CSS Shared Resources, Ontario East

Development Trainings 2026/ 2027
Volunteer Webinar
Session #2






LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Volunteers Who Stay

Creating an Engaging Volunteer Culture

Recruiting is only the beginning. Today: how to make volunteers feel valued, connected and motivated to keep contributing.

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Empower People
Inspire People
Leadership
Lead Change
Shared Vision

Blaming others for not understanding what was said

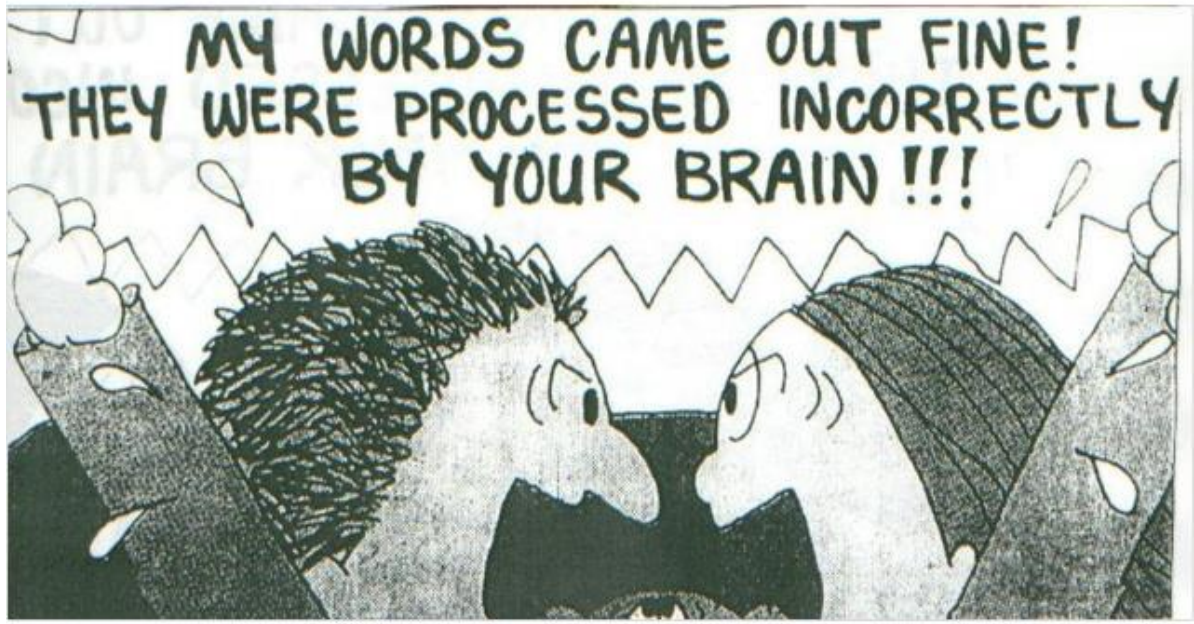
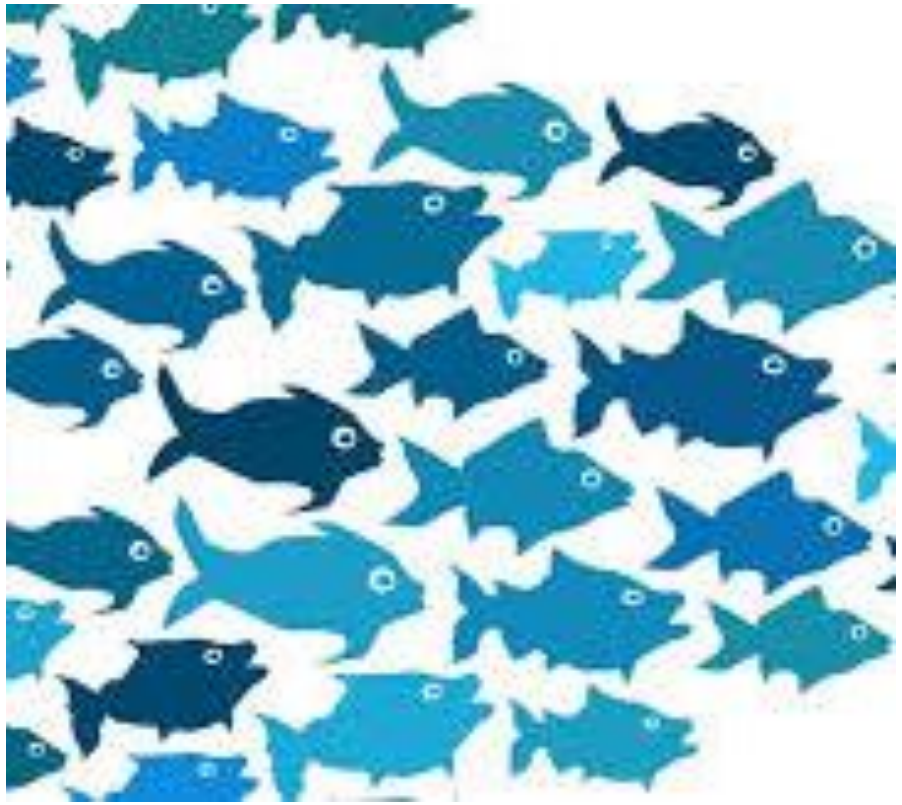


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WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

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Leadership is…

- The ability to influence
- Creative thinking
- People-centered
- Challenging and questioning
- Relationship building
- Forward-thinking



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Why is it hard to manage volunteers?

- Lack of tangible rewards
- Lack of support
- Poor onboarding process
- Forgive small errors
- Just happy that they are helping
- Motivations are different

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How to build an effective leadership team

- Importance of goals
- Succession planning
- Mentor potential leaders
- Model preferred behaviour
- Develop great teams

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What does success look like?

Engaged volunteers

Sharing a path together

Respecting opinions

Willing to take on roles

Volunteers engaging other volunteers

Having a plan and following through

Listening

Optimizing skills

Unique opportunities

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Myths

Ignoring a problem will make it go away.

No one else notices. I’m the only one who is suffering.

I can fix/change the problem person.

There’s good In everyone. I just need to give them time to show it.

If I confront them, it will make things worse.

If I’m really the caring and all-accepting person I should be, I can handle them.

If push them out they will be mad at me.

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The hidden secrets

- Enroll others in the vision
- Goals without strategies can fail
- Listen to the underlying messages
- Understand what makes people tick
- Share the power and delegate
- Celebrate small accomplishments
- Try and maintain a personal balance

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Understand….

- The audience
- The purpose of communication
- The potential response
- The value to the receiver
- The importance of communication
- The various channels available

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What keeps volunteers coming back

Purpose

They can see the difference their time makes.

Belonging

They feel part of a team, not a task list.

Clear roles

Good onboarding and expectations from day one.

Flexibility

Options that fit real schedules and life changes.

Growth

Chances to learn, lead and build skills.

Respect

Supportive supervision, a voice, and genuine thanks.

The first 30 days decide retention

Before day one

Send a welcome note, role description, schedule and who to contact.

First shift

Greet them by name, give a tour and pair them with a buddy.

First month

Check in after two weeks and again at 30 days. Ask what is working.

A volunteer who feels lost early rarely says so. They just stop coming.

Early warning signs of disengagement

What you notice	How to respond
Missed shifts or late replies	Reach out personally and ask how things are
Less enthusiasm or participation	Revisit the role: is it still a good fit?
Quiet frustration or unmet needs	Invite feedback in a low-pressure conversation
Stepping back without explanation	Offer a break, a lighter role or a new challenge

Today's volunteers expect more

Traditional approach	What volunteers seek now
Long-term, fixed commitments	Flexible and short-term options
Filling open slots	Meaningful, visible impact
One-time training	Personal growth and new skills
Annual thank-you	Authentic, ongoing appreciation
Instructions from above	A voice in how the work gets done

Flexibility in practice

Short-term roles

One-time events and defined projects with a clear end date.

Choose your shift

Self-scheduling tools and a range of days and times.

Remote options

Tasks that can be done from home, on a person's own time.

Pause, don't quit

Make it easy to step back and return without guilt.

Growth, voice and purpose

Skills

Offer training, mentoring and roles that build experience people can put on a résumé.

Leadership

Create pathways to team lead, trainer or project owner.

Voice

Invite ideas, include volunteers in planning and act on their input.

Recognition that means something

Specific

Name what they did and the result it created.

Timely

Say it soon after the moment, not at year end.

Personal

Ask how each person likes to be thanked.

Visible

Share stories with the team, board and community.

Quick test: could this thank-you only have been written for this volunteer?

Build relationships through communication

Welcome

A personal greeting, a buddy and a clear first-week plan.

Check in

Short, regular conversations about how it is going.

Listen

Ask for feedback, then show what changed.

Share impact

Close the loop with results and stories.

A communication rhythm that works

When	What	Channel
Weekly or per shift	Schedule, reminders, quick wins	Text or email
Monthly	Impact stories and upcoming needs	Newsletter
Quarterly	One-on-one check-in	Call or coffee
Yearly	Survey, celebration and planning	Event and survey



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Consequences of poor communication



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Affiliators

- Work to make friends
- Needs interaction
- Needs to be perceived as doing good
- Needs to be liked
- Works best in stable groups with supervision

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Achievers



- Task oriented
- Needs specific goals
- Needs parameters to measure success
- Likes to problem solve
- Seeks responsibility
- Conscientious about deadlines

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Influencers



- Self starter
- Well-spoken
- Seeks responsibilities
- Wants impact
- Needs title of authority
- Clear parameters

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Close the feedback loop

1. Ask

Use short surveys, conversations and suggestion boxes.

2. Act

Choose one or two changes and make them quickly.

3. Report back

Tell volunteers "you said, we did" so they know they were heard.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Keep volunteers connected between shifts

Social media is where volunteers can feel the team, see the impact and be celebrated, even when they are not on site.

What to share to keep people engaged

Content	Example
Volunteer spotlights	A short profile: why they started and what it means to them
Impact updates	"Your 400 hours helped serve 1,200 neighbours this month"
Behind the scenes	Photos and short clips from events and shifts
Milestones	Anniversaries, hours given and new roles
Shout-outs and polls	Public thanks, plus questions that invite ideas

Build a volunteer community online

Private group

A volunteers-only space for updates, photos and peer support.

Team chat

Quick coordination for shifts and events on the app your team already uses.

Public pages

Celebrate volunteers publicly and invite friends to join.

Pick one or two platforms your volunteers already use, and keep them active.

Social media ground rules

Consent

Get permission before posting a volunteer's photo, name or story.

Privacy

Never share client details. Keep private groups private.

Tone

Be warm and respectful, and set simple community guidelines.

Responsiveness

Assign someone to moderate, reply and thank people quickly.

Your 30-day action plan

1. Ask five volunteers what keeps them engaged.
2. Replace one generic thank-you with a specific, personal one.
3. Schedule a regular check-in rhythm with your team.

Questions and discussion

GENERAL FEEDBACK

PLEASE COMPLETE SURVEY:

LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK!



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