

Volunteer NWT

Northwest Territories Network
Canada Volunteerism Initiative

Bénévoles TNO

Réseau des Territoires du Nord-Ouest
Initiative canadienne sur le bénévolat

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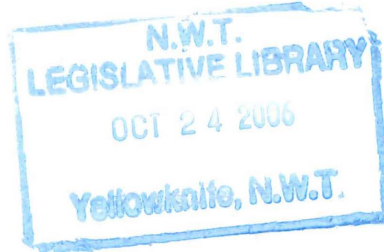
*Chair
Bill
Graham*



October 17, 2006

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Robert Hawkins
MLA, Yellowknife Centre
Legislative Assembly
Box 1320
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9



Dear Mr. Hawkins *Robert*

I am writing today to request your support in the Legislative Assembly for the voluntary sector. The recent federal cuts to cultural and social programs mean the discontinuation of Volunteer NWT as a voice for the voluntary sector in a number of forums; political, bureaucratic and the general public.

Volunteer NWT received its annual base funding of \$130,000 through the Canadian Volunteerism Initiative (CVI). CVI is one of the programs cut. In all, \$9.7 million which was directed at supporting volunteerism across the country was cut. In the NWT, our funding has been used in direct support of volunteers and volunteer groups in the Northwest Territories. Please refer to the attachment "How we're making a difference!" for details on the work we have accomplished over the past three years.

In addition, NWT volunteer groups have received over \$250,000 in funding from the national centres of the CVI for pilot and research projects. Some the beneficiaries have been Ecology North, Sport North and a coalition of the Literacy Council, the Native Women's Association and the YWCA of Yellowknife. These projects have been aimed at expanding volunteerism in the North.

Ms. Hawkins, I ask you to speak for volunteerism in the Legislative Assembly. It is important the Government of the Northwest Territories demonstrate its commitment to support the voluntary sector by making available the resources necessary to continue the valuable programs cut by the federal government. After all, the government did formally pledge its support for the sector in a "Declaration" approved by Cabinet in March 2005.


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It is also important that the Volunteer Support Initiative of the government be adequately resourced. A dedicated program manager and appropriate funding is necessary if the government is to adequately demonstrate its commitment to the "Declaration". To date, the majority of support to the sector has been through the activities of Volunteer NWT.

Another matter of concern is the Finance Action Group's (FAG) report "Toward New Voluntary Sector-Government of the NWT Relationships and Funding Arrangements". A mouthful as I noted in my presentation during the pre-budget consultations in August. The Committee of Deputy Ministers agreed to review the report and to determine the need for internal changes prior to meeting with the voluntary sector to work out mutually acceptable processes which would improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of funding arrangements and the accountability requirements. To date, the Committee of Deputies has not provided a time line for this report.

As I noted above, Volunteer NWT seeks your support for the continuation of its work. Now that the federal government has cut our funding, we need funding from the Government of the Northwest Territories to continue our work on behalf of the voluntary sector. In addition, it is time that the government supported its own "Declaration" of support to the sector with adequate resources. And finally, the FAG report should not be allowed to linger until it is forgotten; action needs to be undertaken to improve the processes for funding and accountability between the sector and the government.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.



W.H. Graham
Chair

How we're making a difference!

Introduction

Volunteer NWT is a committee made up of people who represent the diversity of the volunteer sector in the territories. We are funded by the federal government through the Canada Volunteerism Initiative, which supports a network like ours in each province and territory. Sport North is our host organization, providing financial and other supports. Volunteer NWT began in December, 2003.

Website

- Check out our website at www.volunteernwt.ca. Find:
 - volunteer opportunities
 - a huge NWT service directory
 - information and resources

Newsletter

- Contact info@volunteernwt.ca to join the network of folks getting a better understanding of how important volunteers and volunteer groups are to the NWT quality of life and economy. Keep informed each month about training and funding opportunities. See our website for previous issues.

Resources

- Use our *Resources to increase and support volunteers*. These nine booklets are plain language, with northern content, useful for new and established groups. Available in English and French. Also available on our website and on CD. Communities and groups can adapt the many tools to meet their needs.
- Check out our fact sheets on volunteering, NWT research and other topics.
- Volunteer NWT distributes resources produced elsewhere on a variety of topics of interest to volunteers and volunteer groups

Capacity Building

- Volunteer NWT has delivered 10 community volunteering workshops. Get your community talking about volunteers and how important they are! Help your volunteer group or community develop a plan for recruiting and supporting volunteers. Our workshops are interactive using a community development approach. Community workshops have been held in Deline, Fort Good Hope, Fort Resolution, Inuvik, Fort Smith, Lutselk'e, Tuktoyaktuk and Wha Ti. The workshop is also a great way to get introduced to our *Resources to increase and support volunteers*.

- In April, 2006, 40 people from around the NWT discussed how they could use recent research about the voluntary sector in their organizations or communities.
- September 2006 30 participants attended two Insurance and the Nonprofit Sector seminars.
- We coordinate a Finance Action Group making the case for improvements in financing arrangements and improved relationships between the voluntary sector and the Government of the Northwest Territories. We are working with the GNWT on implementing our report's recommendations.
- Volunteer NWT is creating volunteering resources for schools to encourage youth to help out.

Promotion

- We help groups celebrate International Volunteer Day on December 5. At our request the Minister Responsible for Volunteers has declared this day for the past two years.
- Get ideas for celebrating National Volunteer Week from our kit on our website. Use the ideas anytime of the year! We provide Volunteer NWT for promotional materials and ideas on request.
- We now partner with Municipal and Community Affairs on the NWT Outstanding Volunteer Awards.
- We make presentations on volunteering and its importance to diverse audiences from students to Members of the Legislative Assembly.
- We received 98 entries to our Volunteers Matter! Photo Contest.
- We have held volunteer gatherings in Fort Smith, Hay River, Fort Simpson and Inuvik.

Advocacy

- Successfully encouraged the territorial government to approve its Volunteer Support Initiative and are working toward its implementation.
- We have made submissions on the volunteer sector perspective to the Northern Strategy, the GNWT Review of Boards and Agencies and Legislative Assembly members.

Advice

- Volunteer NWT provides advice at the national level to the Canada Volunteerism Initiative making sure that the interests of northern volunteers and groups are represented.
- We advise other national groups on how to engage volunteers and volunteer groups in the territories. We hosted a community conversation in Yellowknife as part of the national Voluntary Sector Awareness Project.