

Leaders of Volunteers, I have an advocacy question for you.

Who Cares? (No, really, think about it.)



I reflected, who would care to hear about Volunteer Management and hear from Leaders of Volunteers like you?

I also thought, if "MANAGERS OF VOLUNTEERS NEED TO KNOW YOU CARE" was posted on LinkedIn or in various places and spaces on the internet, who would take note?

Finally, I thought who would care if there was a succinct and crystal clear message given to them from a current Leader of Volunteers about the value and importance of the profession and the impact it makes?

Think about it; who cares? It's an interesting list...

I will start with the most obvious – **Volunteer Engagement Professionals, in all their titles, care.** We are an emerging profession, with some college programs and university courses based on the field. We have a few national and international organizations and many small ones keeping an eye on trends, movements, growth and building up a collective knowledge in the field.

But in most fields, the members of that field themselves advocate and support the work of their profession. Social workers will rarely talk about supporting animal rights (unless they also happen to be

animal rights activists). Volunteer Engagement Professionals support two causes: the cause their organization represents, AND we support volunteer engagement.

When we speak about advocacy for the professional management of volunteers- It's mostly to us, from us. One vital role here is reaching out to those in the field who are not yet engaging with the larger profession. **So let's throw some care into this read!**

Action step one: Intentionally reach out and connect to those in the field who are not yet connected to all the rich resources available, connect them to VMPC or your local Volunteer Managers Association- Their presence is a gift to that community, and that community is a tremendous gift to that individual – like any community, most people need an invite, maybe three.

There are many more people on this list who care as well!

Who else cares? **The organizations you, the Leaders of Volunteers, work for care.** Even if they don't know how to show it, the Leader of Volunteers position or directives exist because there is value in it, and an organization can see that the value of one or two staff is worth two, three or even ten times the cost of the volunteer budget. They care because you bring real, caring people to the doorstep, and you build the community that enhances and increases the mission and impact of your organization. But can they 'get it' even more? Sometimes, there are opportunities to see where a leader of volunteers fits in an organization and a long list of items an organization can provide to build up the volunteer engagement team – a professional development budget is a great place to start!

Action step two – know your role; check out the [VMPC professional standards resources](#) and shine a light on your department.

Does anyone else care? **Yes, Volunteers Care!** Without you, they may not have found the opportunity to be trained and given access to such positions. They wouldn't have a voice in their corner when there was a disagreement, and they would often not know the impact of their time invested if you didn't take that time to share it with them. The volunteers are why we do what we do. We believe we are better together as communities with staff, participants (clients, cause), and volunteers because in that combination, we can be assured that people care and are cared for in our organizations.

Action Step 3: Talk about the profession to volunteers! If you have built rapport with a volunteer and they have told you what an excellent job you are doing, accept that! Be as bold as to ask them to write your supervisor about it.

Who else cares? **The people and causes you represent!** You matter to the mission and impact of your organization. Wear that with humble pride. Do not forget to insert yourself into the equation of how your organization makes a difference to the community. Share how a robust and active volunteer program is central to success in any cause! Get feedback and include volunteer evaluation in client and participant surveys.

Action Step 4: Do the math and research - Be clear with your supervisor, your organization's leadership and the board of directors about the value of volunteers. Share how much of that value comes to life with professional volunteer leadership!

Finally, **VMPC cares** – as well as our affiliates. As we keep moving forward on Advocacy at VMPC, we will be leaning into this question of who does care. We will be aiming to represent you, the Leader of Volunteers, as we speak to the value and impact you make every day. We know the difference that comes when an organization has a well-informed, supported and connected volunteer management professional of any title and designation on their staff team. We will seek to hear what advocacy means to you, what you need to be an advocate, and what advocacy you need VMPC to take on to help you thrive!

Action Step 5: Keep building your communities one great connection at a time, knowing and utilizing that caring heart! The members of VMPC are the heartbeat of caring for and growing the Volunteer Management Profession in Canada. If you want to be more involved [JOIN HERE](#) Thank You!

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