



Volunteer
Victoria



YOUTH

LEGACY

PROJECT 2015



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The United Way inspires people to take action and be part of making Greater Victoria a better place to live. We believe everyone has a role to play no matter the age. Since 1999, the United Way has been at the forefront of engaging youth in our work. From seeking feedback from youth during our funding application process, to recognizing youth contributions through our youth awards, and facilitating two volunteer youth-run councils for expertise, and our latest Youth in Action projects in Hillside/Quadra and Esquimalt, the United Way values and respects the opinions of young people. They bring an exciting and new way of thinking to our workplace.

One of our priority areas when it comes to funding focuses on the well-being of children and youth. Growing up can be tough and we fund a network of services that help children and youth succeed in life by investing in their development from early childhood to young adulthood. We work to ensure that every infant grows into a healthy child; every child has the support they need to start and finish school, and every young person makes a successful transition into the workplace, volunteerism and/or post secondary.

We also recognize the importance of interactions between generations and we support many mentoring programs that encourage adults to share their expertise and knowledge with young people.

The voice of youth can help build awareness, dispel stereotypes and inform policies that contribute to removing barriers for young people who are working to create better lives for themselves. For more information about United Way and our youth initiatives, please visit uwgv.ca



The Youth Legacy Research Project was designed to create an in depth understanding of the current pulse of youth volunteering in Victoria. Volunteer Victoria's Youth Team knew by capturing the successes and barriers to volunteering, as identified by youth (aged 15-25), determining how to effectively increase youth participants and make volunteering as fun, enriching and accessible as possible would become more clear.

During Winter 2014 Volunteer Victoria's Youth Focus Group created an online survey in which, over the span of six months, **564** youth living in **Greater Victoria** participated in.

Overall, the results have shown a positive attitude towards volunteering. Over half of the youth surveyed in Greater Victoria are already volunteering (**54.37%**) and are interested in volunteering in a wide range of disciplines. Youth are expressing a strong desire to help others, meet new people and gain new skills. Further to this, there is a solid understanding of the fundamental benefits to volunteering as they relate to employment, career growth and resume enhancement. In fact, close to **100%** of youth acknowledge the direct and multi-layered connection between volunteering, skill development and employment.

While there are clearly identifiable successes in youth volunteering, there is undoubtedly room to increase participation and enhance youth volunteer experiences. There was a strong consensus among respondents that school, work and other commitments interfere with their volunteering potential. Beyond time constraints and other identified barriers, youth may not be engaging in volunteering opportunities because they may be unaware of how to access them and pinpoint ones that meet their volunteer objectives.

The survey asked questions surrounding what makes youth feel supported, why they want to volunteer, and how they might want to engage with volunteering in the future. These essential questions will help to determine what drives youth to begin to volunteer and what sustains them in continuing their volunteer journey.



youthinvic

Youth In Victoria: Individuals aged 15-25 living, working, learning and playing in Victoria, BC
<http://www.volunteervictoria.bc.ca>



We are passionate about
 family
 education
 employment
 traveling
 saving for a house

524 surveyed, 20 average age

Did you know?



Why do we volunteer?

- give back to community
- develop skills
- personal satisfaction
- enhance resume
- meet program requirements

Who else in our life volunteers?

family
friends
coaches
mentors
teachers
peers
colleagues
cousins

How do we volunteer?

Alone 38%
In a Group 35%
With Friends or Family 28%

Where do we want to volunteer?

- with children/youth
- in health and wellness
- with animals
- in arts and music
- with the environment
- in mental health and addictions

“Volunteering with kids has made me remember to laugh – a lot.”





Youth In Victoria
@YouthInVic

TRENDING

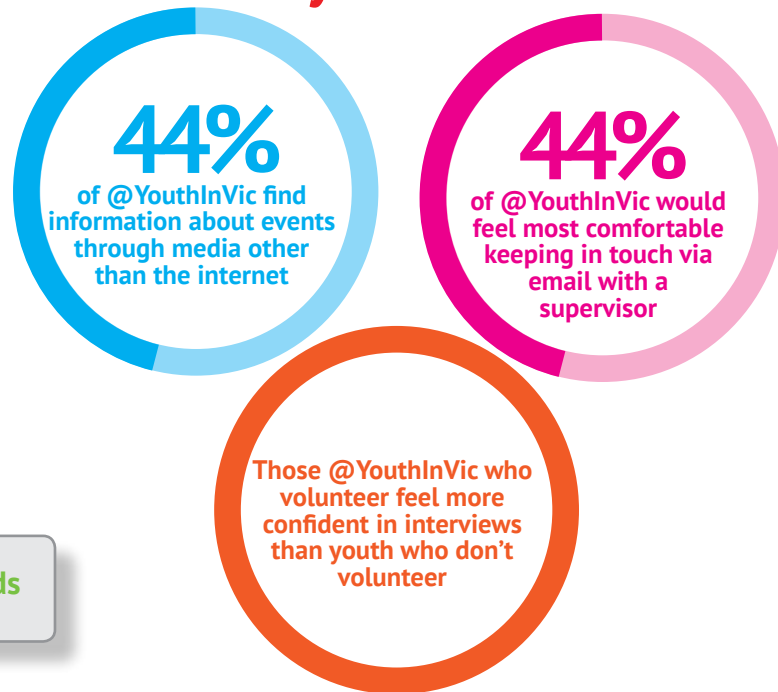
- #Victoria
- #volunteering
- #yyj
- #community
- #giveback

TOP 3 PLACES

@YouthInVic find
volunteer opportunities



Did you know?



1 in 2 @YouthInVic has searched Volunteer Victoria online



Youth identified Facebook as their primary source of information regarding events happening in Victoria; however Facebook was **not** recognized as the tool they used to access information as it relates to volunteering or volunteer opportunities.

Rather **schools** stood out as the dependable means for students and **online volunteer boards** for those not currently in school. A staggering **49%** of non-students acknowledged locating volunteer information from sites such as Volunteer Victoria over all other forms of media or news.

Over **75%** of survey respondents had heard of Volunteer Victoria before with the vast majority of those (59%) learning of the organization through schools (both high school and post-secondary schools were identified).

Survey results also found that youth who have volunteered before are **more comfortable** in interviews, communicating about their abilities and skills, than their counterparts who have not volunteered. This could be attributed to the idea the more experience one has the greater their confidence in themselves becomes.

“Volunteering made me more confident. And introduced me to a whole new way of looking at things, and taught me not to judge too quickly.”



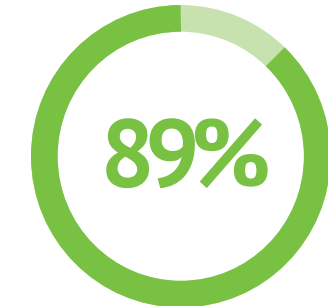
Youth recognize that there is a strong relationship between volunteering and employment. They are acutely aware that volunteering provides opportunities for skill development in several areas including: communication, public speaking and conflict resolution, all which give depth to a resume. Further to this, youth recognize the principle of **strategic volunteering**, volunteering to gain skills or benefits as they relate to a desired field, and identify securing a volunteer position in their field of choice as the number one way volunteering would be more exciting. With this knowledge in mind, **42%** of youth are actively searching for volunteer positions in their field of interest.

Youth in schools are more motivated to volunteer for the purpose of **skill development** than any other reason, demonstrating the recognition that skills and experiences gained through volunteering can assist in the transition from school to employment, or post-secondary entrance acceptance.

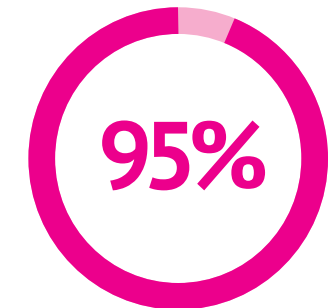
It also may explain why training has emerged as a significant factor in youth choosing volunteer positions. Youth consistently noted that they would be more likely to volunteer if it came with training opportunities. Of the 42% of youth actively looking for relevant volunteer experience, **79%** noted they look exclusively for positions and organizations that provide **training opportunities**. These opportunities enhance resumes and potential employment, provide youth with tools and confidence, and are the **most-sought after benefit** to their time donation. With over **35%** of youth identifying training as something not offered to them by the organization they volunteer for, it could be something to consider adding!



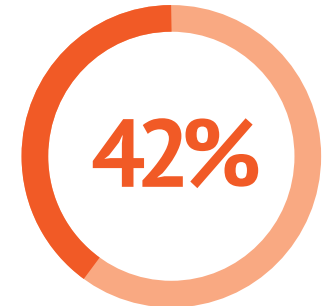
feel volunteering develops transferable skills



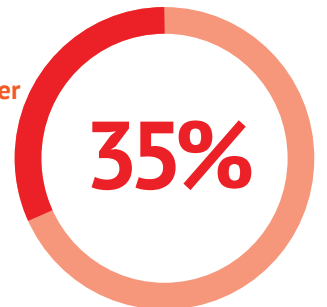
feel we are currently developing skills in our volunteer position



believe volunteering relates directly to employment



look for volunteer positions in our career field at least once a month



are not being offered training opportunities through our volunteer work

“The skills that I learn volunteering help me to adjust to employment and its demands. Volunteering is also a great way to try different jobs for future reference.”











Volunteer Victoria
 What are the upsides to volunteering?
 Sun Feb 2, 10:45pm 972 Youth Comments

Volunteer Victoria
 What are the barriers to volunteering?
 Sun Feb 2, 11:02pm 472 Youth Comments

-  **Helping Others / Giving Back**
 159 people like this
-  **Meeting New People**
 122 people like this
-  **Learning New Skills**
 103 people like this

-  **Not Enough Time**
 197 people like this
-  **Transportation**
 46 people like this
-  **Don't Know Where To Start**
 26 people like this



Time emerged as the dominant barrier to youth volunteering. One respondent captured the daily lives of youth we are speaking with in their quote “**time management [is] balancing a full course load, a part time job, volunteering and travelling [to and from] home**”. Other youth add sports, hobbies and extra-curricular to their definition of time-management and it’s easy to see how a day/week/ month fills up for out youth.

Other obstacles youth identified as facing were **distance/location** of volunteering opportunities and their **shyness/anxiety** towards showing up. While one cannot control where an organization is situated, steps to improving accessibility might be linking bus and bike routes to volunteer postings and encouraging carpooling. While youth noted their nervousness in volunteering they also articulated that **welcoming environments** (friendly staff and volunteers, words of encouragement, non-judgmental spaces) were the best form of support when trying something new.

Increasing youth participation in volunteering goes beyond simply examining the obstacles, it is also useful to consider what motivates youth to volunteer. Over **85%** of youth are interested in volunteering because they want to help others and **give back** to their community. Showing the ripple effects organizations make in the community might be a simple way to generate positive interest and future volunteers.

Youth are also drawn to volunteering for the social benefits that volunteering can offer. Youth regularly mentioned that they want to volunteer to make new friends, gain new contacts and **meet people in their communities**. Volunteering with friends was also a factor in getting youth excited about volunteering and another way they acknowledged feeling supported while volunteering.



Youth recognize the correlation between volunteering and employment with **99%** of youth identifying that volunteering develops skill sets.

Youth who volunteer demonstrate a high level of comfort during interviews and in their ability to market their skills and abilities.

Requirements are not the leading motivations for youth to volunteer. Rather helping others and giving back to the community dominates youths' desires.

Youth are locating their information about volunteering through school and online volunteer boards.

Youth are more motivated to volunteer when training is provided. Knowing that they will be given the support and guidance they require is necessary to allow youth to confidently fulfill their volunteer role.

60% of youth who work and go to school, also volunteer.

“Volunteering gives you just as much experience if not more than your first job would, but instead of getting paid with money you get paid in satisfaction. Satisfaction in knowing you made someone smile, you made their day. You made someone's life easier, and made a difference in the community and lives of others.”



The most dominant barrier to youth volunteering was time. Creating opportunities (when operationally possible) that run during evenings and weekends for youth in school, providing shorter shifts and shifts that occur less frequently would help to overcome this barrier. Transportation and distance were listed as secondary barriers to volunteering. Pointing youth towards similar volunteer opportunities in their area and providing information on public transportation or other modes of travel (car-pooling, biking) that youth may not be aware of may assist in curtailing these barriers.

Youth consistently mentioned welcoming, positive and non-judgmental environments as an integral factor in whether or not they aspire to volunteer. Given that a notable portion of youth also expressed shyness and anxiety as a barrier to volunteering, providing them with a warm and welcoming environment may help to retain those who do seek out volunteering with a given organization. As well as being aware of what the first point of contact looks and feels like for an agency.

Youth are seeking and committed to volunteer positions where training, guidance and/or mentoring is offered. This may take several different forms. For example, volunteers could be provided with formal training, a friendly point person to direct questions to or be set-up with a mentor (staff or volunteer) for training and ongoing guidance. Youth want to ensure that they understand their volunteer role and will be given the opportunity to learn and ask questions. If training opportunities for volunteers are already established and have proven to be effective, then organizations should ensure that they are advertising this when promoting volunteer opportunities.

Finally, youth volunteer for many reasons, particularly because they want to help others and give back to their community, work in an area of specific interest, and gain relevant skills for future employment. Leading youth to opportunities that can meet these objectives could be achieved through a variety of methods, online or otherwise. For the significant number of youth drawn to the social benefits of volunteering, creating opportunities for youth to volunteer with friends, interact with the population they are volunteering for and with, and creating social events for volunteers to get to know one another better, may also assist in increasing volunteer participation rates.

If you are between the age of 15-29 Volunteer Victoria can help you:

Explore how volunteering can be used to your benefit

Use volunteering to reach your personal, professional, academic goals

Learn more about the non-profit community

Find (or create) a volunteer position

Develop your resume and prepare for interviews

Support you through your volunteer journey

If you work with a group of youth (at a school, employment centre, support group, etc.) Volunteer Victoria offers:

Interactive presentations catered to your group/class to enhance learning about volunteering and the non-profit community

Support in group or class volunteer efforts

Presentations designed for high-school business classes on the difference between non-profits for-profits

Attendance at volunteer/community fairs

Support to your students in hosting a volunteer/community fair





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Volunteer Victoria
Mount Douglas Secondary School
Victoria High Secondary School
Oak Bay Secondary School
Island Health
City of Victoria
City of Victoria Youth Council
Restorative Justice
Saanich Recreation
Boys and Girls Club
Need2
Victoria Youth in Care Network
Sooke Youth Council
United Way Youth in Action



“Never doubt that
a small group of thoughtful,
committed citizens can
change the world; indeed, it’s
the only thing that ever has.”
– Margaret Mead



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