

"The Opposite of Apathy is a Volunteer"

Helen Hayles, Executive Director of The Volunteer Centre of Winnipeg Inc. was our CLA 2001 luncheon guest speaker, offering her local, provincial and national views of the voluntary sector.

Some key problems she outlined include:

- Participation - active involvement in economic activity
- Innovation – generation of new ideas, and new ways of doing things
- Flexibility in management of change

Values promoted by the voluntary sector relate to sharing, caring and belonging. Their economic importance is supplemented by their democratic importance. However, volunteers are taken for granted and not well understood. Our strength is our diversity, in being able to do so many things. Our weakness is this diversity, in that we have no one speaker to represent us. On the other hand, the business, labour and government sectors are well represented. Volunteers do special programs for communities, meet unfilled needs, help communities to help themselves and enhance the social fabric of our life. The issues facing us at a time when governments cannot answer the growing human service and cultural needs include funding, privatization (public vs. private sector involvement) and the need for new and dynamic leadership.

Future success in the voluntary sector relates to the following initiatives:

- Community leadership to develop a plan
- A strong voice
- Sustainability
- Research on sector
- Development of agreements with government agencies for sustainability
- Recommendations and solutions on priorities
- Improved cohesion in the sector
- Increased commitment to capacity expansion
- Enhanced expertise in serving the public

Helen referred to two government resources relating to the volunteer section

1. Voluntary Sector Initiative – the Broadbent Commission – <http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/index.cfm>

2) ***Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*** <http://www.nsgvp.org/n-2000hr-ca.htm>

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