

# Volunteer fair a hit with Edmontonians

## HIGHLIGHTING THE SPIRIT OF THE CITY OF CHAMPIONS

On May 13, more than 500 Edmontonians showed their festival spirit by attending the second annual Festival Volunteer Fair to find out how they could help support 32 city festivals.

As a "one-stop festival volunteer shopping" opportunity, the fair featured a variety of arts and culture-related festivals showcasing their volunteer opportunities at the TransAlta Arts Barns.

Members of the public were invited to attend the fair to find out how to become involved in volunteering.

"We were thrilled to see so many people drop in to learn more about how to help support the unique festivals in our community," says Janice Bell, director of Volunteer Edmonton. "We saw such a diverse group of people. Edmontonians truly are interested in volunteering."

### A BIG HIT

The fair, hosted by Volunteer Edmonton with the support from the Edmonton Arts Council, Fringe Theatre Adventures, the Edmonton Realtors Association, Industry Images and River City Event Rentals, proved was a big hit for both visitors and festivals hoping to recruit volunteers.

Doreen Cardinal, youth day co-ordinator for Dreamspeakers Festival, believes the fair provided festivals an opportunity to recruit volunteers.

When asked to rate the event, Cardinal says: "Let me put it this way. Out of the 100 (volunteer) applications we had at our table, we only have seven left."

Cardinal hopes to be part of the fair next year.

"It gives festivals a chance to network with each other and the event is a great opportunity for the general public to get involved in volunteering," she explains.

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Janice Bell  
VOLUNTEER EDMONTON DIRECTOR

Edmonton's Food Bank is Canada's first food bank. It was incorporated as the Edmonton Gleaners Association in 1981 by a handful of inner-city volunteers who were concerned that the local food industry was wasting perfectly good food while many Edmontonians were going hungry.



Visitors could sign up for a number of unique positions, ranging from costume designers, parade marshals, security and clean-up crew, ticket takers, drivers and more.

"The perks included are often a great incentive to get involved," says Bell. "Some festivals offer free admission, complimentary food and refreshments during your shift, attendance to the wrap-up parties, and of course the sense of fun, friendship and camaraderie you get from working with other like-minded individuals."

For many, the fair helped make the connection to volunteering easier.

"It makes sense to have these kinds of events," says Brett Bailey. Although she currently volunteers and works full-time, Bailey was interested in seeing what festivals had to offer.

### WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

"Sometimes you don't know where to go or who to call when you want to volunteer. This fair makes the process simple and fast. It's really beneficial for everyone."

Bell and committee organizers hope events like the Festival Volunteer Fair will help strengthen volunteerism in the city.

"We want to make volunteering accessi-

ble to everyone. It's a great way to build skills and a chance

to do something interesting while helping the community," Bell says.

If you missed the Festival Volunteer Fair you can still sign up to volunteer.

Visit [www.volunteeredmonton.com](http://www.volunteeredmonton.com) to view a complete list of festivals, along with their contact information, featured at the fair.

Look to this space to see the work that the city's volunteers and non-profit organizations are carrying out.

For suggestions for story ideas, please contact Evelyn Pham, communications coordinator, at [epham@volunteeredmonton.com](mailto:epham@volunteeredmonton.com), call (780) 732-6655 or check out our [www.volunteeredmonton.com](http://www.volunteeredmonton.com).



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