

It's a Noble Choice They've Made: Sport Volunteerism in Small Communities in the Northwest Territories

A Research Report

Prepared by:

Richard Daitch, Principal Researcher

Mary Pat Short

Rita Bertolini

Mike MacPherson

© 2005 Imagine Canada.

Copyright for Knowledge Development Centre material is waived for charitable and nonprofit organizations for non-commercial use. All charitable and nonprofit organizations are encouraged to copy any Knowledge Development Centre publications, with proper acknowledgement to the authors and Imagine Canada. Please contact Imagine Canada if you would like to put a link to our publications on your website.

For more information about the Knowledge Development Centre, visit www.kdc-cdc.ca.

Knowledge Development Centre
Imagine Canada
425 University Avenue, Suite 900
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M5G 1T6
Tel: 416.597.2293
Fax: 416.597.2294
e-mail: kdc@imaginecanada.ca

www.imaginecanada.ca | www.kdc-cdc.ca

ISBN# 1-55401-171-X

Imagine Canada's Knowledge Development Centre is funded through the Community Participation Directorate of the Department of Canadian Heritage as part of the Canada Volunteerism Initiative. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The logo for Canada, featuring the word "Canada" in a serif font with a small Canadian flag icon above the letter "a".

Table of Contents

Introduction \ **1**

Literature Review \ **4**

Methodology \ **10**

Findings \ **11**

Analysis of Findings \ **33**

Conclusions and Recommendations \ **39**

Glossary \ **44**

References \ **46**

Acknowledgements

The research team wishes to thank the 52 participants in the communities of Deline, Hay River Reserve, Ulukhaktok (Holman Island), and Wha Ti. They were exceptionally generous in giving their time to share their ideas, experience, and insights regarding sport in their communities and, in particular, their perspectives on volunteerism in sport.

The researchers would also like to acknowledge both The Knowledge Development Centre in Toronto and Sport North Federation in Yellowknife, NWT, for their support for this project.

It's a Noble Choice They've Made: Sport Volunteerism in Small Communities in the Northwest Territories

Executive Summary

The purpose of this study, carried out from October 2004 to July 2005, was to examine sport volunteerism in small communities in the Northwest Territories (NWT). The three main objectives of the study were:

1. to gain a better understanding of sport volunteerism in small communities in the NWT;
2. to examine the barriers that prevent participation in sport volunteering, including personal, social, economic and cultural barriers; and,
3. to develop a set of recommendations that might assist in increasing volunteerism in sport in small communities.

Data collection occurred in the four small communities of Deline, the Hay River Reserve, Ulukhaktok (Holman Island), and Wha Ti. There were a total of 52 research participants: 29 sport volunteers and 23 non-sport volunteers.¹ To obtain quantitative data, we asked each participant to complete a personal demographic profile and a questionnaire. Qualitative data was obtained through focus groups. In both the questionnaire and the focus groups, the emphasis for volunteers was on their motivations for volunteering and some of the issues sport volunteers face. The emphasis of the questionnaire and focus

groups for non-sport volunteers was their perceptions of the barriers to participation in sport volunteering.

Most sport volunteers in small communities in our study were between 25 and 44 years old. More females volunteered than males, which differs from sport volunteer populations in other parts of Canada. Most of the sport volunteers were employed in full-time jobs, had average family incomes of \$40,000 to \$90,000 per year, and possessed at least a high school education. Just over half of the sport volunteers were Aboriginal, which is an under-representation, given that that the population of the four communities is over 90% Aboriginal. Sport volunteers generally became involved because they wanted to help other people, believed in the cause, wanted to have fun, wanted to promote sport and recreation, and wanted to use their skills and knowledge.

Non-sport volunteers in our study in small NWT communities were generally older than sport volunteers. Compared to sport volunteers, smaller numbers had a high school education and fewer were employed. Over half were Aboriginal. Some non-sport volunteers helped out in other community activities but tended to contribute fewer volunteer hours than their sport volunteer counterparts.

¹ The term non-sport volunteer is used throughout this study to refer to the group of respondents who volunteered in areas other than sport, as well as those who did not volunteer at all. See Methodology for a detailed explanation.

Important barriers to participation in sport volunteerism noted by non-sport volunteers included other volunteer commitments, lack of time, lack of training, never having been asked to volunteer, perceived lack of skills, work and family responsibilities, and an unwillingness to make a commitment. Although they do not volunteer in sport activities, they highly valued the work of those who do.

Many sport volunteers and non-sport volunteers viewed sport as part of a broader social and cultural context. Sport is linked to the development of youth and the community. Members of both groups regarded the lack of sport volunteers as part of an erosion of the traditional value of giving, sharing, and caring for others.

As a result of this study, we have made recommendations that may increase sport volunteerism rates and support the work of those already involved. These include the following 12 recommendations:

1. Personally ask potential volunteers to assist, and match their skills and knowledge to the help they are being asked to give.
2. Develop networks between experienced volunteer and prospective volunteers.
3. Target potential teen and young adult sport volunteers.
4. Target older people even if they are not sports-oriented.
5. When hiring teachers, local school committees could consider candidates' willingness to become involved in the community as sport volunteers.
6. Hold workshops on volunteering in small communities.

7. Expand the opportunities for community coaches and committed volunteers to obtain additional training.
8. Communicate the availability of training opportunities for volunteers more widely.
9. Establish a mentoring system so that new volunteers are taught the required skills under the guidance of an experienced person.
10. Organize and develop fundraising groups.
11. Identify and consolidate information on funding available from various sources.
12. Appreciate and recognize volunteers more fully.



George Lessard

Introduction

When asked what she thought when she heard the phrase “sport volunteer”, one participant in this study, who did not volunteer in sport, responded without hesitation, “It’s a noble choice they’ve made.” There is an element of nobility about the core of volunteers who make sport happen in the small communities of the Northwest Territories (NWT). Indeed, volunteerism is the foundation of amateur sport, especially for youth and teens in the NWT. Volunteers coach, maintain and repair equipment and facilities, provide transportation, raise funds, travel to competitions, and encourage and frequently counsel athletes about both sport and life.

The aim of this study was to develop a picture of sport volunteerism in small NWT communities. Our goal was to identify the factors that influence participation in sport volunteerism in an effort to increase the number of volunteers involved. We developed a profile of sport volunteers in four communities and sought to understand their motivations for volunteering in sport, as well as the perceived barriers faced by non-sport volunteers. The benefits of volunteering, both individual and societal, were also investigated. We end with a number of recommendations suggesting ways to build the capacity of sport volunteers in the NWT.

Most communities in the NWT are small and there is rarely a sufficiently strong support network for sport volunteers. As a result, sport volunteers frequently take on enormous commitments, are overstretched, and sometimes “burn out.” A recent NWT study suggested that there was a serious lack of volunteers in general and of sport volunteers in particular: “In virtually every NWT community, insufficient volunteers are over-extended and burning out, activities are cancelled and local needs are unmet” (Lutra & Associates, 2003).

Five communities were involved in this study. A pilot study which included several long-term sport volunteers took place in Fort Smith, November 2004. Subsequently, in the spring of 2005, members of the research team visited the communities of Deline, Hay River Reserve, Ulukhaktok (Holman Island), and Wha Ti to interview a total of 52 participants. The participants were generous with their time, ideas, and their personal perspectives on sport volunteering. The host communities were generous in other ways as well. Dinner invitations were extended and one pair of researchers returned home with the gift of an ample supply of freshly caught trout from Great Bear Lake, as well as valuable insights. The interviewees shared their passionate concern for the well-being of their communities, along with their pride in the tradition of helping others.

When the interviews, transcription, and analysis were completed, the research team felt equipped to address the three primary goals of the study:

1. to gain a better understanding of sport volunteerism in small communities in the NWT;
2. to examine the barriers that prevent participation in sport volunteering, including personal, social, economic and cultural barriers; and,
3. to develop a set of recommendations that might assist in increasing volunteerism in sport in small communities.

There is a shortage of studies on volunteerism in sport and on the motivations and barriers for volunteering amongst minority groups (Riemer, Dorsch, Hoeber, & Bell, 2003). This study sought to address this gap by exploring volunteerism in small NWT communities that have a population that is over 90% Aboriginal. This research illuminates the issues surrounding sport volunteerism and provides suggestions that may contribute to its enhancement in the NWT.

Community Profiles

The NWT is a vast area covering 1.17 million square kilometres. It has a population of 42,083. Half of this population is spread throughout 33 communities and the remainder lives in the city of Yellowknife. The four small communities selected for this study each have a population of approximately 300 to 600, are over 90% Aboriginal, and represent different government regions. (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Map of the Northwest Territories



Deline

Deline is situated on Great Bear Lake at 65 degrees north latitude and 10 degrees west longitude. It is 544 kilometres northwest of Yellowknife. Deline was known as Fort Franklin until 1993. The earlier name honoured Sir John Franklin, who used the area as a base for exploration during the mid-1820s. It currently has a population of 570 people, with an equal number of males and females. The population is 92.6% Aboriginal. Nearly 45% of the population is under the age of 25. The population of Deline has decreased by 11.8% since 1996, primarily because of a declining birthrate. Approximately 55% of the families are involved in traditional activities such as hunting, fishing, and trapping. Ninety-six percent of the people speak an Aboriginal language, primarily North Slavey. The average income in Deline was 60.3% of the average income in the NWT in general in 2002 (Government of the Northwest Territories, Bureau of Statistics, 2004a). The recreational facilities of the community include an arena, a community hall, a gymnasium, trails, and playing fields. Hockey is particularly popular. Although Deline is located on a vast lake, there are no aquatic facilities or seasonal waterfront programs available.

Hay River Reserve

The Long Spear people came from the western plains of Canada and settled in the area of the Hay River Reserve about 7,000 years ago. They hunted and trapped in the area for centuries. The arrival of Europeans changed things radically for the original inhabitants. The first permanent structure was built when the Hudson Bay Company constructed a post in 1868. The Roman Catholic Mission was built in 1868, followed by an Anglican Mission in 1894. A school and nursing station were built shortly afterwards. Today the Reserve is the home of the Dene Cultural Institute.

The Hay River Reserve is situated near the south shore of Great Slave Lake, around 140 kilometres north of the Alberta border. It has a population of 298 people, all of whom are Aboriginal. There are 146 males and 152 females on the Reserve. Over 48% of the population is under 25 years of age. Its population has grown by 12% since 1996. Approximately 53% of the families are involved in such traditional activities as hunting, fishing, and trapping. Just over half of the people speak an Aboriginal language, primarily South Slavey (Government of the Northwest Territories, Bureau of Statistics, 2004b).

The recreational facilities of the community include a community hall, a gymnasium, playing fields, and seasonal waterfront programs. The Reserve is a short drive from the town of Hay River, which has a population of 3,835, and much more varied recreational facilities, including an arena, a curling rink, cross-country ski trails, a golf course, two gymnasiums, trails, an outdoor track, and a swimming pool, which is open year round.

Ulukhaktok (Holman Island)

Ulukhaktok (Holman Island) is located on the west coast of Victoria Island in the Arctic Archipelago and is situated at 70 degrees north latitude and 117 degrees west longitude. It is 925 air kilometres north of Yellowknife. Ulukhaktok (Holman Island) is the home of the Copper Inuit. John Franklin was the first European to visit the area. The Hudson Bay Company trading post was opened in 1940. Artists of this Inuit community are known for their printmaking, carving, and wall hangings.

Ulukhaktok (Holman Island) has a population of 421 people: 197 males and 224 females. The population is 94.7% Aboriginal. Nearly 51% of the population is under 25 years of age. The population of Ulukhaktok

(Holman Island) has declined by 5% since 1996 primarily because of a declining birthrate. Around 82% of the families are involved in such traditional activities as hunting, fishing, and trapping. Seventy-six percent of the people speak an Aboriginal language, primarily Inuvialuktun. The average income in Ulukhaktok (Holman) is 61.4% of the average income in the Northwest Territories (Government of the Northwest Territories, Bureau of Statistics, 2004c).

The recreational facilities of the community include an arena, a community hall, a gymnasium, a ball diamond, playing fields, and a curling rink. Ulukhaktok (Holman) is known for hosting the most northerly golf tournament in the western hemisphere. The Billy Joss Open is held every July on a nine-hole grassless course.

Wha Ti

Wha Ti (“Marten Lake”) is located on the southeastern shore of Lac La Martre at 63 degrees north latitude and 117 degrees west longitude. It is 164 kilometres northwest of Yellowknife. The Northwest Company established a permanent trading post at the site in 1793. Wha Ti has a population of 483 people: 271 males and 212 females. The population is 97.7% Aboriginal. Nearly 50% of its people are under 25 years of age. Wha Ti’s population has increased by 11.3% since 1996 due to an increasing birthrate. Around 51% of the families are involved in such traditional activities as hunting, fishing, and trapping. Ninety-seven percent of the people speak an Aboriginal language, primarily Dogrib. The average income in Wha Ti is 59.4% of the average income in the Northwest Territories (Government of the Northwest Territories, Bureau of Statistics, 2004d).

Wha Ti appears to have access to the fewest sport facilities of the communities studied. The recreational

facilities of the community include an arena, a gymnasium, and seasonal waterfront programs.

Literature Review

In order to place a study of volunteerism in rural communities of the NWT in perspective, a literature review was undertaken that examined volunteerism in general and volunteering in sport in particular. This review places this study in a larger context of the benefits and challenges of volunteerism, both nationally and internationally.

With the number of social, demographic, economic, educational, and environmental issues facing both developed and developing nations, and with what some scholars have traced as the changing nature of work (Rifkin, 1995), a worldwide focus on volunteerism is timely. For example, 2001 was the United Nations’ International Year of Volunteers. Activities of this year drew national and local attention to volunteerism, and it was judged to be a success (Report of the Secretary General, 2002, p.1). Since 2001, many governments around the world have continued to work on increasing awareness of the importance of volunteerism and enhancing participation rates of volunteers. According to the Secretary General’s Report:

One hundred and twenty-three National Committees and scores of local, regional and state committees were formed... A heightened recognition of the role of volunteerism in development resulted from the plethora of activities, including efforts to measure the contributions of volunteers, in every part of the world (2002, p.2).

Volunteerism, defined here as “the contribution of time, resources, energy, and/or talent without

monetary compensation” (McClintock, 2004, p.1), has contributed greatly to Canadian society. Volunteers built and operated our earliest hospitals, orphanages, homes for the aged, and other health and welfare agencies. Organizations such as the YMCA, YWCA, Saint John’s Ambulance, and Canadian Red Cross were all started by and continue to rely on volunteers. Furthermore, 40% of Canada’s 78,000 charities rely solely on volunteers (McClintock, 2004). Today in Canada, 27% of the population over age 15 volunteers; these contributions occur in virtually every area of society. Similarly in the NWT, the world of organized and amateur sport is very dependent on the contributions of volunteers.

In reviewing the literature on volunteerism, we explored several questions:

1. Who volunteers in general?
2. What is the demographic profile of a typical sport volunteer?
3. What motivates sport volunteers?
4. What prevents some people from volunteering for sport or sport organizations?
5. What can be done to recruit more volunteers and build capacity for them to work effectively to strengthen sport?
6. What benefits are accrued by individuals or society due to sport volunteerism?

Who Volunteers?

The 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP) indicates that 6.5 million Canadians volunteered from October 1, 1999, to September 30, 2000 (Hall et al., 2001). These volunteers collectively gave over one billion hours of time, which is equivalent to 549,000 full-time jobs. At the average Canadian salary of \$16.89 per hour, this

equates to over \$17 billion dollars of paid income (McClintock, 2004, p.2). A 1997 version of the NSGVP revealed that 7.5 million Canadians volunteered. In only three years, Canada lost approximately 13% of its volunteers, and this has had both social and economic implications.² Furthermore, McClintock (2004) notes that 34% of all volunteer hours were contributed by the 5% of volunteers who each gave over 596 hours per year and that 25% of those volunteers who each contributed over 188 hours per year (representing 7% of all Canadians) contributed 73% of all volunteer hours. This means that a small group of individuals is doing most of the volunteering in Canada.

These statistics on volunteerism in general in Canada are consistent with research in the NWT. As noted by Little (2001, p.9), “There seems to be a core group of volunteers in each NWT community...in small communities, the core group may be as small as 4 to 10 people. In larger communities, 30 to 50 people may form the core group.” In her consultations in the NWT voluntary sector, Little found that Northerners indicate that the number of volunteers and people willing to help is declining. This trend is occurring at a time when the demand for volunteers is growing. Little conveys the sentiments of volunteers in the NWT: “Existing volunteers are burning out” (2001, p.10).

In terms of demographics, Lasby (2004) notes that among Canadian volunteers in general, 44% are between the ages of 35 and 54, and these people account for 43% of all volunteer hours. Females tend to volunteer more than males: 54% compared to 46%, respectively. Sixty-seven percent of volunteers are employed (with 51% employed full-time), and only 4%

² In England, studies of sport volunteerism confirm the economic value of volunteers in sport (Carter, 2003).

of volunteers are unemployed.³ While not many unemployed people volunteer, those who do contribute extensively – an average of 175 hours per year. Furthermore, 75% of all volunteers earn between \$20,000 and \$99,999 per year, while only 8% of volunteers make less than \$20,000. This indicates that unemployed and low-income-earning individuals have low rates of volunteerism. Furthermore, those who have not completed high school (19% of all volunteers) are less likely to volunteer than those who have, and the former contribute the least amount of time.

Volunteerism in Sport

There is limited research on volunteerism in sport; however, in the research that has been done, it is clear that volunteerism is vital to sport. This sentiment is expressed by Patrick Carter, Chair of Sport England, in his response to a major study of sport volunteerism done in that country in 2002:

“...we take this voluntary support for granted at our peril. Sport is dependent on volunteers but there are increasing pressures within society that threaten the sustainability of volunteering at the levels we currently enjoy...take the volunteers out of sport and we effectively take the sport out of England” (2003, p.2).

Similarly, during the spring and summer of 1994, Canadian researchers carried out a study of volunteerism in sport in order to understand the status of volunteerism in sport and recreation in the province of Ontario. The study sought to determine the contribution of volunteers to the economic and social well-being of this sub-sector. A major finding was that

“volunteers play a vital role in the provision of sport and recreation” in Ontario (Rhyne, 1995, p.2).

With reference to sport volunteerism generally, the numbers from various studies indicate that the area of sport, recreation, leisure, and fitness is one of the largest sub-sectors. For example, in Canada, 26% of all volunteer hours occur in the areas of arts, culture and recreation, which includes sport volunteers (Lasby & McIver, 2004, p.9). Rhyne (1995) found that 24.7% of all volunteers in Ontario volunteer in sport and recreation, as do 9% of Ontario adults. They contribute on average about \$2.25 billion worth of time each year.

Despite these significant findings, studies show that sport volunteerism in Canada is on the decline.

“There are two main sources of data on the extent of volunteering for nonprofit sports organizations in Canada; both are by Statistics Canada, and both indicate a decline, a slight decline, over the span of a decade, and a sharper decline [in sports volunteerism] within the 1990s.” (Manitoba Voluntary Sector Initiative, 2001, p.10).

This decrease has occurred even though there has been an increase in population, and a doubling in the number of Canadians coaching and refereeing amateur sports between 1992 and 1998 (Manitoba Voluntary Sector Initiative, 2001). In the NWT, Little (2001, p.11) notes that recreation coordinators are becoming overextended due to a lack of volunteers to assist them:⁴

“Mixed messages about paid work and volunteerism create difficulties for front-line

³ Thirty percent of volunteers are not in the work force (Lasby, 2004).

⁴ Recreation Coordinators are also referred to as Community Recreation Directors in the NWT.

service staff such as Recreation Coordinators. These people are likely to invest as much volunteer time as paid time. They say that the lack of volunteers is the reason for this.”

Little’s research, based on numerous community consultations, indicates a definite shortage of volunteers in the NWT.

Typical Sport Volunteer

According to Lasby and McIver (2004), about 8% of Canadians volunteer in the sub-sector of arts, culture and recreation, which includes volunteers in sport. In summarizing the findings of the 2000 NSGVP, Lasby and McIver note the following about arts, culture and recreation volunteers (2004, p.9):

- 49% ranged in age from 35 to 54;
- 58% were male compared to 42% who were female;
- 70% were married;
- 52% had a post secondary diploma or university degree;
- 71% were employed (57% had full-time employment);
- 3% were unemployed and 26% were not in the work force;
- 73% claimed some religious affiliation (but were not weekly attendees);
- 56% earned between \$40,000 and \$99,999 per year; and,
- 7% earned less than \$20,000 per year.⁵

Motivations for Volunteering in Sport

According to the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, volunteer motivations are ranked as follows (Lasby & McIver, 2004; Lasby,

⁵ For comparative numbers from England and Ontario see Carter (2003) & Rhyne (1995).

2004; McClintock, 2004):

- 95% believed in the cause;
- 81% wanted to use their skills and experience;
- 69% volunteered because somebody they knew was involved;
- 57% wanted to explore strengths;
- 30% volunteered because friends volunteered;
- 26% wanted to fulfill religious obligations or beliefs;
- 23% wanted to improve job opportunities; and
- 8% were required to volunteer.

In provincial surveys of sport volunteer motivations, findings differed slightly. In Quebec, Thibault (2002) found the main motivation for volunteering in sport to be “contributing to a cause,” whereas in Ontario, Rhyne (1995) found that “to help others” was the primary motivator for 78.4% of those surveyed. In Saskatchewan, Dorsch, Reimer, Sluth, Paskevich, and Chelladurai (2002) found “helping the community” to be the most prevalent motivator (76%). Of note for the province of Saskatchewan is the Reimer et al. (2003) finding that there is a significant “lack of Aboriginal volunteers, as administrators and coaches...in the various mainstream sport organizations Saskatchewan Sport is responsible for.” Aboriginal volunteers that they surveyed reported similar reasons for volunteering as non-Aboriginal volunteers, which included primarily believing strongly in the activity. However, the same study found that Aboriginal people perceived a racial barrier that limited their willingness to participate in mainstream voluntary sport organizations.

Barriers

What prevents non-volunteers from volunteering? There appears to be less information on barriers for non-volunteers than on motivators for volunteers.

Where data and information exist, however, it would appear that the two main barriers to volunteering are lack of time and unwillingness to make a commitment. The 2000 NSGVP (Lasby & McIver, 2004) found the following 11 key barriers to volunteerism in general:

- no extra time.....(76%);
- unwillingness to make a year-round commitment.....(34%);
- feeling they had already made a contribution.....(29%);
- contribution of money instead of time.....(24%);
- not having been personally asked.....(17%);
- health problems.....(16%);
- no interest.....(16%);
- cost of volunteering(13%);
- not knowing how to get involved.....(10%);
- had a negative previous experience with volunteering.....(8%).

These barriers correspond with what Rhyne (1995) found in the study of sport volunteerism in Ontario where the top barrier identified by respondents was lack of time (40%). Other corresponding barriers reported by Ontarians included lack of interest (8.3%), poor health or disability (5.9%), not being asked (2.8%), and the cost associated with volunteering (0.3%).

Structure

The formal structure of some voluntary organizations can also be a barrier to participation. While some organizations need to be very structured, especially for large events such as the Olympics, Commonwealth Games, or large tournaments, in day-to-day volunteering, such structure may seem unnecessary to some volunteers (Carter, 2003). Concern with structure was noted by Lutra and Associates (2003) who found that

“concepts about structured giving and the growing professionalism and responsibility of the voluntary sector may be intimidating or viewed as unnecessary among Aboriginal groups and individuals” (p.33). Similarly, Reimer et al. (2003) noted that the formalism and structure of some mainstream voluntary organizations may deter Aboriginal and Métis volunteers. Niyazi (cited in Reimer et al., 2003, p.2) says that such structure “stands in contrast to the more informal and communal values found when grassroots participation within minority communities is examined.” Finally, Rhyne (1995) notes other factors that impact volunteers’ level of satisfaction, which can be a barrier to volunteering: enjoyable work, knowing what’s going on, commitment and participation of others, having a say in how things are run, the amount and type of work, amount of supervision, amount of training, support and recognition of volunteers, staff and volunteer relations.

Other Barriers to Volunteerism in Aboriginal Communities

Two studies identified social issues such as unemployment and substance abuse as barriers to volunteerism. As noted by Little (2001, p.11), “Work and money are two factors that seem to have the most impact on volunteerism in the NWT. Families are too busy working or trying to get enough money to get by, to volunteer or give to others.” Reimer et al. (2003) also noted that economic insecurity due to unemployment, poor health, and substance abuse prevented volunteering by Aboriginal respondents in Saskatchewan. They explain, “These determinants of health are so endemic in Aboriginal communities, especially on-reserve, that for many, dealing with their social and economic environment takes precedence over, and indeed leaves little time for volunteering” (2003, p.14).

Recruitment

The number of volunteers in Canada is dwindling, which has increased pressure on existing volunteers; thus, the need for recruitment is vital (Lasby & McIver, 2004). Little (2001, p.11) notes that in the NWT, the “voluntary sector is particularly preoccupied with the challenges of recruiting volunteers,” especially from among the young and unemployed. Lasby and McIver (2004) note the main ways volunteers began participating as volunteers, as identified by the 2000 NSGVP:

- 38% were asked to volunteer;
- 21% were members of an organization;
- 21% were approached by an organization independently;
- 15% had a child involved;
- 13% were asked by a friend;
- 4% responded to public appeal;
- 5% were nominated to volunteer;
- 4% were asked by a boss;
- 7% got involved through other means.

By contrast, Thibault (2002) reports that a majority of volunteers in Quebec became involved in volunteering primarily by their own initiative (32.9%), and, secondly, by being asked by someone in the organization (24.8%).⁶ It would appear that active face-to-face recruitment is a key to getting more participation. Early life experience with volunteering has also been noted to increase the likelihood of volunteering in adulthood (see Lasby, 2004).

Benefits of Volunteering

There are numerous benefits of volunteering: to society as a whole, to the volunteer, and to those whose activities are supported by volunteerism.

Volunteering has been described as empowering and essential in building and sustaining a community’s ethic of mutual caring and social responsibility (Report of the Secretary General, 2002). In NWT communities, volunteers provide a multitude of social services, including education, health, and leisure activities (Little, 2001). In terms of individual gains, the 2000 NSGVP found that volunteers have reported benefiting from volunteering in the following ways (McClintock, 2004, p.15):

- 79% felt they gained interpersonal skills, such as the ability to understand people better, motivate people, and deal with difficult situations;
- 68% reported learning better communication skills, such as public speaking, writing, public relations, and running meetings;
- 63% said they increased their knowledge about social issues;
- 57% gained organizational skills;
- 42% learned fundraising skills;
- 33% learned office skills, such as word processing and bookkeeping, and technical skills, such as coaching.



George Lessard

⁶ Similarly, in England Carter (2003) found that many people did not volunteer because they did not know how to become involved or had not been asked.

Methodology

This study examined sport volunteerism in four small communities in the NWT. The main purpose was to learn about individuals who were already volunteering in sport by identifying their demographic make up and their motivations for volunteering. Secondly, non-sport volunteers were included in order to learn about their demographic profile and to understand their perceptions of the barriers that exist to their volunteering in sport.

The research team began with a literature review that examined studies of volunteerism moving from the general to the specific. Volunteerism was examined internationally, from a Canadian perspective, and in relation to the NWT. Secondly, researchers investigated studies that had been done specifically on sport volunteerism. The literature review provided a broad understanding of volunteerism and sport volunteerism based on previous research, background that helped shape the current study's approach and design, information that informed the researchers' development of instruments and protocols, and a background for the comparative analysis of findings.

Subsequently, the researchers developed a draft demographic form to determine patterns in age, employment, education, questionnaires (see p.24), and focus group questions for both sport volunteers and non-sport volunteers. Complementary quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to gain a full spectrum of insights on volunteering. A pilot study was then carried out with six sport volunteers, Fort Smith, NWT in November 2004 to test and gain feedback on the data collection instruments. From this, minor changes were made.

In January and February 2005, the research team went through the NWT research license procedure and began the process of community consultation. By the third week in February, the recreation directors in the four small communities of Deline, Hay River Reserve, Ulukhaktok (Holman), and Wha Ti had all been contacted and had agreed to support the research. Three considerations guided the selection of communities: population, regional representation, and accessibility.

In planning the community visits, the researchers worked with key sport volunteers, including the recreation directors, in order to arrange focus group sessions with both sport and non-sport volunteers. In all, 52 people were interviewed: 29 sport volunteers and 23 non-sport volunteers. The table below shows the number of participants per community:

Table 1. Number of Study Participants in Each Community

Community	Sport Volunteers Interviewed	Non-Sport Volunteers Interviewed
Deline	12	5
Hay River Reserve	3	1
Ulukhaktok (Holman)	7	6
Wha Ti	7	11
Total	29	23

In May and early June, community visits and data collection occurred. One to three members of the research team visited each community and led two focus group sessions in each, one for sport volunteers and another for non-sport volunteers. During the sessions, both qualitative and quantitative data were obtained. Quantitative data was collected by having respondents complete a demographic profile and a

questionnaire. The demographic forms were the same for both sport volunteers and non-sport volunteers. The questionnaire differed in that sport volunteers were asked to rank from one to five a number of possible motivators for volunteering, while non-sport volunteers were asked to rank from one to five a number of possible barriers to volunteering in sport. Additionally, the recreation director was asked to complete the Small Community Sports Volunteer Survey.

The focus groups followed a fairly structured process and lasted approximately two hours. While most qualitative data was obtained via focus group sessions, in several instances researchers held interviews with between one and three individuals who could not be part of a focus group.⁷

Prior to data analysis, the focus group and individual interviews were transcribed, and the quantitative material was tabulated and summarized. The report was written in July 2005, edited, and finalized in March 2006.



George Lessard

⁷ Data collected in the interview scenario was treated the same as that obtained in the focus group.

Findings

In this section, we present the qualitative and quantitative findings. First, we describe the motivations, benefits, and challenges of volunteering in sport in the communities studied. Next, the perspectives of non-sport volunteers are provided. Where appropriate, we include quotes from participants so that their views are represented in their own words. Following the qualitative section, we provide the quantitative findings and summarize both sets of findings in the conclusion.

Qualitative Findings: The Perspective of Volunteers in Sport

The Motivations and Benefits of Volunteering

When we asked sport volunteers about their motivations for volunteering, many replied with an explanation of the community benefits that volunteering brings. This reflects the holistic worldview found in the Aboriginal communities that participated in our study, where helping others is seen as an inherent cultural value and individuals generously give their time to others in anticipation of mutual benefit. Here, motivation and benefit are closely interconnected.

Altruism

The single largest motivation for volunteering among sport volunteers was altruism. “To help other people” was the strongest motivation for volunteering among participants, with 90% of sport volunteers listing it as a high or very high consideration. Sport volunteers wanted to help others and in doing so gained personal satisfaction. Some were concerned with helping young people become or remain law-abiding citizens. They were alarmed by the high crime rates in their communities and decided to try to do something about it.

The following respondent's experience typifies this concern:

“One of the problems was youth crime. I wanted to be close to them and help them not to commit crime and be more responsible. I went to the school and found out who would be interested in soccer. I put some conditions: to be on the team you must attend school and have good behaviour, respect your teachers, and not get in trouble with the law. The kids considered me a strict coach. We had fun, but we focused on the practice. There were kids who had been doing break-and-enters in the past, but did not break the law after the team was formed.”

This energetic volunteer found that the youth in the program, many of whom were considered to be “at-risk,” improved in both sport and school and stayed out of trouble. They transferred the discipline they learned in sport to their overall lives, and this respondent found satisfaction in being a guide and influence for this growth. She commented further, *“With kids, they see you as a role model. They need somebody who cares for them and to be there as a friend, not just as a coach.”*

Some respondents found satisfaction fostering joy in others. One volleyball coach said, *“I like to see people smile and laugh. We just like to get together and have fun. I like to make them happy.”* Other respondents talked of growth: *“You see the fruits of your labour when you see kids developing. In sport, you see growth before your eyes.”*

Being a role model was also a motivator and benefit of volunteering: *“The kids look up to you and look for direction, and there is personal satisfaction in helping them out.”* Helping others was satisfying to many: *“I was looking for an opportunity to make a contribution.”* Participants took pride in both their contributions and the enhancement of their regard in the community: *“A lot of my friends are really proud of me for volunteering over the last few years.”*

The primary motivation and reward for these volunteers was giving others opportunities. Monetary benefits were not part of the equation. As one committed volunteer explained, when it came to sport volunteering, *“Money never existed for me.”* Another echoed that view:

“I like to encourage a lot of young people. As an Aboriginal person, I was taught to give, and it does make me feel good about myself when I do this kind of work and we don't get paid.”

Community Building

Many volunteers gained satisfaction from being part of a community of sport activists. They shared a belief in the fundamental benefits of sport and felt they were working for a worthy cause, which gave them a kinship with likeminded people: *“I had to be part of something. It's a community thing. We're supposed to be helping one another. What we're doing as a team is what really matters.”* Another viewed the sport community in a very personal way: *“In a small place, people really treat each other as a family. That is what inspires me. The volunteer group became like brothers and sisters, an extended family.”* One coach became involved simply to help children but came to cherish the wider sporting ties that evolved: *“Seeing a fraternity building amongst*

volunteers. Knowing that you're building a community spirit. You have ties between all the different volunteers."

Beyond the community of sport volunteerism, many respondents felt that their participation in sport was part of a general contribution to community life:

"I was brought up in the traditional way, on the land with my grandparents. You care for each other. It doesn't matter what kind of activities. It could be sports or other activities. A community is like one big family. I like interacting with other people. A community can do a lot of things once you get active and allow people to participate."

Some respondents saw the size of the community as a positive: ***"In a small community, it's like a family unit. So you bond with certain people and expand on that."*** Many respondents found that their sport volunteering had wider benefits. One felt that enabling people to be busy kept both their bodies and minds active.

A Holistic Perspective

The four communities that were part of this study have kept more of their cultural traditions alive than many other parts of the Northwest Territories. One key indicator of this is language. Eighty percent of the combined population of the communities in the study spoke an Aboriginal language, compared to 44% of the population NWT generally.

A traditional perspective led to a unique view of sport by community members. Sport was seen not as a separate entity but as one part of an interrelated circle of elements. These included physical, psychological, health, academic, social, and spiritual benefits.

Whenever people began talking about their involvement in sport, they would soon broaden the discussion to larger concerns:

"I volunteer just to get active and to have a positive impact against social issues, and to help families because they don't always get support and to help young people. I believe in sobriety and well-being. I want to be a role model for the community. I have to see activity in sports and cultural activities. What is given to me, I give back. In our Dene way, we share, we care and we do things together to have an active healthy community. I've been very active in a lot of sports so I want to share that experience. Sport gives you discipline and independence."

Often sporting activities were seen as part of an overall cultural experience. For community festivals, people participated in traditional activities such as hunting, fishing, cutting wood, skinning animals, and preparing hides, as well as sporting events such as a golf tournament, canoe races, snowshoe races, and traditional Dene or Inuit games. Frequently, spirituality was part of the event, and drum dancing and prayer were important. Eating together was often part of the proceedings. These were aspects of community celebration, in which sport was but one part.

While the performance of young athletes was well regarded, so were the accomplishments of others, including elders:

"Age is just numbers. My grandparents are in their seventies and eighties, and they're still boating and putting their nets in the bay or going hunting or snowshoeing."

Hunting, trapping, and fishing are of vital importance to many people in small communities. In Ulukhaktok (Holman Island), a focus group went awry when migrating flocks of ducks and geese arrived, and many of the group's participants went hunting. Needless to say, in a place where most or all the fish or meat consumed by 45% of the households is harvested in or near the community (Government of the Northwest Territories, Bureau of Statistics, 2005c), the birds were a higher priority than the focus group.

Many volunteers connected the value of taking part in a sport activity with the larger importance of participating in traditional activities:

“I’m full of energy out on the land. I do a lot of hunting with my husband. We sit out there for two or three hours when we hunt geese. Your whole mind and body connects with the land. That gives me energy, which I bring back to the community. We take children on the land. Recently, eight boys were taught how to hunt. The boys learned how to be absolutely quiet. We go and do a lot of boating. We do a lot of canoeing, bringing just the basics and making camp on the shore and moose hunting. There are a lot of knowledge, skills, and resources in the community that we’d like to utilize more. We did canoe races and they challenged the older people.”

Thus, in the view of this respondent, the canoe races were part of the larger context of the experience of being on the land.

The Arctic Winter Games, which take place biennially, include both Dene Games and Inuit Arctic Sports.

These have not only proven to be popular with spectators but also have helped to sustain interest in traditional games in small northern communities. Respondents spoke with enthusiasm of traditional activities such as hand games, log sawing, and snowshoeing:

“Moss ball – is it ever fun! The ball is made up of moss and caribou hide. Every year you learn different things. I find it exciting and I can’t wait to learn. You pass on your skills to young people.”

Volunteering in sport was not seen as separate from helping the community in other ways:

“I’ve volunteered all my life. When I was young, I helped carry wood for people, get water and helped check the nets. We were thankful that some people came out and organized activities. I spent a lot of hours raising money for trips to tournaments. I grew up with it, and not only sport, but helping out elders, helping at feasts.”

It was not unusual for respondents to begin by discussing their involvement in sport and extend this by including their contributions to the cultural and spiritual life and the wellness of their community.

One coach connected education with sport. He felt the goals of school and sport were the same, for the aims of each included discipline, achievement, and enhanced self-confidence: *“You have to approach teaching from a holistic perspective. It’s not just dealing with the mind. You are a spiritual, emotional, and physical being as well.”*

Fun

Our respondents frequently used the word “fun” to describe the pleasure they and the people they helped derive from sport. One volunteer took pleasure in:

“the satisfaction of seeing people have fun. The families are all there and everybody’s laughing. At the end of the day, you want a happy community. Volunteering and organizing activities bring that stuff on.”

Coaches found that not every athlete was capable of being outstanding, but they were all able to have fun. Many spoke of seeing the happiness on the faces of young people:

“I once coached a young man from a very troubled home, and because of things I did when I was coaching him, he was able to do better than expected, and he won a gold medal – and it wasn’t the gold on the medal, it was the look on his face, and I’ll never forget him on the podium getting that medal around his neck. It makes me feel good.”

This sort of happiness was contagious because when the sport participants were happy, their volunteers were as well: *“I love seeing the happiness on kids’ faces, especially working with younger children and feeling I had a role in that.”*

There was joy for our respondents in seeing children and community members derive pleasure from sport: *“Helping kids is fun.”* When this help enabled young athletes to have success in competition, the whole community seemed to share their happiness. One team did extremely well at the highly competitive

Super Soccer tournament in Yellowknife. Team members returned home with a banner recognizing their success. It was promptly displayed in the school gym. At the next practice, one respondent explained, *“There were thirty young guys who turned out for indoor soccer, and everyone is proud to play under that banner.”*

Personal Growth

Regardless of their original motivations, nearly all sport volunteers found that they themselves acquired new skills and developed personal qualities while volunteering.

Most spoke of developing a capacity for patience:

“Learning patience and learning to work with people from a different culture better has been a tremendous learning experience.” Another respondent said, *“When you have patience, everything falls into place.”*

Many volunteers spoke of enhanced confidence:

“I made a good friend and now we’re always organizing things together. I’ve learned a lot from her about my self-esteem. I used to think, ‘I’ll never do anything.’ Now I challenge that. Today I feel I can do anything, even if it’s hard. I want to do it.”

Some respondents gained serenity. Many gained technical knowledge about their sport. Others gained enhanced people skills.

All sport volunteers are faced with the need to raise funds. One community in the study reported that it needed to raise \$200,000 a year to take athletes to competitions because of the distances and airfares involved. Thus it was not surprising that many learned to be skilled in this area: *“The most important thing*

I learned is how to do bingos. With bingo, I came in and watched people and learned from them.”

Another volunteer developed expertise in finding sources of funding by acquiring networking skills:

“You can only get so much money from your own community, and then you look at other organizations to give certain programs more. As you work with your networking skills, you get better at it.”

Most respondents benefited from improved organizational skills:

“With any sport activities, you need planning and organization: contact parents, get supplies and equipment, bringing snacks. I’ve learned to really get community input and see what they can share. Afterwards, assessment, questionnaires, and surveys are really important.”

Others learned flexibility and acceptance:

“When you’re doing a team sport, you want to teach them everything you know, yet some people who try very hard are just not that good. They are not athletes, but they will be there at every practice. I learned to be able to see the positive in everybody.”

Another respondent echoed this view:

“I’ve realized how to encourage the fun aspect of sport to improve their skills and that it isn’t necessary for them to do it right every time. I gained that from volunteering.”

Influence of Role Models

Many respondents saw family or community influences as significant factors in their desire to help others. These influences included extended family members, teachers, and educational or religious organizations. Parents were highly influential: *“My parents volunteered a lot in volleyball and hockey. They are role models.”* Some spoke of parental commitment with admiration: *“Most of my childhood life was in sport, and both my parents spent most of their weekends at arenas or swimming pools.”*

One respondent learned about the spiritual perspective of volunteering from her father:

“My dad was a drummer and has a good voice. When people wanted him to perform at a wedding and pay him, he said, ‘No, I don’t want to get paid. It’s a gift.’ He thinks if he gets paid, he’ll lose the gift.”

Family members sometimes demonstrated the pleasure that is shared through volunteering:

“My brother and my uncle volunteered during Christmas Eve through New Year’s Eve. Every night they were getting the games ready, demonstrating games, tirelessly doing this. I saw them being happy and all the time doing things for the people. They gave people joy and that was my biggest influence.”

Family size can create a spirit of helping:

“Being from such a big family, you had to pitch in – help your little brother, help your little sister. We all had to help each other. I had lots of brothers and sisters and always helped them. Everyone had fun and it was pure joy!”

Religion inspired one respondent. His experience attending church as a youth demonstrated the importance of helping others: ***“It taught you that volunteering was a good thing...Church wore off, but volunteering stayed. You see the value and you know it’s the right thing to do.”***

One volunteer spoke with admiration of his kindergarten teacher:

“She didn’t know how to ski, but she taught us. She started the ski program here. She also started up the Cubs program and the Brownies program. The thing about how much this lady did in terms of starting up these things, she wasn’t from here. She doesn’t have any kids. But she wasn’t afraid to take things on because she recognized the need for activities. She got satisfaction out of it personally. If I ever think I don’t want to do it, I always think of her and say, ‘Okay, let’s go ahead and do it.’”

In northern Aboriginal communities, elders are highly respected:

“A lot of elders of the past have always taught us to share your food, your company and share your concept. My grandfather always told me, ‘You’re going hunting with that person. You’re going trapping with that person.’ You were volunteering with your uncle or your relative and all that was instilled.”

Small communities generally valued helping others: ***“Volunteerism was woven into everything. It was just part of the way we lived. As I was growing up, people were helping each other. It’s always been part of me.”***

People volunteer for a variety of reasons.

Respondents in the four communities felt that they were continuing a valued tradition. They had in common their passion, commitment, and belief in sport as a positive outlet for fun and healthy activities, cooperation, competitiveness, fitness, self-discipline, good citizenship, and helping to create a more active community.

The Challenges of Volunteering

Changing Values

As eloquently as the volunteers spoke of the influences that encouraged them to volunteer, they spoke even more passionately about the value of volunteering being in jeopardy. One of the greatest concerns of respondents in this study was that many people in their community wanted to be paid for helping others. This issue was voiced in every community by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal respondents, but it was the Aboriginal respondents who were the most deeply disturbed because they felt that a cherished and very basic value of their culture was becoming endangered:

“More and more people are refusing to volunteer. When we ask community members, they want to be paid. The residential school and children being taken away from their families have triggered the change. Also the government has taken full responsibility for doing things for individuals in the communities like helping out with money, looking after their health needs and education, and also giving the welfare assistance. This has really made people dependent on government for everything. In the past, whenever we had something going on in the community like a drum

dance or a feast, the right-hand man of the chief would organize all the activities. Now what I see happening is that whenever we want a feast and drum dances, the right-hand person wants to be paid. They all want to get a lot of money for it. That's a real change since I was a child. Before that, whenever the chief said we're going to have a Christmas dance and a Christmas feast, the whole community got involved and would cook caribou meat, make bannock and do all the preparations. Now it doesn't happen; the government and band councillors are spending too much money. Everyone wants to be paid for everything. The most important thing we have in our community is our language and our culture. And now people are wanting to be paid for sharing that, and that's a crime...

I think we can improve that by constantly encouraging people to volunteer.

We have to educate young people about their attitude towards volunteering. You have to keep pushing and pushing. I know it's tough, especially for people who are not that well educated. But we have to do our jobs and some volunteer work."

Lack of Volunteers

One result of the declining tradition of helping and sharing is that there are fewer volunteers, who are, as a consequence, frequently overextended. In every community, the respondents saw this as a critical problem: *"Not a lot of people willing to volunteer their time for the kids and elders. Not enough*

people to share tasks." Often the shortage of volunteers concerned the respondents who were themselves very busy people:

"We volunteer and do a really good job at it. We find ways to get them their money. We should do more to get families involved. The parents should at least come out and tie up their kids' skates. It's like babysitting. Parents have to be involved in helping. Sometimes you say, 'Why am I helping these kids if the parents don't even want to help?' Volunteering is not rocket science. The biggest step is getting people started in it, doing little things."

Sometimes volunteers become burned out by their commitment when too few volunteers are expected to do too much:

"There are days when I am just too tired; the kids are very needy. The kids don't get the attention or care from their parents. You have to be prepared to function at a high level all the time, as you are always visible."

Another respondent sounded similarly exhausted:

"If we're being frank, we all know there are only so many people who step up, and if those people step away, who will come in behind? I know I want to take a break next year because I'm burned out."

Another said simply, *"You need a life, too."*

The majority of respondents felt that there had been a decline in sport volunteerism over the last ten years: *"There are fewer volunteers. It's more of a problem now than before."* Volunteers felt that

parents could do much more to aid their children's athletic activities: ***“Volunteers are giving and giving and they see parents out there not helping.”***

One respondent linked the decline in volunteerism to the diminishing interest in traditional knowledge:

“The knowledge of the elders has to be remembered so you can pass it on. Sometimes we don't have all the knowledge they have because we haven't the experience they have had. You want to pass our knowledge along so the activities will continue. I have the same fear about sports and volunteering in general as I do about the decline of our Aboriginal knowledge.”

Lack of Appreciation

Despite their huge commitment of time and energy, a number of respondents felt that their efforts were not fully appreciated. Often their time helping others became an expectation by many community members: ***“When you volunteer and do it on your own time, then it becomes expected. You are left to feel that you should be doing it, rather than being appreciated for it.”*** Another respondent sounded worn out: ***“You have to have ‘sucker’ written across your forehead.”*** There was a concern that lack of appreciation of volunteers would further exacerbate the decline in their numbers: ***“We need a volunteer incentive program. It's crucial. Volunteers don't go out there to say, ‘Hey, look at me,’ but they like to be appreciated.”***

Financial Concerns

The bane of existence for sport volunteers is fundraising. Our respondents enjoyed coaching, organizing events, counselling, and guiding athletic

and personal growth, but the need to raise money for equipment and travel was experienced universally as burdensome. In a vast geographic area where a return ticket from one of the small communities to Yellowknife costs \$2,000 and where taking a group of athletes to play in the Super Soccer tournament costs \$28,000, many northern coaches spend as much time in the bingo halls as in the rinks and gymnasiums. These volunteers became involved because of their love of sport or concern for young people but feel that fundraising takes a disproportionate amount of their time and effort: ***“Money is disappointing. You're always nickel and diming and scrounging. If there was more money invested in sport, you could go a long way.”***

Community Wellness Issues

There was a strong perception that the general health of the community has a profound effect upon both the recruitment of volunteers and the commitment of athletes to their sport. All northern communities are affected by the challenges of substance abuse, crime, and the reduced use of Aboriginal languages and cultural traditions. It is impossible to examine the issue of volunteerism without recognizing these difficulties.

Some of our respondents have had first-hand experience with the lifestyle choices facing many northern youth. It wasn't until they themselves had identified and dealt with these matters that they were able to fulfill their potential as productive citizens:

“After I sobered up, I got involved in volunteering because I didn't want young people to follow the things I did. I'm not proud of that part of my life. Looking at people that are part of that cycle now, you have to break that cycle. I'm hoping that I can do it through sports. Having a healthy lifestyle is very

important. We coach kids about life after hockey. We are very fortunate that we still have a strong cultural background. There is a strong physical component to our culture. It's not only about sport. You can talk to the kids about their problems. So you feel connected to the kids and that to me is very important. Hockey helps my own kids not to get involved in alcohol or drugs."

A number of respondents used the word "cycle" to describe the period in which youth in their community were involved in unhealthy choices. Some had emerged from this portion of their lives and were leading healthy lifestyles. These respondents had an understanding of the challenges young people were facing and were optimistic that they would move through the cycle to a place where they could make a positive contribution to their community. Frequently time is needed for change to occur: *"When the younger generation grows up, they will become more mature. It took a while for me. I had to get older before I started helping out my community."* When this maturation occurs, many respondents felt that sport participation and volunteerism would be a good outlet to express that positive growth: *"Sports for youth can take away social issues and dysfunction. Show people spirituality and kindness and they will want you back."*

The anecdotal information supplied by the respondents about the difficulties faced by young people in their communities is reinforced by statistics provided by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs of the Government of the Northwest Territories. These showed that the communities in the study face many challenges. The leading social indicators for the communities included

crime rates, educational levels, employment rates, average employment income, households in core need, percentage of single-parent families, and children living in low-income families. In nearly all instances, the small communities in the study compared unfavourably to both the territorial and Canadian norms (Government of the Northwest Territories, Bureau of Statistics, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2005d).

Some negative social indicators, such as heavy alcohol use, are pervasive in communities across the Northwest Territories. For example, the incidence of heavy alcohol use was nearly double in the NWT as it was nationally in 2002. As there is a strong connection between excessive alcohol use and crime, it is not surprising that violent crime rates in three of the communities studied, for which statistics were available, were high, at 7.6 times the national average. Some indicators, however, showed specifically that people in small communities face enormous challenges. The percentage of single-parent families was nearly 50% higher than the overall rate in the NWT. The employment rate in the four communities averaged around 45%, compared to 61% territorially and 69% nationally. The average employment income was around half of the national average. The number of children living in low-income families was 22% higher than both the Canadian and NWT norms (Government of Northwest Territories, Bureau of Statistics, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2005d). Not surprisingly, these factors caused difficulties.

While our respondents were very straightforward in describing the social concerns that their communities faced, they remained optimistic that exposure to sport could be one method of dealing with them. Many felt that in addition to sport, re-establishing traditional values and practices was essential in combating alcohol, drugs, family dysfunction, and their

consequences: ***“Get people to go out on the land as a family. Connect mothers and daughters and fathers and sons.”***

Qualitative Findings: The Perspective of Non-Sport Volunteers

The second group of participants that we interviewed, the non-sport volunteers, came from a variety of backgrounds. Some were active volunteers in areas other than sport. Others had been volunteers in sport at one time but had given up their involvement. Some individuals in this group had had no involvement in any sort of volunteer activity.⁸ While the sport volunteers seemed eager to share their viewpoints and thus were relatively easy to organize into focus groups, more of the non-sport volunteers were reticent. Therefore, the researchers had to reach out more vigorously to this group in some communities. However, once the interviews began, this group was as generous as other respondents in sharing their ideas.

Reasons for Not Volunteering in Sport

There were various reasons why former sport volunteers were no longer involved. These included lack of time, changing interests, their children no longer being involved in sport, caring for young children, lack of babysitters, age, health, and economic factors: ***“I stopped because I needed to take care of my family and work to pay the bills.”*** Sometimes a job change affected sport volunteering:

“When I was working as a teacher, I was around the kids and it was natural to volunteer in sports, but since I stopped teaching my interests changed. Now I’m more into counselling. I don’t have time to do sports anymore.”

⁸ We are unable to separate the data pertaining to those respondents who had never volunteered from those who had volunteered in areas other than sport, so both are included in this one group.

What Is a Volunteer?

In the communities that participated in this study, there is a tradition of caring and helping others that preceded the introduction of the notion of volunteerism. The non-sport volunteers had strong feelings about the meaning of the word “volunteer.” Their responses included:

- ***“doing something without being paid”;***
- ***“someone who does it because he likes it”;***
- ***“giving of their time and talent”;***
- ***“helping others”;***
- ***“people who love kids and their points of view”;***
- ***“creating opportunities”;***
- ***“helping students achieve”;***
- ***“individuals who have a passion for their community and the activities they value.”***

In response to the question, “what is a volunteer?” one respondent remembered a community member fondly:

“This one guy way back used to set up hand game tournaments. He never got paid once. He did this all his life. The recreation complex is named after him. His heart was into it. You got to have heart. You got to have kindness and respect.”

Regard for Sport Volunteers

Though these respondents did not volunteer in sport, they respected those who did. They saw them as good role models for children and the community in general: ***“I’m proud of people who volunteer. They show kids that they can give back. It makes me smile.”*** They had regard for the willingness of sport volunteers to give their time and energy without the

expectation of financial rewards. Volunteers were seen as good people by those who did not volunteer. Some saw volunteering as an affirmation of their own cultural values. Non-sport volunteers recognized that sport volunteers contributed their expertise because of their love for their sport and their commitment to others:

“They are committed people to what they do and what they believe. Teachers, for example, spend their evenings running all kinds of sports in schools. They seem to be very positive, always encouraging and just being there for young people. The students seem to have a lot of respect for the teachers running sport. The people who are volunteers become mentors to those young people. It goes beyond sport.”

Non-sport volunteers respected the comprehensive approach of the sport volunteers, many of whom encouraged participants to do well in school and lead healthy lives, and assisted with their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Many were seen as de facto counsellors as well as coaches.

Encouraging Sport Volunteerism

There was a widespread viewpoint among both sport and non-sport volunteers that many more people are needed to help out. Non-sport volunteers were asked to think about what might encourage them to volunteer in sport. The responses included training and workshops, helping out when their children get older, being encouraged by sport volunteers, being asked to do something that they are good at, and being asked to be involved in activities that are recreational and not merely sports-oriented. One respondent felt that she would volunteer in sport if

there were more frequent connections between sport and culture:

“I am not interested in organized sports, but I am interested in kids. When I volunteered with Dene games in the past, I felt sports connected me with other people. I translated so that people fully understood what they were doing. There was a connection between culture and games. You teach about sports and sportsmanship. You teach them how to be a good person and you hope they evolve. It’s part of a whole.”

This respondent echoed the holistic perspective of the sport volunteers. Although she no longer volunteered in sport, she saw a valuable connection between sport, culture, and community life. If sport were promoted as more than an athletic activity, as part of a broader life experience, then people without a specific sport orientation might become interested.

Skills and Knowledge

Respondents were asked about the skills and knowledge they felt they could bring to sport volunteerism and what they might gain as a result of volunteering. Some of the skills the respondents possessed included patience, basic first aid, calmness, technical skills in a particular sport, flexibility, punctuality, organizational ability, motivation skills, and interpersonal skills.

Qualities that the respondents hoped that they would gain through volunteering included the ability to interact with different kinds of people, knowing how to be effective with other age groups, leadership skills, and learning to be more assertive. One respondent felt that if she learned the technical skills of sport, she would have more

“self-satisfaction because you feel you’re making a contribution in seeing children develop skills. You see them working together and getting fit and feeling that they can accomplish something, too. You improve your interpersonal skills, too. You see youngsters grow. You are letting people know they can rely on you.”

Training

Most of the non-sport volunteers we interviewed felt that training might encourage them to consider volunteering. The types of training included first aid, sport workshops, coaching clinics, and meetings on how to share available resources and talent. Some respondents felt that they might consider volunteering in sport if they didn’t have to travel great distances to receive the necessary training: *“I need to learn more about sports. I wouldn’t mind getting some kind of certification. It would be good if they had a course here in the community.”*

Measures Needed to Encourage New Volunteers

Non-sport volunteers repeatedly said that if potential volunteers were asked directly, they might consider volunteering:

“If people were to be asked individually, they would volunteer. You need to be asked to do specific things. Ask people what their interests are and team somebody who is experienced with somebody who is less experienced. People often feel they don’t have confidence or skills but they do. Recognition of their abilities is

important. Sometimes you have to point out a person’s talent to them. If someone asked me for a specific job I could do, I would volunteer. I came tonight because I was specifically asked. How do you get people out there? You need that extra push. Recognition is important. Not that you have been given something, that you’ve been able to accomplish something. I think you recognize people by saying, ‘I know you’re capable of doing this or that.’”

One respondent felt that if parents were asked to help in the school, it would ease their path to volunteerism in sport because a support network would already be there:

“They could learn how to do things, because it is too much to expect them to set up and manage activities if they have no experience. In the communities, we have a lot of people who are not educated, who do not know how to read and write. For them to jump in and take over would be a very scary situation. I think we should educate people to take little baby steps.”

Another respondent felt that not all sport volunteers need to be sport-minded:

“The concept of booster clubs might be useful in the North. Members of the group don’t coach but raise funds for the group. Parents are required to help with dances or car washes. This would take the heat off the coaches who wouldn’t have to take responsibility for fundraising as well as coaching.”

Community leadership was seen as important:

“If a community member sees a leader volunteering, that will encourage more people to volunteer. They are role models and while they have a lot on their plate, it is really important for them to be bonded with the community.”

Quantitative Findings

In this section, we present the quantitative findings of our research. Each of the 29 sport volunteers and 23 non-sport volunteers was asked to complete a personal demographic profile and to complete a questionnaire either identifying their reasons for volunteering or indicating their perception of the barriers to volunteering in sport.

Small Community Sports Volunteer Survey

The purpose of the Small Community Sports Survey was to gather information about what sports were occurring in each community. Data to complete the Small Community Sports Volunteer Survey (SCSVS) was obtained in two ways. First respondents were asked to list on their personal demographic profile the sports in which they had volunteered. Then the SCSVS was given to the community recreation director and he or she indicated which sports were available in that community. Sports listed on the survey included all sports named by Sport North Federation that have a Territorial Sport Organization (TSO); space was also provided for including sports and activities not listed by Sport North Federation. In each of the four communities names of people who volunteered for various sports were put forward. Our goal was to capture a picture of who is volunteering for what in each small community. From these community surveys, a master profile was developed.

In the communities where the sports were occurring, the greatest number of volunteers were participating in basketball, hockey, soccer, track and field, volleyball, cultural activities and games (such as snowshoe racing and canoeing), and general gym activities. However, even though these sports attracted the most volunteers, they were not all occurring in every community. In fact, only three sports – volleyball, Inuit Arctic Sports or Dene Games, and cultural activities and games – occurred in all four communities, as noted in Table 2 (p. 25).

Demographic Profile of Sport and Non-Sport Volunteers⁹

Respondents were asked to provide information about their age, gender, marital status, education level, labour force status, annual family earnings, hours volunteered per week, ethnic background, and years of residence in the NWT. The requested information corresponds approximately to categories in the *2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating* (McClintock, 2004). We included ethnic background in the profile in order to assess how the ethnicity of sport volunteers in the communities studied corresponds with the ethnic makeup of that community.

The following graphs summarize the demographic categories and are accompanied by a brief commentary of findings for each category. The demographic profile shows patterns and trends for those volunteering in sport in small communities in the NWT, and in our analysis these demographics are compared with those of non-sport volunteers, and where appropriate, sport volunteers in the rest of Canada. Although the parameters of this study did not include determining the total population of sport

⁹ Please note that although we present the demographic profiles of our two groups of participants side-by-side, it is not our intention to suggest that the non-sport volunteers are a homogenous group.

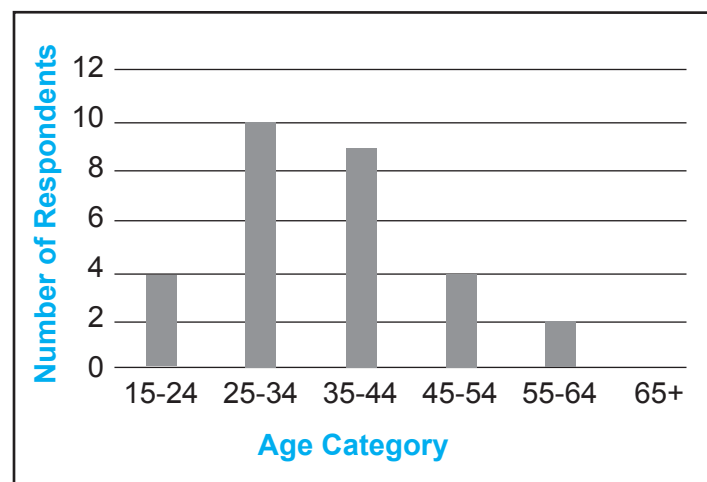
Table 2. Number of Communities in which Sport Activity is Occurring

Number of communities in which sport volunteerism activity is occurring	Sports in which at least one volunteer per community is assisting with or organizing activities
Four out of four communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Volleyball ● Inuit Arctic Sports or Dene Games ● Cultural Activities and Games
Three out of four communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="width: 50%;">● Basketball <li style="width: 50%;">● Soccer <li style="width: 50%;">● Dog Sledding <li style="width: 50%;">● Softball/Baseball <li style="width: 50%;">● Hockey <li style="width: 50%;">● General Gym Activities <li style="width: 50%;">● Cross-Country Skiing
Two out of four communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Badminton ● Shooting ● Track and Field
One out of four communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="width: 50%;">● Bowling <li style="width: 50%;">● Boxing <li style="width: 50%;">● Broomball <li style="width: 50%;">● Weightlifting <li style="width: 50%;">● Swimming
None of the four communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="width: 50%;">● Special Olympics <li style="width: 50%;">● Ski Biathlon <li style="width: 50%;">● Snowshoe Biathlon <li style="width: 50%;">● Speed Skating <li style="width: 50%;">● Curling <li style="width: 50%;">● Squash <li style="width: 50%;">● Figure Skating <li style="width: 50%;">● Taekwondo <li style="width: 50%;">● Gymnastics <li style="width: 50%;">● Tennis <li style="width: 50%;">● Karate <li style="width: 50%;">● Wrestling <li style="width: 50%;">● Kayaking

volunteers in the four communities studied, the 29 sport participants can be considered key volunteers within their respective communities.

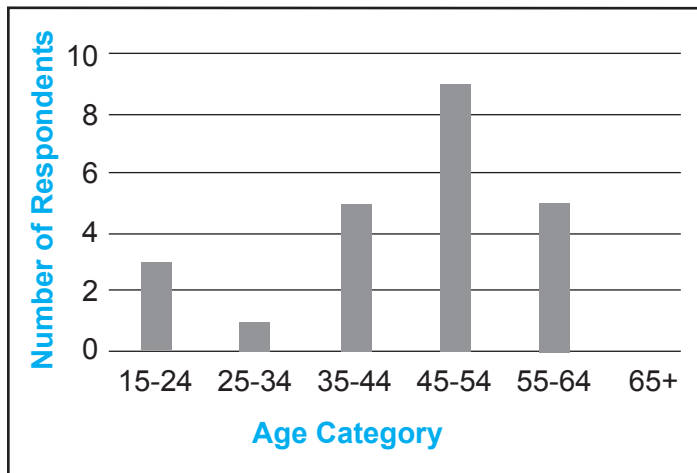
As shown in Figure 2, 19 of the 29 (66%) sport volunteers ranged in age from 25 to 44 years. The age category from 15 to 24 years represents only 14% of the population of sport volunteers in this study.

Figure 2: Age of Sport Volunteers



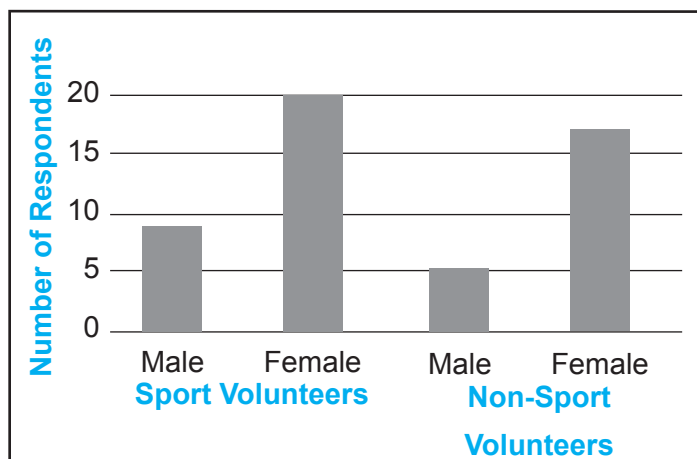
Thirty-nine percent (39%) of the 23 non-sport volunteers ranged in age from 45 to 54 years (see Figure 3). In reference to age, the biggest difference between the sport volunteers and non-sport volunteers was in the age category from 25 to 34 years. Ten of 29 sport volunteers (35%) were in this age group compared to one non-sport volunteer (5%).

Figure 3: Age of Non-sport Volunteers



Among sport volunteers studied in the NWT, females outnumbered males. As Figure 4 shows, of the 29 sport volunteers, 9 (31%) were male and 20 (69%) were female. The numbers are similar for non-sport volunteers. Of the 23 non-sport volunteers, 6 (26%) were male and 17 (74%) were female.

Figure 4: Gender of Volunteers



Figures 5 and 6 show the marital status of the participants. Eighteen of the 29 sport volunteers (62%) were married or in a common law relationship, and 9 of 29 (31%) were single.

Figure 5: Marital Status of Sport Volunteers

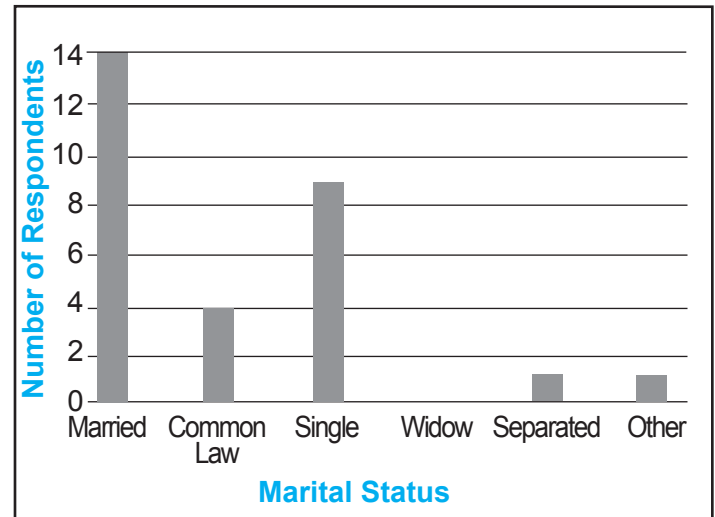
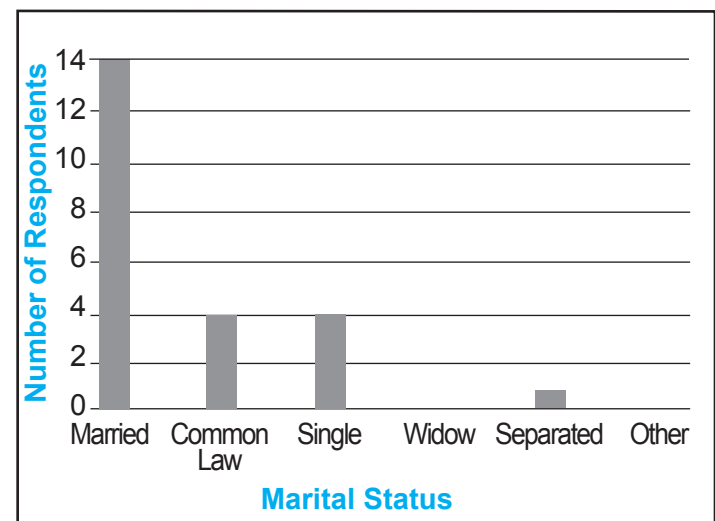
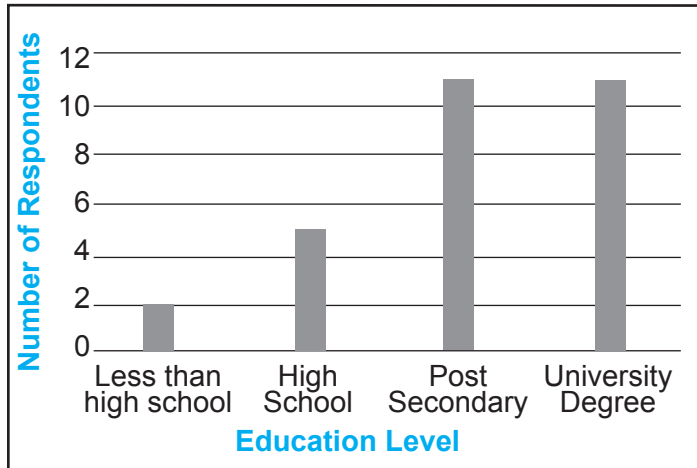


Figure 6: Marital Status of Non-sport Volunteers



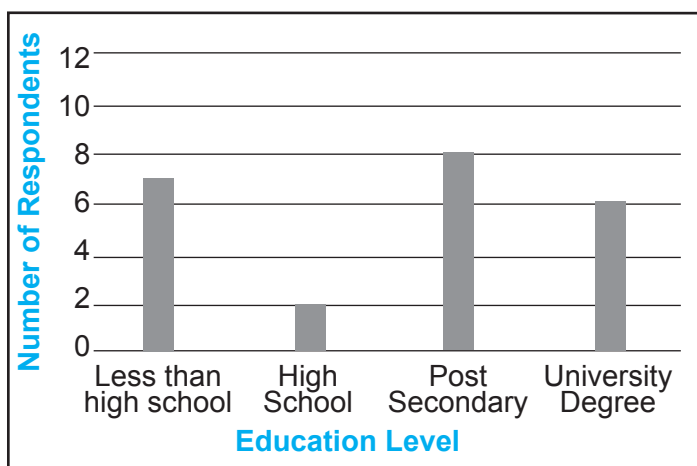
Concerning level of education, Figure 7 shows that 27 of 29 sport volunteers (93%) had at least a high school level of education and above, and 22 of 29 (76%) had some post secondary education or above.¹⁰

Figure 7: Level of Education of Sport Volunteers



In the group of non-sport volunteers shown in Figure 8, seven of 23 (30%) had not completed high school compared to 2 of 29 (7%) in the sport volunteer group.

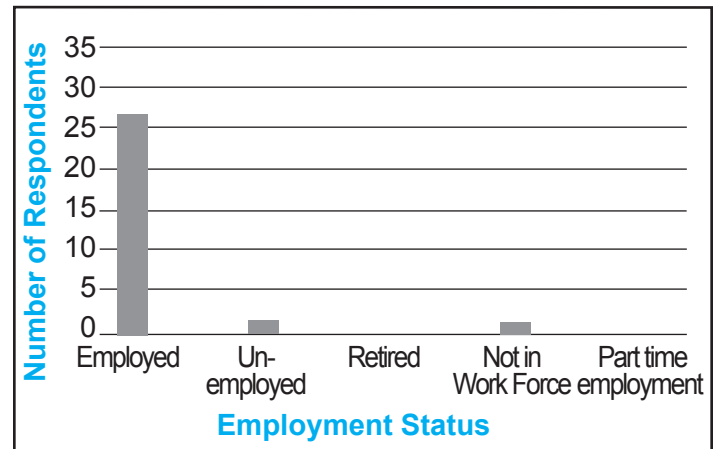
Figure 8: Level of Education of Non-sport Volunteers



¹⁰ The exact level of post secondary education was not specified.

As Figure 9 shows, the majority of sport volunteers in this study were employed. Twenty-seven of 29 (93%) worked in full-time jobs. Of the two remaining respondents, one was unemployed and the other was not in the work force.

Figure 9: Labour Force Status of Sport Volunteers



As Figure 10 shows, there were a greater number of unemployed people in the non-sport volunteer group. In this sample, seven out of 23 (30%) were unemployed compared to 1 out of 29 (3%) unemployed in the sport volunteer group.

Figure 10: Labour Force Status of Non-sport Volunteers

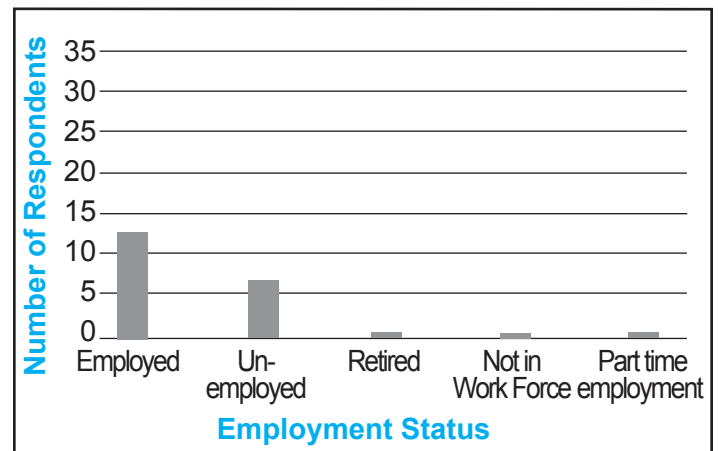
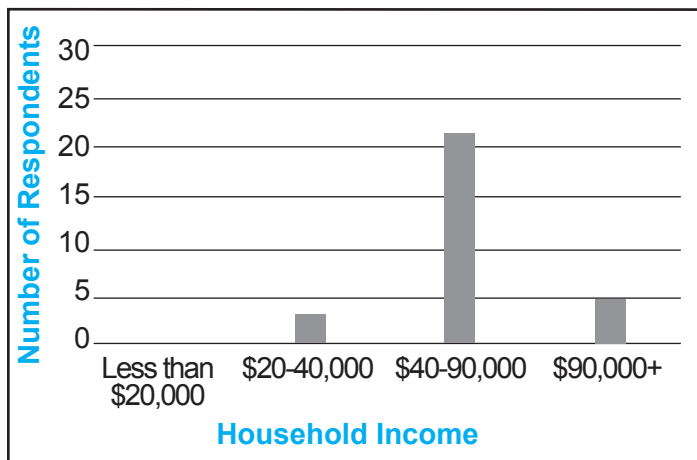


Figure 11 shows that 21 of 29 sport volunteers (72%) indicated they had a family income in the range of \$40,000 to \$90,000 per year. The average family income of all 29 participants was approximately \$65,000 per year.

Figure 11: Annual Family Earnings of Sport Volunteers



Eight out of 23 (35%) non-sport volunteers had a family income of less than \$20,000 per year as shown in Figure 12. In the sport volunteers group no one made less than \$20,000 per year. The average family income of non-sport volunteers was approximately \$34,000 compared to \$65,000 per year for the sport volunteers group.

Figure 12: Annual Family Earnings of Non-sports Volunteers

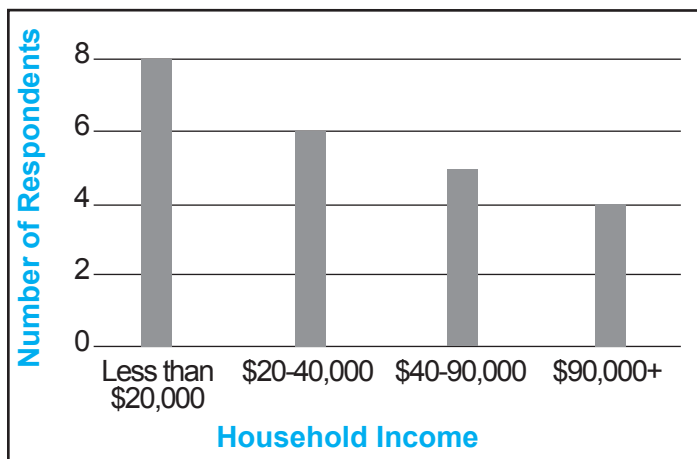


Figure 13 shows that most sport volunteers (17 of 29) contributed four to six hours per week. The average number of hours contributed yearly, by all 29 sport volunteers, is 276 (calculated as an average of 5.3 hours volunteered per week, multiplied by 52 weeks).

Figure 13: Hours Volunteered per Week by Sport Volunteers

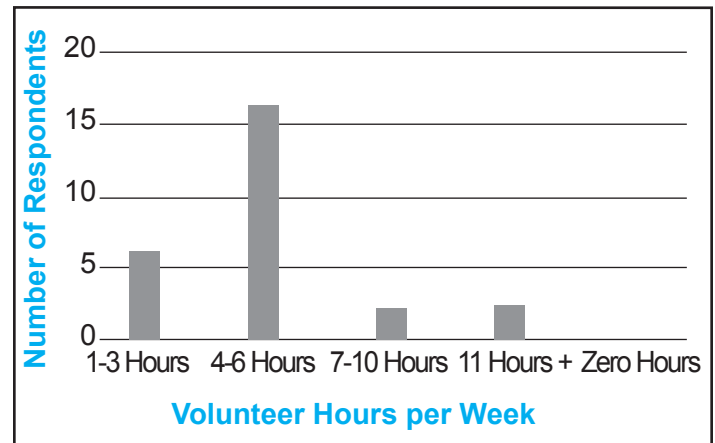
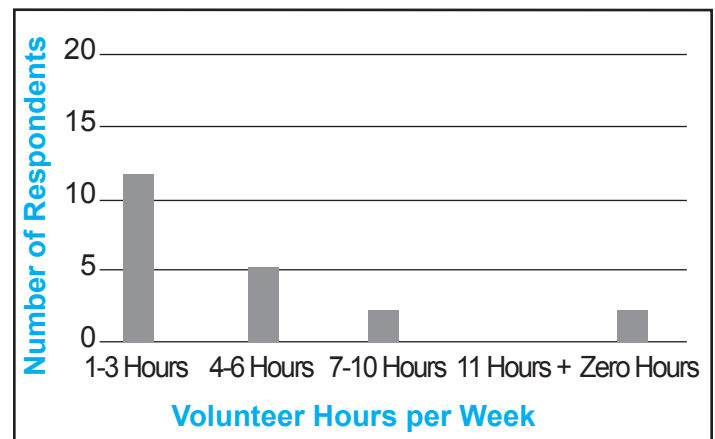


Figure 14 shows that over half of the non-sport volunteers (12 of 23) contributed one to three hours per week in non-sport related volunteerism. The average number of hours contributed yearly, by all 23 non-sport volunteers was 166 (calculated as an average of 3.2 hours volunteered per week, multiplied by 52 weeks).

Figure 14: Hours Volunteered per Week by Non-sport Volunteers



Although the majority of individuals in each of the four communities are Aboriginal, 59% of sport volunteers who participated in this study were Aboriginal.¹¹ The sport volunteers included 17 individuals who self-identified as Dene, Métis, or Inuvialuit (see Figure 15). In the non-sport volunteer group, 16 of 23 (70%) individuals self-identified as Dene or Inuvialuit.

Figure 15: Ethnic Background of Sport Volunteers

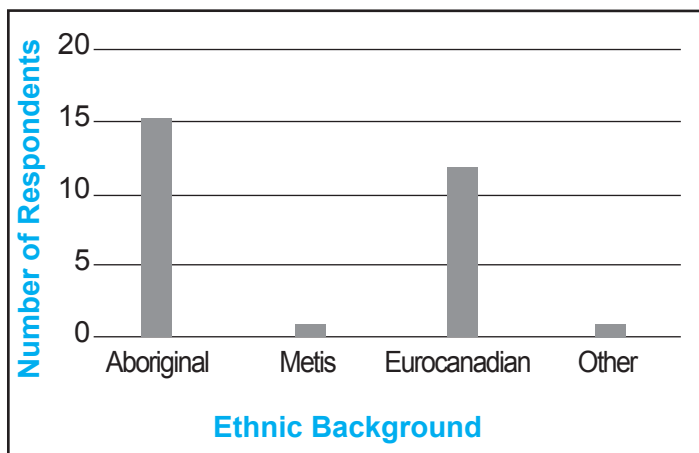
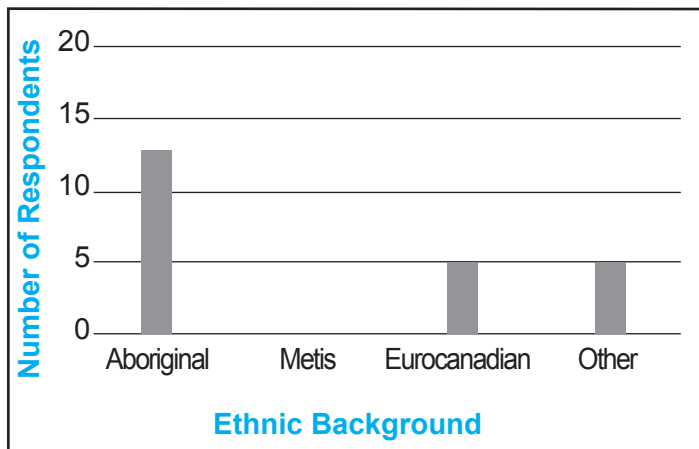


Figure 16 shows that in the non-sport volunteer group, 13 of 23 (56%) individuals self-identified as Dene or Inuvialuit.

Figure 16: Ethnic Background of Non-sport Volunteers



¹¹The Aboriginal populations of the four communities are: Wha Ti – 98%, Deline – 93%, Hay River Reserve – 100%, and Ulukhaktok (Holman) – 95%. Government of the Northwest Territories, Bureau of Statistics, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2004d.

Figure 17 shows that 15 of 29 (52%) sport volunteers in this study were born and raised in the community, and 18 of 29 (62%) had been in the North for ten years or longer.

Figure 17: Years of Residence of Sport Volunteers

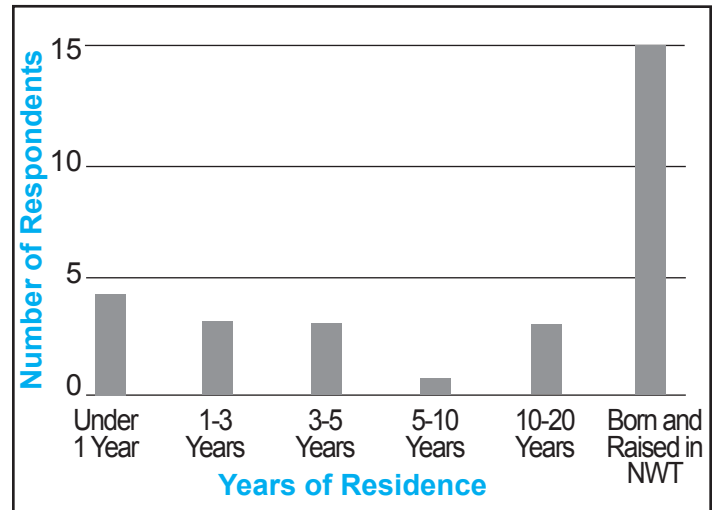
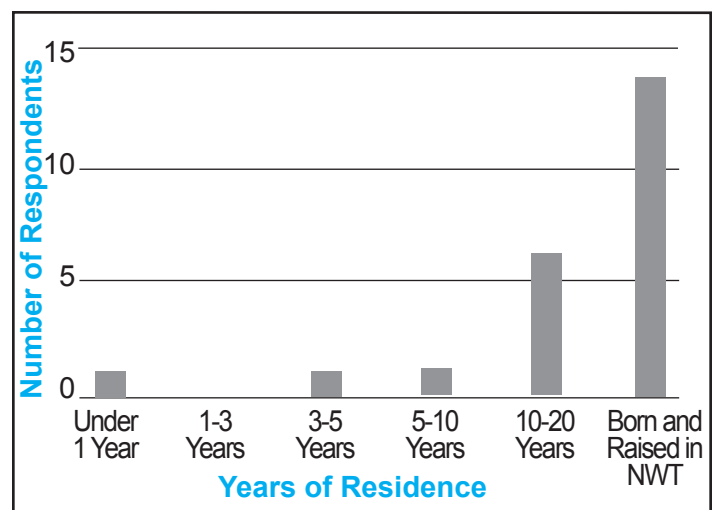


Figure 18 shows that 14 of 23 (61%) of the non-sport volunteer group were born and raised in the community in which the study took place. Twenty individuals (87%) had lived in the North for ten years or longer.

Figure 18: Years of Residence of Non-sport Volunteers



To conclude, in looking at the demographics of the sport volunteer population, the picture that emerged is a 31% to 69% male to female ratio. The sport volunteers were for the most part employed in full-time jobs, they possessed at least a high school education, and their family incomes ranged from \$40,000 to \$90,000 per year. These sport volunteers contributed on average 276 hours of volunteer time each year. Just over half of them were Aboriginal and were born and raised in the community studied.

The non-sport volunteers were generally older than the sport volunteers; 83% of them being 35 years or older and 61% being 45 years or older. In general, the group had less formal education than the sport volunteers group, with 70% having at least high school completion compared to 93% high school completion in the sport volunteers group. Seventy-four percent of the non-sport volunteers were female. Only 61% were employed with 57% being employed full-time compared to an employment rate of 93% for sport volunteers. For non-sport volunteers, 35% had family incomes of less than \$20,000 per year, while 39% had family incomes greater than \$40,000. Some of the non-sport volunteers do volunteer in other areas besides sport, but tend to volunteer fewer hours than their sport volunteer counterparts.

Fifty-two percent volunteered three hours or less per week in activities other than sport.

Findings from the Sport Volunteer Questionnaire

Each sport volunteer was asked to complete a questionnaire and rate a number of statements about volunteering. The rating was based on a five-point scale (Likert Type) with 1 indicating the least importance, and 5 being of most importance. Responses for each participant were listed on a master table. A score was given based on the number of responses for a given statement. For example, if 5 people assigned a rating of 5 for a particular statement, this would constitute a score of 25 points (5x5). The total scores ranged from 80 to 132, and, in order of priority, identified the reasons for sport volunteers' contributing their time.

Table 3 shows the ranking of the least important to most important reasons for volunteering in sport, identified by the 29 participants in the study. The prime reasons included: helping other people, believing in the cause, having fun, promoting sport and recreation, and using skills and knowledge. Such motivations as finding a better job, filling spare time and gaining recognition were of far less importance to

Table 3. Categories of Important Motivators for Sport Volunteers

<p style="text-align: center;">Low Importance (66-80)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Medium Importance (100-113)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">High Importance (123-132)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Help Find a Job (66) ● Fill Spare Time (70) ● Gain Recognition (72) ● Improve Career (80) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Help Where My Family is Active (100) ● Companionship/Friendship (108) ● Learn New Skills (113) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use my Skills and Knowledge (123) ● Promote Sport and Recreation (125) ● Have Fun (126) ● Belief in the Cause (131) ● Help Other People (132)

the respondents. As will be discussed in the analysis, these results differ slightly from reasons given by sport volunteers in other regions of Canada.

Respondents were invited to list additional reasons for volunteering in sport. Some of the reasons included:

- *“to make activities happen in the community”;*
- *“to gain a sense of fulfillment”;*
- *“for personal growth and life learning”;*
- *“to meet people and to stay active and healthy”;*
- *“to reduce youth crime and help the community develop”;*
- *“to provide an opportunity for youth to travel”;*
- *“kids whose parents are involved in their life do better”;*
- *“If I don’t do it, who will?”*

Non-Sport Volunteers’ Reasons for Not Volunteering in Sport

Whereas the sport volunteers were asked to complete a questionnaire examining their motivations for volunteering, the non-sport volunteers were asked to complete a questionnaire examining the perceived barriers to volunteering in sport. A score of 1 indicated a barrier they considered of low importance, and a score of 5, a barrier of high importance. Table 4 (p. 31) provides a summary of the scores.

Non-sport volunteers were also provided with the opportunity to add comments about other barriers to their participation in sport volunteerism. Some responses included:

- *“I’m not sports oriented or good at sports.”*
- *“I’m too old.”*

- *“I’m interested in other areas.”*
- *“I could help but not in a coaching capacity.”*
- *“I like to spend more time on the land and with my family.”*
- *“There’s too much community emphasis on hockey.”*

Summary of Findings

Summary of Qualitative Findings for Sport and Non-Sport Volunteers

Volunteers in sport were motivated by their commitment to athletic activity and their belief in the cause. They wanted to have fun and to encourage others to do likewise. Many wanted to contribute to and promote cultural as well as athletic endeavours. These volunteers saw sport as a means of promoting personal growth, their own and that of others. They had been significantly influenced by positive role models and hoped to become role models for others. There was widespread concern that the tradition of helping others without personal financial benefit was declining. Sport volunteers worried about the financial cost of giving athletes opportunities to compete outside their communities. The priorities of the volunteers went beyond sport, and they were committed to improving the overall wellness of their communities.

Non-sport volunteers had a high regard for those who volunteered in athletic activities. Nevertheless, several reasons were given for not becoming personally involved. These included lack of time, changing interests, their children were not interested in sport, their children had grown up, child care responsibilities, age, health, lack of training, and economic factors. Some non-sport volunteers had been involved in sport but felt burned out. One felt that her sport had left her

Table 4. Low, Medium, and High Barriers to Participation in Sport Volunteerism

Not an Important Barrier (30-43)	Barriers of Medium Importance (44-58)	Important Barriers (59 to 75)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I should get paid for my time (30) ● Child care issues (37) ● My health is not good (38) ● Concern about being injured while volunteering (38) ● What it might cost me (42) ● My friends don't volunteer (43) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transportation issues (46) ● I'm not interested In volunteering (47) ● No one would appreciate my efforts (48) ● I've already made my contribution (49) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I don't want the commitment (59) ● Work responsibilities (60) ● Lacking needed skills (63) ● No one has asked me (65) ● Lack of training (67) ● Lack of time (69) ● I volunteer elsewhere (75)

behind: *“The rules of the game have changed and I'm not aware of them.”* Others perceived an ambiance that put them off. They felt intimidated by the exclusiveness of the sport culture: *“A new person to the community is fearful you might step on someone's toes, so you wait for an invitation.”* One felt that *“sport can be too cliquy.”* Some respondents lacked confidence when it came to sport knowledge: *“Somebody else could do a better job. I don't have the skills or training.”*

Like the sport volunteers, these respondents expressed concerns about the number of people who expected to be paid for all aspects of their contributions to their community. The non-sport volunteers, like their sport volunteer counterparts, expressed concerns about the negative effect of drugs and alcohol.

Despite these obstacles, many felt that if they were asked directly to participate in sport, they might give it a try. Some suggested that a mentoring system would help them learn the necessary skills. Generally they had a positive feeling about sport and its potential to help their community. Several volunteered in other areas but were not particularly interested in sport.

Summary of Quantitative Findings for Sport Volunteers

Twenty-nine sport volunteers participated in the study. They were in mid-career or younger. Only 17% were age 45 years or older. These respondents were well educated. Sixty-nine percent had post secondary education or a university degree. Ninety-three percent had at least a high school education, compared to 67% of the population of the NWT in general. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of the volunteers participating in the study were female. Significantly, 93% were employed, most at demanding jobs. Ninety percent (90%) of sport volunteers had an annual family income of \$40,000 or greater. Fifty-five percent (55%) were Aboriginal. Fifty-two percent (52%) were born and raised in the communities in which the study took place. These volunteers made a significant commitment to sport. Seventy-nine percent spent four or more hours per week volunteering and 21% spent at least seven hours.

The main reasons for volunteering in sport included helping other people, believing in the cause, wanting to have fun, wanting to promote sport and recreation, and wanting to use skills and knowledge. Such

factors as wanting to find a better job, wanting to fill spare time, and wanting to gain recognition were of far less importance to the respondents.

Summary of Quantitative Findings for Non-Sport Volunteers

Twenty-three (23%) non-sport volunteers were interviewed. They were generally older than sport volunteers; 83% were 35 or older, and 61% were 45 or older. Sixty-one percent (61%) had some post-secondary education or a university degree. Seventy percent (70%) had at least a high school education. Seventy-four (74%) percent of the non-sport volunteers were female. Fifty-six (56%) percent were employed. Thirty-nine (39%) percent of non-sport volunteers had an annual family income of \$40,000 or more. Fifty-six (56%) percent were Aboriginal. Sixty-one (61%) percent were born and raised in the communities in which this study took place. Some of the non-sport volunteers helped out in other community activities but tended to contribute fewer hours than their sport counterparts. Fifty-two (52%) percent volunteered three hours or less per week in activities other than sport.

Analysis of Findings

In this section, we discuss the qualitative and quantitative findings in relation to the research objectives. First, the Small Community Sports Volunteer Survey (SCSVS) is considered. Second, a comparison is made between the findings of the demographic profile of sport volunteers and the profiles of sport volunteers in other localities. Third, the motivations of small-community sport volunteers in the NWT are related to those of sport volunteers in other jurisdictions. Finally, the group profile for non-sport volunteers is analyzed and the barriers they perceived to participation in sport volunteerism are examined.

Small Community Sports Volunteer Survey

The recreation director in each community completed the SCSVS. These surveys created a snapshot of sporting activities in their community, and from the surveys flowed a number of observations. Only three sports took place in all four communities: volleyball, Inuit Arctic Sports or Dene Games, and cultural activities and games. The latter sport varied from community to community and included snowshoe racing, canoe racing, log sawing, fishing derbies, and other activities that reflect a broader understanding of sport.

In three of the four communities, the following sports occurred: Inuit Arctic Sports or Dene Games, basketball, dog sledding, hockey, cross-country skiing, softball, soccer, and general gym activities. Several of these sports require technical expertise and equipment, which can be a factor in making the sport available. For instance, Inuit Arctic Sports and dog sledding require a great deal of experience. Cross-country skiing involves technical knowledge, ski trails, and equipment. However, basketball, soccer, softball, and general gym activities are more readily organized if there is someone in the community to assume leadership. It is fair to assume that the reason that these sports were not occurring in every community was due to an overextended recreation director, a lack of local interest by potential participants, or the absence of a motivated volunteer.

Sports that were found in only one or two communities included badminton, shooting, bowling, broomball, seasonal swimming, boxing, weightlifting, and track and field. While sports such as shooting, swimming, and weightlifting require specialized knowledge, equipment or facilities, broomball and badminton can be accommodated more easily.

Not surprisingly, due to their small populations, none of the communities were able to offer all sports. Not even Yellowknife, with over 45 times the average population of the communities studied, offers all 27 sports for which there are Territorial Sports Organizations in the NWT.

Sports that were not taking place in any of the four communities included Special Olympics, ski and snowshoe biathlons, curling, figure skating, gymnastics, karate, kayaking, speed skating, squash, taekwondo and tennis. Clearly, many of these sports are dependent upon specialized facilities, which do not exist in the communities studied. For example, biathlon requires a shooting range, bowling requires a bowling alley, curling requires a curling rink (and Ulukhaktok (Holman) is the only community that has one), and squash requires a squash court. Other sports such as figure skating, gymnastics, karate, kayaking, and taekwondo call for detailed technical knowledge to ensure safety and teach participants. If a knowledgeable and willing volunteer is not available for a given sport, it is unlikely to occur. All sports require an organizer to stimulate interest, raise funds, and encourage participants to continue their involvement.

In examining the availability of sports in small NWT communities, potentially restrictive factors have been suggested, which include a lack of facilities,

equipment, technical know-how, familiarity and interest by potential participants, and available and knowledgeable leaders or volunteers. It seems evident that while not every absence of a sport can be attributed to a lack of volunteers, volunteers are crucial for maintaining a range of sporting opportunities in small NWT communities.

Discussion of the Demographic Profile of Sport Volunteers

When the demographics of the 29 sport volunteers were tabulated, there were striking similarities with sport volunteers in other localities, yet there were also some differences. Forty-eight percent of the sport volunteers in the four communities were between the ages of 35 and 54 and 66% were between 25 and 44. As Table 5 shows, this is similar to the findings of the most common ages of volunteers in general and sport volunteers in particular noted in other studies. Our study of the NWT is consistent with other studies in that the majority of volunteers in our study were between 25 and 44 years of age.

According to the results of the 2000 NSGVP, more Canadian females than males volunteered, 54% of females compared to 46% of males (Lasby, 2004). As noted in the literature review, Lasby and McIver (2004) reported that in the broad category of arts, culture, and recreation, 58% of Canadian volunteers

Table 5. Ages of Volunteers

Canadian Volunteers in General (Lasby, 2004)	Sport Volunteers in England (SVE, 2002)	Sport Volunteers in Ontario (Rhyne, 1995)	Sport Volunteers in Small Communities in the NWT
44% between 35 and 54 years of age	40% between 35 and 59 years of age; 12% between 25 and 34 years of age	76% between 18 and 44 years of age	48% between 35 and 54 years of age; 66% between 25 and 44 years of age

were male and 42% were female. Rhyne's (1995) study of sport volunteers in Ontario found that 53% were male compared to 47% who were female. In our study of the NWT, however, females outnumbered males, 69% to 31% respectively.

In terms of marital status, Lasby and Mclver (2004) reported that 70% of arts, culture and recreation volunteers in Canada were married. Rhyne (1995) noted that 62% of sport volunteers in Ontario were married. Similarly, in our study, 62% of sport volunteers were married or in common law relationships.

According to the literature that we reviewed, volunteers in general and sport volunteers in particular tended to be employed. Table 6 shows employment percentages for volunteers in other studies.

Sport volunteers in the NWT were even more likely than volunteers in general or sport volunteers in other studies to be employed. Notably, all sport volunteers in this study who were employed, were employed full-time. This is significant as the employment rate in

small communities in the NWT is very low: Wha Ti, 41%; Deline, 40%; Hay River Reserve, 42%; and Ulukhaktok (Holman), 57% (Government of the Northwest Territories, Bureau of Statistics, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2004d).

On the other hand, figures for unemployed volunteers are consistently low. Table 7 shows the percentages of unemployed volunteers in other studies.

In other studies, there is a considerable population of general volunteers and sport volunteers who are not in the workforce, approximately 20% to 25%; in our study, only one out of 29 (4%) was not in the workforce.

Volunteers were not only more likely to be employed but they had a mid to high range of family income. Seventy-five percent of Canadian volunteers had a family income of between \$20,000 and \$99,999 (Lasby, 2004). Fifty-six percent of arts, culture, and recreation volunteers had a family income of between \$40,000 and \$99,999 (Lasby & Mclver, 2004), and 76% of sport volunteers in Ontario had a family

Table 6. Percentages of Employed Volunteers and Sport Volunteers

Canadian Volunteers in General (Lasby, 2004)	Sport Volunteers in England (SVE, 2002)	Sport Volunteers in Ontario (Rhyne, 1995)	Sport Volunteers in Small Communities in the NWT
67%	70%	73%	93% (all employed full-time)

Table 7. Percentages of Unemployed Volunteers and Sport Volunteers

Canadian Volunteers in General (Lasby, 2004)	Sport Volunteers in England (SVE, 2002)	Sport Volunteers in Ontario (Rhyne, 1995)	Sport Volunteers in Small Communities in the NWT
4% Unemployed	No Data	6% Unemployed	4% Unemployed

income of between \$20,000 and \$99,999. In our study, the percentage of sport volunteers with high family incomes was greater than in other localities, with 72% of sport volunteers having family incomes of between \$40,000 to \$90,000. This may be explained by the fact that those who do work in the North frequently earn more than their southern counterparts because of higher salaries and northern allowances.

Generally, volunteers are more likely to have a high level of education. Lasby (2004) reported that 81% of Canadian volunteers had at least a high school education. Rhyne's (1995) study found that 93% of sport volunteers in Ontario had a high school education or higher. The NWT study resulted in exactly the same finding – 93%. This is significant and causes concern because in the four communities examined in this study, the high school graduation rate averages 35%: Wha Ti, 32%; Deline, 32%; Hay River Reserve, 44%; and Ulukhaktok (Holman), 33% (Government of the Northwest Territories, Bureau of Statistics 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2004d). When overall employment and education levels are averaged in the four communities, the employment rate is 45% and the high school graduation rate is 35%, which stands in stark comparison to the significantly higher employment rate (93%) and high school graduation rate (93%) of sport volunteers in this study. This would suggest that by increasing the number of high school graduates and thus their increased likelihood for employment, the potential pool of sport volunteers might be increased. This speaks to the interdependence of multiple factors in working to build all aspects of communities.

Fifty-nine percent of the sport volunteers in this study were Aboriginal, and this group makes a substantial contribution. But over 90% of the population of the communities studied is Aboriginal, which suggests

that Aboriginal people are under-represented in sport volunteering.

Finally, Lasby (2004) reported that the top 25% of volunteers in Canada averaged 188 volunteer hours each per year and accounted for 73% of all volunteer hours. The 29 individuals in our study averaged 276 volunteer hours each per year. Twenty-three of 29 volunteers in our study (79%) averaged over 208 volunteer hours per year, and three of the 29 (10%) averaged close to 576 hours each per year. This is a substantial contribution to the sporting activities in the communities.

Motivations of Sport Volunteers

In both the qualitative and quantitative components of our study, altruism or helping others was the most important for volunteering. We learned from the focus groups that this desire to help others included an interest in helping to better one's community. Through helping others and one's community, sport volunteers gained a deep sense of personal satisfaction. As reported in the literature review, this finding is consistent with a study conducted by Dorsch et al. (2002) of sport volunteers in Saskatchewan and with Rhyne's (1995) study of sport volunteers in Ontario, in which the majority of respondents indicated that helping others or helping the community was their main motivation for volunteering.

Lasby and McIver (2004) reported that among Canadian volunteers in general, the main reason for volunteering was a belief in the cause. This is consistent with Rhyne's (1995) findings in the study of sport volunteers in Ontario, in which 75% of respondents considered contributing to a valuable area, i.e., belief in the cause, as a very important motivation for volunteering. In the NWT study, belief in the cause ranked second in importance. In fact, of the

five most important motivators for sport volunteers in this study, four are identical in order of importance to the study of sport volunteers in Ontario, as illustrated in Table 8.

The only significant difference between the two studies is that in the Ontario study, “helping where my own family is involved” was cited as the fifth most important reason, while in the NWT study it was the eighth. Otherwise, the studies produced very similar results.

Consistent with other studies, data from our study indicates that low motivators for volunteering include improving one’s career, gaining recognition, and filling spare time. These results are consistent with those found among sport volunteers in Ontario. Similarly, in the Saskatchewan study of sport volunteers (Dorsch et al., 2002) gaining recognition, volunteering as a

diversion, or for career advancement were all very low motivators for participation. Ninety-three percent of sport volunteers in the NWT study were employed and thus relatively secure financially. Sixty-two percent were married. This may explain why volunteering was not seen as a way to improve one’s career or gain recognition.

Unlike any other study examined, many NWT respondents linked motivation for volunteering to culture. They saw volunteering as an extension of the Aboriginal tradition of helping others through giving, caring, and sharing. For some respondents, there was a relationship between the decline in volunteerism in their communities and the erosion of traditional culture. Many sport volunteers did not view their volunteerism in isolation; rather, their volunteer activity was seen as contributing to the betterment of the community.

Table 8. Ranking of Volunteer Motivation: A Comparison of Two Studies

Motivation for Volunteering in Sport	Sport Volunteers in Ontario (Rhyne, 1995)	Sport Volunteers in Small Communities in the NWT
Help others	1	1
Contributing to a valuable area (belief in the cause)	2	2
Have fun	3	3
Promote sport and recreation	4	4
Use skills and knowledge	6	5
Learn new skills and knowledge	7	6
Companionship/friendship	8	7
Help where family is involved	5	8
Improve career	10	9
Gain recognition	11	10
Fill spare time	9	11
Find a job or a better job	N/A	12

Finally, the motivation of learning new skills was not viewed in terms of just learning the technical skills of a sport or how to coach. Rather, learning new skills was a motivator that was linked to personal growth and included developing patience, personal confidence, serenity, enjoyment, people skills, fundraising skills, and flexibility.

Role models inspired many sport volunteers. For many, their parents were role models and helping was part of a spirit of giving in the family. For some, teachers who volunteered were the inspiration. For others, the value of giving and helping out was learned from elders. In every community, sport volunteers were concerned about people expecting to be paid for things they did for others or for their communities. Volunteers felt that this did not represent traditional values and could have an ongoing detrimental effect on volunteering.

Respondents were also concerned about the need for additional sport volunteers. This would help to prevent the current core of volunteers from becoming even more overextended.

Sport volunteers felt that they were not fully acknowledged, for instance, when parents consistently drop their children off at the rink without stopping to lace their skates or watch them play. This lack of parental involvement makes volunteers feel that their contribution is not appreciated.

Finally, sport volunteers linked many of their concerns to community wellness issues. In every community, some sport volunteers felt that there has been a decline in the number of volunteers over the past 10 years. They believed that this reduces the sporting opportunities and provides fewer diversions for youth. They were concerned that the decline in the number

of volunteers was linked to a decline in the traditional value of helping others.

Analysis of Findings for Non-Sport Volunteers

In general, the group of non-sport volunteers was older, with 61% over 45 compared to the sport volunteers group where only 21% were over 45. The non-sport volunteers had less formal education than the sport volunteers. The male to female ratio in the two groups was similar. Three other notable findings were that members of the non-sport volunteer group were less likely to be employed than were sport volunteers. In the former group, 61% were employed, whereas 93% of sport volunteers were employed. Secondly, non-sport volunteers earned less than sport volunteers. Sixty-five percent had family incomes of more than \$20,000 a year; whereas all 29 sport volunteers had family incomes of more than \$20,000 a year. Finally, the average number of hours volunteered per year was 146 hours for non-sport volunteers compared to 276 hours for sport volunteers.

Reasons for Not Volunteering

Although motivations for participation were consistent across the four communities studied, barriers to participation were not. The number one barrier to participation for many non-sport volunteers was that they already volunteered elsewhere. By comparison, this reason ranked only eighth in importance in Rhyne's (1995) study of sport volunteers in Ontario.

The second most important barrier to participation in sport volunteerism identified by NWT respondents was a lack of time. This is consistent with Lasby and McIver's (2004) findings of Canadian volunteers and with Rhyne's (1995) study of sport volunteers in

Ontario. Both studies indicated lack of time as the most significant barrier to volunteering.

The NWT data suggests that most non-sport volunteers are not involved in sport volunteerism because they have commitments elsewhere, either other volunteer commitments or paid work. In addition, some people simply do not want an ongoing commitment. Nonetheless, potential volunteers might be more willing to participate if they had training that would be useful in the voluntary activity. A number of non-sport volunteers indicated that they might volunteer in sport if they were asked directly or knew how to get involved.

Finally, non-sport volunteers felt that they understood the motivations of those who volunteer. They had a high regard for volunteers and recognized that sport volunteers not only coach but often concern themselves with wider issues in young people's lives, such as helping them deal with peer pressure and encouraging them to stay in school. Respondents appreciated that sport volunteers are providing positive outlets and experiences for youth, which can help them stay away from negative influences. Some non-sport volunteers believed they could make a contribution if given a suitable task, training and support, and if they were asked directly and encouraged to become involved.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

As in the rest of Canada, volunteers are essential to sport in the NWT and in small communities in particular. This study indicates that there is a core of highly dedicated sport volunteers in the communities of Deline, Hay River Reserve, Ulukhaktok (Holman Island), and Wha Ti. The majority of these volunteers are well educated and have well-paying jobs. Most are women and are under 45 years of age. While the majority of sport volunteers are Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal volunteers make a significant contribution in relation to their proportion of the total population. Volunteers are motivated by a desire to help others and a strong belief in the benefits of sport. It is important to them that their sport volunteerism contributes to the health and well-being of their communities. Sport volunteers see fun as an essential element of their contribution. Many feel that they garner new skills and develop personal qualities as a result of their volunteering. These motivating factors for sport volunteerism are similar to the motivations of sport volunteers in other parts of Canada.

In small communities in the NWT, a view of sport emerges that is broader than the traditional definition. Sport is considered to be one part of a number of interrelated beneficial activities. Sport, cultural activities, and games are all valued in the communities in our study, and thus some sporting events are seen as part of an overall cultural experience.

A number of volunteers felt that they were not fully appreciated. There was a general feeling that they were required to spend an excessive amount of time raising funds. Many felt overly committed to their

sport, and some described the effect of their involvement as burnout. There was a strong feeling that there is a shortage of volunteers. Many feared that the cultural tradition of helping others without pay is fading.

Given the small size of the communities and the limitations of both volunteers and facilities, only a few sports are offered in each community, but this is to be expected. Sport volunteers recognized the impact of educational, social, and economic challenges; nevertheless, many remained optimistic about the future.

Non-sport volunteers generally had less formal education and lower paying jobs than sport volunteers, a finding that corresponds with other Canadian studies of volunteers. They were older than the sport volunteers; the majority being 45 or older. Similar to the sport volunteers, most non-sport volunteers are women. This group was predominantly Aboriginal.

Many non-sport volunteers had previously volunteered either in sport or in other areas. They had a high regard for sport volunteers. There were a number of perceived barriers to sport volunteering by this group. These included other volunteering commitments, lack of time, lack of training and skills, not having been asked, work responsibilities, not wanting the ongoing commitment, changing interests, and not being sport-oriented. It is worthy of note that in none of the focus group discussions with non-sport volunteers did respondents mention racism as a perceived barrier to their participation.

Similar to national and international trends, respondents from the four communities studied told researchers that there had been a decline in the number of volunteers in sport in recent years. As

many of the sporting activities in these communities could not be sustained without the help of volunteers, it is essential to find ways of retaining the committed core of existing volunteers and to identify new recruits. There is a need to target individuals with skills that complement those of the coaches.

An example of how this is done successfully occurs in the community of Fort Smith, where this study was piloted. There is an annual event called the Fitz-Smith Ski Loppet. A number of seniors, none of whom are expert skiers, volunteer for such jobs as race starters, campfire builders, cooks, two-way-radio operators, and statisticians. The organizing committee asks them to help each year, assigns tasks within their comfort zones, invites them to the celebratory banquet after the race, and recognizes their contribution through an advertisement in the local newspaper. Small communities with limited number of individuals who have technical sport expertise can look to others with complementary skills to help with their activities.

Both sport and non-sport volunteers emphasized the value of sport to the well-being of their communities. Sport was seen as a means of keeping fit and staying away from negative influences. It was viewed by some as a way of preserving the physical aspect of their culture. Participants learn discipline and enhance their self-esteem. Sport participation sometimes provides an opportunity for youth to broaden their horizons by travelling to new communities, competing with others, and learning about different places and cultures. It helps keep young people who are “at risk” involved in positive activities. Thus it is important to keep the supply of volunteers flowing. There is no simple solution to the shortage of sport volunteers in small northern communities. It is and will be an ongoing challenge. The respondents in this study had

a wealth of ideas to deal with this challenge. The next section offers recommendations that have emerged from this study.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Recruitment

1. Personally ask potential volunteers to assist.

- Encourage potential volunteers to see how their skills and knowledge could benefit them, the sport activity and the community generally. Nationally, 30% of volunteers became involved because they were asked individually, so this is a proven recruitment method.
- Match volunteers' skills and knowledge with the volunteer activity. For example, people who are not sport-oriented can initially help by lacing skates, opening and closing the facility, preparing food, and helping out at bingo and fundraisers.

2. Target youth.

- Use the Career and Life Management program (CALM), a required course for graduation, to initiate young people into volunteering. All NWT high school students must perform some form of community service to receive credit for CALM. If the leaders of sport activities liaise with schools and offer opportunities for students to obtain these credits by helping out with their sport, it is possible that some of these students will continue volunteering in the future.
- In addition, young people can be specifically invited to attend sport-training sessions when they are offered in their home community.
- Incorporate a coaching component into secondary school physical education programs. This would encourage students with sport

leadership potential to expand their range of sport skills.

3. Target older people.

- Older members of the community may not have the strength and energy of youth, but they have a wealth of experience, wisdom and skills. Even if they are not sport-oriented, they can often offer complementary skills to the coaches who have the technical and athletic expertise.

4. Recruit teachers.

- When recruiting teachers, local school committees could ask candidates about their interest in volunteering in sport. All things being equal, the candidates with a stronger likelihood of becoming involved in the community as a sport volunteer could be hired.

Recommendations for Training

5. Offer workshops and information sessions.

- Hold workshops on volunteering in small communities. These would provide the basics of how to organize, train, and retain volunteers. These workshops could convey the essential principles of volunteerism with a sport orientation.
- Established and successful sport volunteer representatives could share expertise with small communities. As there are many vibrant sports groups in the NWT, enabling representatives of these groups to share expertise and exchange ideas with small-community volunteers could be advantageous.

6. Training community coaches.

- Expand the opportunities for community coaches and other volunteers to obtain additional training. Because of the high cost of travel from isolated communities, more of these development opportunities could be held in small communities.

7. Provide financial assistance for coach training.

- Increase opportunities for active sport volunteers to receive grants to attend training sessions that are held in larger centres. Many courses are held in Yellowknife or in larger centres, but the high costs for small-community volunteers is often a barrier.

8. Establish a mentoring system.

- Establish a mentoring system so that new volunteers are introduced to helping out with sport and taught the required skills under the guidance of an experienced hand. This would enable the new volunteers to acquire skills gradually and become comfortable with the requirements of assigned tasks. There is a model for this: the Sport North Federation has established a coaching mentoring system for the Arctic Winter Games.¹²

9. Expand networks.

- Recruit community members to volunteer to work with teachers who are doing sports in the schools. This would enable more people to learn about sport and how to supervise children. When people have these skills, they are more likely to use them.

Recommendations for Communication

10. Publicize training opportunities.

- Publicize availability of training opportunities for volunteers extensively. When courses or training are offered by Sport North Federation and other institutions, this information should be distributed more widely. In addition to schools and recreation directors, nursing stations, band and hamlet offices, local stores, and the RCMP should receive this information and be asked to display it. Identified community sport volunteers could also be notified personally.

11. Enhance communications.

- Strengthen communication between non-sport volunteers and sport volunteers. Ask parents, youth, and other community members for help with specific tasks.

Recommendations for Financial Aspects

12. Establish fundraising groups.

- Sport support clubs could be organized to take on the role of fundraising. Coaches often spend considerable time raising funds for trips to competitions and to cover other expenses. If a community support group could take on this



George Lessard

¹² For further information contact the Sport North Federation at 1-800-661-0797.

responsibility, it would significantly reduce the workload of coaches and reduce potential burnout.

13. Identify funding sources.

- Identify and consolidate information on funding available from various sources. Each year there is funding available for sport and physical activities from various government and non-government sources. A system could be devised to pinpoint these sources of funding for the upcoming year so that communities might be eligible to access this funding to enhance their sport programs. Perhaps the new NWT Council of Sport and Recreation could take responsibility for identifying this information and sharing it with all sport stakeholders in small communities.

Recommendations for Recognition

14. Appreciate and recognize volunteers.

- Recognize volunteers for their contributions. Nearly everybody appreciates being thanked. Local sport clubs and teams, and communities could increase the efforts they make to recognize and celebrate the contributions of volunteers. This can be done in many ways: community banquets; local award ceremonies; nominating volunteers for territorial awards; thank you letters; notices on widely read bulletin boards; thanking people personally; placing a message on local radio or television; giving tokens of appreciation like plaques, mugs, T-shirts, or pins; and recognizing sport volunteers in public as often as is appropriate.¹³

Final Thoughts

The NWT has many assets, including its varied wildlife, exquisite flora, rivers, lakes and waterfalls, as well as oil, gas, and diamonds. In a land blessed with so many treasures, volunteers in sport are amongst the most precious resources. It is through the dedicated efforts of a very small number of people that opportunity for regular sport is available to members of small communities. Without them, sport as we know it in the North would be greatly diminished. It is therefore essential that we celebrate the contributions of these volunteers and find every way possible to involve others in the sport volunteer sector. It is important that we are all reminded that aiding others is an essential value of all cultures. It is a reward in itself. We hope that this study has succeeded in suggesting ways of giving more people the opportunity to help members of their community benefit from the joy of sport.



George Lessard

¹³ For further suggestions, see *Book 5 Recognize and Thank Volunteers*. Volunteer NWT c/o Sport North Federation or at www.volunteerNWT.ca.

Glossary

Arctic Winter Games: Since 1970, this event has been a sport competition for Arctic and northern athletes. The Games strive to strengthen sport development, and promote the diversity of the circumpolar regions. They also provide an opportunity for developing athletes to share cultural values and compete with others from northern regions. Athletes from such jurisdictions as the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Yukon, northern Alberta, Greenland, Alaska, northern Scandinavia, and Russia participate in this international competition.

Barrier: An obstacle that checks or impedes progress. In the case of non-sport volunteers, it refers to such issues as lack of time, interest, or commitment, or such factors as age, health, or not being asked.

Community Recreation Director: An employee of the Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Municipal and Community Affairs who lives in the community and is responsible for overseeing a portion of the sport and recreation activities in the community.

Focus Group: A group of people who participate in a carefully planned and guided discussion, so that researchers can illicit the perceptions of participants about a specific area of interest, in this case sport volunteerism.

Motivation: A factor or circumstance that inspires a person to act in a certain way. In the case of sport volunteering, it refers to why people volunteer.

NWT Council of Sport and Recreation: An organization established in June 2005 by the NWT Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Its

mandate is to improve sport and recreation program coordination and efficiency and provide opportunities for all NWT residents to access sport, recreation, and physical education programs.

Physical Activities: Activities in which bodily movements are valued. Because the movements are valued, there is a reason for making up games and contests where the movements have a central role and are necessary. Physical activities can incorporate such qualities as speed, accuracy, force, and grace.

Recreation: Recreation includes any pleasurable occupation of the body or the mind, including various exercising activities. This activity can renew the health and spirits of the participant through enjoyment and relaxation. It is generally less structured and less competitive than sport. Hiking is an example of a recreational activity.

Sport: Physical activity involving disciplined use of muscle groups requiring mental preparation and strategic method and whose outcome is determined by skill, not chance. Sport occurs in an organized structure, and competitive environment in which a winner is declared. Some of the attributes of sport include:

- competition,
- practice and training,
- physical endurance, and
- physical exertion.

Sport North Federation: An organization incorporated in 1976 to assist in the promotion and development of amateur sport in the Northwest Territories.

Super Soccer: An annual indoor soccer event that takes place in Yellowknife in the spring. Over 300 games are played in seven gymnasiums. The event attracts over 150 teams from the Northwest Territories and other jurisdictions.

TSO: Any of 27 Territorial Sport Organizations that comprise the Sport North Federation and represent a particular sport in the Northwest Territories.

Volunteer: An individual who contributes his or her time, resources, energy, and/or talent without monetary compensation.

Volunteer NWT: Part of the Northwest Territories Network, Canadian Volunteer Initiative. This is an organization whose goal is to promote and support volunteers and volunteerism in the NWT. Volunteer NWT's Website is <http://www.volunteernwt.ca/home/> where further resources are available.



George Lessard

References

- Dorsch, K.D., Riemer, H.A., Sluth, V., Paskevich, D.M., & Chelladurai, P. (2002). *Volunteer motivation: What drives sports volunteers?* Retrieved November 22, 2005, from: http://www.nonprofitscan.ca/files/iyv/dorsch_fs_english.pdf
- Hall, M., McKeown, L., & Roberts, K. (2001). *Caring Canadians, involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*. Retrieved November 22, 2005, from Statistics Canada Web site: www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/71-542-XIE/71-542-XIE00001.pdf
- Lasby, D. (2004). *The volunteer spirit in Canada: Motivations and barriers*. Retrieved November 22, 2005, from: http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca/pdf/reports/Volunteer_Spirit.pdf
- Lasby, D. & McIver, D. (2004). *Where Canadians volunteer: Volunteering by type of organization*. Retrieved November 22, 2005, from: http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca/pdf/reports/Where_Canadians_Volunteer.pdf
- Little, L. (2001). *NWT voluntary sector development: The emerging third sector*. Yellowknife. Retrieved November 22, 2005, from: <http://www.volunteernwt.ca/research/PDF/Emerging-Third-Sector-Report.pdf>
- Lutra and Associates. (2003). *Choosing to help: NWT volunteer support initiative (VSI) action plan*. Yellowknife, NWT: Sport, Recreation and Youth, Municipal and Community Affairs, Government of the Northwest Territories. Retrieved November 22, 2005, from: <http://www.volunteernwt.ca/research/PDF/CleanFinalVSIActionPlan.pdf>
- McClintock, N. (2004). *Understanding Canadian volunteers: Using the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating to build your volunteer program*. Retrieved November 22, 2005, from: http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca/pdf/reports/Understanding_Volunteers.pdf
- Manitoba Voluntary Sector Initiative at the Secretariat on Voluntary Sector Sustainability. (2001, March). *Profile of the sustainability of the nonprofit and amateur sports sub-sector*. Retrieved November 22, 2005, from: <http://www.voluntarysector.mb.ca/library.asp>
- Northwest Territories (NWT) Bureau of Statistics.(2004a). *Deline: statistical profile*. Retrieved November 22, 2005, from: <http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca/Profile/Profile%20PDF/Deline.pdf>
- Northwest Territories (NWT) Bureau of Statistics. (2004b). *Hay River Reserve: statistical profile*. Retrieved November 22, 2005, from: <http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca/Profile/Profile%20PDF/Hay%20River%20Reserve.pdf>
- Northwest Territories (NWT) Bureau of Statistics. (2004c). *Holman: statistical profile*. Retrieved November 22, 2005, from: <http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca/Profile/Profile%20PDF/Holman.pdf>
- Northwest Territories (NWT) Bureau of Statistics. (2004d). *Wha Ti: statistical profile*. Retrieved November 22, 2005, from: <http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca/Profile/Profile%20PDF/Whati.pdf>
- Northwest Territories NWT Infrastructure. (2005a) *Deline: infrastructure profile*. Retrieved November 22, 2005, from: <http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca/Infrastructure/Comm%20Sheets/Deline.html>

Northwest Territories (NWT) Infrastructure. (2005b). *Hay River Reserve: infrastructure profile*. Retrieved November 22, 2005, from: http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca/Infrastructure/Comm%20Sheets/HR_Res.html

Northwest Territories (NWT) Infrastructure. (2005c). *Holman: infrastructure profile*. Retrieved November 22, 2005 from, : <http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca/Infrastructure/Comm%20Sheets/Holman.html>

Northwest Territories (NWT) Infrastructure. (2005d) *Wha Ti: infrastructure profile*. Retrieved November 22, 2005, from: <http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca/Infrastructure/Comm%20Sheets/WhaTi.html>

Rhyne, D. (1995). *Volunteerism in sport, fitness, and recreation in Ontario*. Toronto: Institute for Social Research, York University.

Riemer, H.A., Dorsch, K. Hoerber, L. & Bell, A. (2003). *Building volunteer capacity in the Aboriginal community*. Regina: Project Partners include Sask Sport, Volunteer Regina, Regina Treaty Status Indian Services, Inc., Missouri Coteau Development Corporation, University of Regina, Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies.

Rifkin, J. (1995). *The end of work*. New York: Tarcher/Putnam.

Taylor, P., Nichols, G., Holmes, K., James, M., Gratton, C., Garrett, R., et al. (2003). *Sports Volunteering in England in 2002*. Retrieved November 22, 2005, from: http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/volunteer_full_report.pdf

Thibault, A. (2002). *Recreation volunteers: An asset to be cultivated*. Retrieved November 22, 2005, from: http://www.nonprofitscan.ca/files/iyv/thibault_fs_english.pdf

United Nations. (2002). *International Year of Volunteers: Outcomes and future perspectives*. Report of the Secretary General, Fifty-seventh session, agenda item 98 (Publication No. A/57/352, September 24, 2002). Retrieved November 22, 2005, from: <http://www.cev.be/Documents/UNReport2002IntYearVol%20outcomes%20+%20future%20perspectivesEN.pdf>

Notes

This and other Knowledge Development
Centre publications are also available online
at www.kdc-cdc.ca, or as a special collection
of the Imagine Canada — John Hodgson
Library at www.nonprofitscan.ca.



www.kdc-cdc.ca