

## Community Services

### Capital News: Volunteer Centre Column 2013 April 18

#### **Work and volunteering go together**

People who work full-time volunteer more than we realize. Statistics Canada just released a study called “Social Participation of Full-time Workers, 2010”.

Look around your office. For every five co-workers between the ages of 25 to 54, one volunteered five or more hours each month on a regular basis.

Employees who have flexible start and finish times to their work day and who have the option of working at home occasionally tended to volunteer more frequently. The percentage was 26%, or one in four staff.

Full-time workers with fixed working schedules volunteered less, at a rate of 18%.

The influence of flexible and fixed work schedules remained significant even when factors such as the influence of education, age group, industry, and parenthood were considered.

Commuting time does influence volunteer rates. Full-time employees who travelled 45 minutes or more to get to work volunteered at a 15% rate compared to 21% for people who travelled 30 minutes or less.

Interestingly, the number of hours worked had no impact on the extent of volunteering. People who worked 50 hours or more each week volunteered as often as those who worked fewer hours.

What about the self-employed? Women (35%) were more likely than men (21%) to volunteer regularly. This compared with 19% for salaried workers.

Self-employed women more often reported that volunteer work helped them find a job or start a business.

What other factors positively influenced volunteerism among full-time workers? Three were significant: attending religious services weekly, graduating with a university degree, and having school aged children.

Research by Volunteer Canada called “Bridging the Gap” helps explain some reasons for volunteering. People can be looking to gain work experience, to network and to share existing skills.

Others want work life balance and are looking to make friends and try something completely different.

Whatever the reason, people in Kelowna volunteer at an overall rate of 52%.

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