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# Volunteer managers the key to success



For every organization that involves volunteers, there is a volunteer manager. These are the folks who work hard to ensure that volunteers continue to exist and are happy, respected and acknowledged for their contribution.

Sounds easy? Not exactly. Especially when you consider the skills and training needed to successfully recruit and retain this valuable human resource.

That's why Volunteer Edmonton, along with the Resource Centre for Voluntary Organizations, is hosting a three-day course called Encouraging Volunteer Involvement.

The first session, on Friday, Jan. 16, saw 37 people sign up to learn how to improve their volunteer involvement strategies.

"Unless you work in the sector, most people are not familiar with what a volunteer manager does and

the critical role they play," explains Janice Bell, director of Volunteer Edmonton.

"Organizations that do not do a good job of supporting volunteers will lose out and volunteers will donate their time elsewhere," Bell explains.

Such basics as greeting a volunteer on their first shift, providing a training and orientation program and saying thank you are just a few critical elements that need to be present.

The session featured information on the influence behind volunteer motivation, volunteerism trends, the challenges of volunteer involvement, how to adapt to a changing demographic and more.

"There is no right or wrong way to involve volunteers," says Wendy MacDonald, course facilitator and former chair of Grant MacEwan's Voluntary Sector Management Program. "It's about motivation. Why do people get involved in volunteering?"

"Some people think volunteers are little old ladies or that volunteering was something that our parents and grandparents did," MacDonald says. "Canadians are just as committed as they were before."

MacDonald suggests tapping into motivation begins with a good job design. "We need to get people excited."

For many of the participants new to volunteer management, the course provided new insight and ideas on recruiting and retaining volunteers.

The next two sessions will take place on Feb. 6 and March 13. To learn more about the Encouraging Volunteer Involvement Course or how to become a volunteer, visit [www.volunteeredmonton.com](http://www.volunteeredmonton.com).

For more information or suggestions for story ideas, please contact Evelyn Pham, communications co-ordinator, at [epham@volunteeredmonton.com](mailto:epham@volunteeredmonton.com)

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