

②

Scholarship

*How important is
volunteering to a
community?*

Lillian Wright

777-3556

In managing such a diverse municipality, the Town must take great effort in offering initiatives to the citizens of Inuvik in the volunteering field. Volunteering is an opportunity to develop new skills, expand your network, and it also gives you personal satisfaction in serving others.

My personal experience with volunteering was in the Suicide Crisis Line a few years ago. This was a big challenge for me as I had to get 'outside the box' and deal with distressed people. Losing a son to suicide made me aware of how important it is to be involved with a simple thing like the Suicide Crisis Line. This tragedy gave me the empathy to reach out to others. I was on the Family Counseling board, too, before it closed down for a number of years. At present, I'm volunteering with the Great Northern Arts Festival. This year will be my third term. This experience has given me opportunity to meet many artists, and gain ideas and different methods of making art.

Volunteering boosts your self confidence because you stay connected with the community. In volunteering, new skills and ideas are learned. You gain experience which will be helpful on resumes. It doesn't cost anything, but our time and it demonstrates a team spirit among people that we will be working with in the future. Volunteering should be passed onto the youth as well, so they can gain confidence in themselves. This would help them be better citizens in the next generation.

One of our subjects that we studied in the Office Administration Program was Organizational Behaviours. One example that they gave about connecting with employees was Canada Post CEO, Moya Greene. She kept her perceptions in focus by staying close to employees. The first six months of her job, she travelled across the country doing every job that employee's do, from sorting mail to delivering it. She spent time in the plant, in the letter carrier depots, and sorting parcels on the loading dock, mainly to understand how the business works. Communication with employees keeps her connected with what's happening in the organization. Canada Post has been recognized for the second consecutive year as one of Canada's Top 100 Employers.

I know that we all can't be like Moya Greene, but I used her as an example to show how we can follow her footsteps, and use that scenario in the volunteering field. As leaders of Inuvik, being a volunteer would greatly motivate others to do the same as it will connect with the citizens of Inuvik. As the leaders show the initiative, it will make the Town look good. The employees will feel good also as they see the positive outcome of all the hard work of volunteering. It would also encourage other businesses to 'take up the torch'. I'm sure this gesture will be contagious to all people, young and old.

One idea that the citizens of Inuvik can do with their leaders is to have a litter free environment. Clean up should be done periodically, and not only in the summer months. Major clean ups should be done in the summer, preferably before the ferry starts running. When the roads are closed, each business should get their employees to pick up litter around their office building for about twenty minutes on a specific day. Garbage trucks can be arranged to pick up the garbage bags on the same day, too. Every citizen of Inuvik could do the same and have a specific day for such an event. Once this begins, I'm sure this will cause everyone to participate in keeping our environment litter free. Families that don't have a vehicle can be helped to have their garbage taken away. Even though we do have garbage pickup, it makes it more of an urgency to set a day or more just for clean up time.

The businesses and other buildings need help with cleaning windows, as well. I'm sure that the Justice committee can get involved with their group and clients to promote in keeping Inuvik clean and safe.

The homeless people can be encouraged to volunteer to help pick up litter. For example, they should pick up a garbage bag of litter a day before they enter the shelter for the night. They need to be recognized for their effort every so often to make them feel good, and maybe put some hope into them. Asking them to help would make them feel important.

Another idea would be sell T-shirts, bumper stickers, yard signs, and tote bags with slogans written on them. Some slogans can be; 'Just pick it up', 'Tidy town', and 'Keep Inuvik beautiful'. The garbage bins should be painted in bright colors, different color from the recycle bins. 'Thank you' could be written on the garbage cans, these words mean a lot. By example we can teach the young and elderly to pick up one piece of garbage a day. Imagine how good our community will look. We will be proud to welcome the visitors and the tourists. They'll leave the north with a good impression of Inuvik

Planting trees in various places in town could be a nice project, too. Getting youth involvement through the youth centre may spark some interest in such projects. The town needs to look attractive for tourists and visitors. It will also make us feel good, as we admire the effort that is put into beautifying Inuvik. The Arts Festival draws tourists from all over the world, and it will bring great satisfaction in knowing that our "Northern community" looks so clean.

For volunteering in doing our duty in keeping Inuvik clean, it would be nice to have a barbecue for everyone, and serve juice instead of pop. The barbecue can be done by the volunteering Town Councilors. If the councilors wear a yellow shirt with their names written on it, people will get to know who they are, and have a 'connection' with them. The T-shirt can be any color of their choosing.

As we all join together in volunteering for various jobs, it will give us the feeling of 'being part of a big family' even though we live in a diverse municipality. The feeling of satisfaction in the volunteering field will be our reward.