policies - Library Volunteer Job Description Page 23-14  
Medicine Hat Public Library - Policy Volunteers  
Ontario Public Library Guidelines - 5.2 Links with other organizations and individuals  
Salt Spring Public Library Association Volunteer Handbook  
Surrey Public Library Policy Manual - 1.6.0 Volunteers  
Trillium Public Library (fictional library)- Volunteer policy  
Wainright Public Library 4.5b Library Volunteers  
Whistler Public Library Policy Manual - 1003.1 Friends of the Whistler Public Library Society  
Woodstock Public Library. Policy Manual. Section 11. Volunteers

# Volunteer Profile

## Volunteer Profile

**Position Title:** Leading To Reading Volunteer

**Locations:** The Leading To Reading Program takes place at the following Toronto Public Library branches:

**East Region**

**For information, phone Cathy Thomson, 416-396-8601**  
Agincourt, Albert Campbell, Cedarbrae, Malvern, Morningside, Thorncliffe Park

**North Region**

**For information, phone Denise Piper, 416-395-5990**  
Downsview, Fairview, Flemingdon Park, Humber Summit, Jane Sheppard, Woodview Park, York Woods

**South Region**

**For information, phone Trevor Pross, 416-393-7682**  
Annette Street, Bloor/Gladstone, Dufferin/St.Clair, Northern District, Parkdale, Parliament, Queen/Saulter, Sanderson

**West Region**

**For information, phone David Kondo, 416-394-5012**  
Albion, Eatonville, Evelyn Gregory, Humberwood, Jane/Dundas, Maria A. Shchuka, Mimico, Mount Dennis, New Toronto, Oakwood Village, Richview, Weston

**Summary Statement:** At Toronto Public Library, our mission is to encourage and foster an interest in reading and life long learning. Reading practice volunteers are paired with elementary school children who have reading difficulties. Reading practice volunteers build children's reading confidence and motivation, provide a positive reading experience, and promote the enjoyment of reading by using the library as a resource.

**Responsibilities:**

- ◆ Meet the same student one hour per week at the Library at a regularly scheduled time
- ◆ Encourage reading by reading together and engaging in a variety of reading games and activities
- ◆ Assist their partner in selecting reading material
- ◆ Keep written notes each week regarding the reading session
- ◆ Keep parent(s) and program staff advised and up-to-date on their partner's progress
- ◆ Familiarize your partner with the Library and encourage the child to borrow

Sample Documents from  
Toronto Public Library  
volunteer program.

**Qualifications:**

- ◆ Fluent and well-versed in written and spoken English
- ◆ Able to relate well to children and enjoys working one-to-one with a child
- ◆ Can work well independently
- ◆ Communicates well with both children and adults
- ◆ Able to act as a mature reading role model
- ◆ Teaching experience is not essential
- ◆ Placements are subject to the return of a satisfactory Police Reference Check (which is paid for by the Toronto Public Library).

**Orientation and Training:**

- ◆ Training, provided by Library staff, covers:
  - ◆ Basic reading theory
  - ◆ Tutoring techniques
  - ◆ Problem solving
  - ◆ Time management
  - ◆ Behaviour management
  - ◆ Building relationships with the children
  - ◆ Creating a positive attitude to learning and reading
  - ◆ Program structure and procedures
- ◆ A separate on-site orientation, provided by Library staff, covers:
  - ◆ Local program procedures
  - ◆ Local library and program resources
- ◆ Printed materials, outlining program procedures and reading strategies, are provided.

**Time and Place:** One-hour sessions take place in library buildings once per week at a regularly scheduled time that is mutually suitable. In general, sessions are held after school, in the evening, or on Saturday.

**Commitment:**

- ◆ The duration of the elementary school year (October through May at most sites)
- ◆ A few sites offer the option to volunteer during the summer.
- ◆ A regularly scheduled time commitment of one hour per week is required.
- ◆ Applications may be accepted at any time.

**Onsite Supervision:** Library staff provide assistance and on-site supervision during the program. They are available for consultation at other times by appointment.

**Privileges:**

Volunteers may copy at the staff rate.  
Overdue fines and non-resident fees are waived for current volunteers with six months or more of active service.



## VOLUNTEER CODE OF ETHICS

Toronto Public Library inspires the spirit of exploration, the joy of reading, and the pursuit of knowledge for peoples of all ages and backgrounds, beginning with the very young.

By volunteering at the Toronto Public Library you help us to achieve this vision through your dedication and commitment to Library services and programs.

In carrying out your responsibilities you are dedicated to the following principles:

**Active Participation** - through consistent attendance, regular communication, and participating in on-going training

**Confidentiality** - by maintaining confidentiality in all your activities

**Non-discrimination** - by recognizing the dignity and worth of every person and abiding by the principles of the Human Rights Code

**Co-operation** - by working together with learners, other volunteers, and Library staff in a spirit of mutual understanding and respect

Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised: December 17, 2004