

# Loss of human touch will hurt nonprofits

While businesses everywhere are struggling to maintain their bank balances during this economic downturn, nonprofit and charitable organizations are facing similar challenges in retaining another valuable resource — volunteers.

Recent findings show that the recession is indeed making its mark on the nonprofit sector.

Charity Village, a leading online resource for news, information and services for Canadian nonprofits, has

released a tough times survival guide designed to help organizations weather the current economic hardship.

In November, Volunteer Canada, along with 70 organizations, sent a letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper urging his support for the nonprofit sector.

As a result of the recession, many potential volunteers are opting to enter the workforce to help pay mounting bills or replenish depleted savings, rather than volunteer.

An added loss of a volunteer workforce due to the economic situation could seriously hamper the efforts of nonprofit and charitable organizations already short of volunteers.

Alberta boasts more than 19,000 nonprofits, charities and community-based organizations supported by 2.5 million volunteers who donate 449 million hours.

These numbers make Alberta the province with the highest per capita number of nonprofits in the country.

With 58 per cent of these organizations run solely by volunteers, it becomes clear how important and necessary volunteers are to the survival of nonprofit and voluntary sector organizations.

Figures from Statistics Canada show that volunteerism is declining by as much as two per cent a



year. Given that a small number of people are shouldering most of the work — 75 per cent of the volunteer work in Alberta is done by only 25 per cent of volunteers — any slight decrease will present challenges to

the nonprofit sector in a few years to come.

To ensure the sector remains vibrant and healthy, addressing the volunteer shortfall will require a complex answer that goes beyond spending money on the issue.

“When a business is successful, it brings in money and is profitable. When a nonprofit is successful, it spends money delivering programs and services that the community demands,” explains Janice Bell, director of Volunteer Edmonton.

This example, says Bell, is to highlight how organizations use funds to meet community needs. Without volunteers, staff work more hours, budgets are stretched to pay for positions that would otherwise have been filled by volunteers — money that could have gone into programs and services.

“People do care and want to help out,” she says. “It’s just a matter of reminding folks that a little bit of their time will go a long way in helping out the community.”

For more information or suggestions for story ideas please contact Evelyn Pham, Volunteer Edmonton communications co-ordinator, at [epham@volunteeredmonton.com](mailto:epham@volunteeredmonton.com), call 732-6655 or check out our website at [www.volunteeredmonton.com](http://www.volunteeredmonton.com).

**Alberta boasts more than 19,000 nonprofits, charities and community-based organizations supported by 2.5 million volunteers who donate 449 million hours.**



## DENTURE PATIENTS REQUIRED

Do you have complete upper and lower dentures in need of replacement? NAIT's Denturist Program can help, with high-quality services and very reasonable rates.

All procedures are completed by students under the direct supervision of a licensed denturist. Appointments will be taken for services through to May 2009.

Call for an appointment: 780.471.7786. Please leave your name and telephone number so that your call may be returned.

AN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY COMMITTED TO STUDENT SUCCESS  
[www.nait.ca](http://www.nait.ca)

**LASIK MD**  
VISION

**LASIK Now. Pay in 2010.**

### LASER VISION CORRECTION

Starting at

**\$490** /eye\*

### NEW FINANCING

<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>0%</b>
Down	Payments	Interest
<b>UNTIL JANUARY 2010†</b>		



Dr. Richard Leger  
MD, FRCSC  
40 000 procedures

FREE Consultation 780-702-2020

EDMONTON: Edmonton City Center Mall,  
10200 - 102 Avenue, Suite C107

[www.lasikmd.com](http://www.lasikmd.com)



\* Prices are subject to change without prior notice. Prices vary based on prescription strength. Applicable to surgery on both eyes only.  
† Subject to Desjardins Card Services credit approval. No payments, no interest until January 2010.

Halifax | Montréal | Toronto | Winnipeg | Calgary | Vancouver

# 100%

Did you know that EPCOR is 100% owned by the City of Edmonton? EPCOR pays an annual dividend to the City. A total of \$1.8 billion in dividends, taxes and franchise fees has been paid to the City since 1996.

Learn more about EPCOR's financial performance at [www.epcor.ca](http://www.epcor.ca)

