

## Community Information & Volunteer Centre

### Capital News: Volunteer Centre Column 2012 December 13

#### **It's the giving time of year, and don't forget that tax receipt too**

December is a month that tugs at our heart strings and our purse strings. We reach out in compassion and share in the spirit of giving and on the practical side, December 31<sup>st</sup> is the cut off for 2012 income tax charitable deductions.

Imagine Canada recently released its 'Guide to Giving' to help us make wise decisions about where to direct our money.

This Guide suggests that we ask ourselves five basic questions. The first is 'What should I look for before giving to a charity?'

Check with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to see if the organizations is a registered charity and can legally issue tax receipts.

Learn more about the charity through its brochures, program impact information, annual reports, talking with staff and volunteering.

'How can you find out how much a charity spends on fundraising?' Charities must file an annual 'Registered Charity Information Return' with the CRA that you may review.

In 2009, the CRA released fundraising guidance for charities. The higher the ratio of fundraising costs (over 35%), the more likely the CRA will review that charity's fundraising activities.

'How can I be certain that a charity's fundraising costs are reasonable?' The idea of what is reasonable depends on a number of factors.

Look at a three to five year average of fundraising costs for a specific charity. Consider the nature of the cause, size of organization, use of volunteers, types of funds raised, types of fundraising methods, and use of outside fundraisers.

Remember there is a cost to doing good and most charities depend on fundraising in order to serve their communities. Most charities work diligently to keep their costs as low as possible.

Read the Guide for yourself at [www.imaginecanada.ca](http://www.imaginecanada.ca) and give with confidence to the charity of your choice.

**Dawn Wilkinson manages the Community Information and Volunteer Centre at Kelowna Community Resources. Go to [kcr.ca](http://kcr.ca) and click on Volunteer Opportunities Search to create your volunteer profile. View all the Volunteer Centre columns at: [kcr.ca/volunteercolumn](http://kcr.ca/volunteercolumn). Contact 250-763-8008 ext 24 or [informkelowna@kcr.ca](mailto:informkelowna@kcr.ca).**