

July 2011

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Upcoming Events

**Spirit of Volunteerism and
AGM: September 23, 2011
at the Lionhead Golf Club,
8525 Mississauga Road,
Brampton, ON.**

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on [www.learningforums.ca!](http://www.learningforums.ca)
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Spirit of Volunteerism Recognition Event 2011

Please join us in congratulating this year's Spirit of Volunteerism nominees with a wonderful dinner and special awards ceremony, **Friday, September 23, 2011**, where we will celebrate our Distress Centre volunteers who donate their time and commitment to selfless volunteerism to support communities across Ontario.



DCO Board Chair Charles Laframboise presents the 2010 SOV award.

The event will take place at the [Lionhead Golf and Country Club](#), 8525 Mississauga Road, Brampton.
5:30 pm: Cocktails
6:30 pm: Dinner
7:30 pm: Spirit of Volunteerism award ceremony

Parking is free for attendees. As in the past, all nominees will be receiving personal invitations as well as complimentary dinners and recognition plaques. We encourage everyone to bring their family members and friends. DCO provides a subsidized meal cost for all members of each nominee's party.

A Save-the-Date notice, with details, will be sent to all centres in early August.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

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Partnership Project: Strengthening Ontario's Not-For-Profit Sector

In the spring of 2010, the Government of Ontario launched the Partnership Project as an initiative to strengthen the relationship between the Ontario government and the not-for-profit sector (NFP), appointing Dr. Eric Hoskins,



Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, and Ms Helen Burstyn, former Chair of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, to co-Chair the Project.

Dr. Hoskins and Ms Burstyn learned about what works and what falls short for not-for-profits in terms of legislation, policies, structure, and funding, by attending regional round tables with organizations from the environmental, youth, and arts sectors, and meeting with senior representatives from leading NFP service providers that span all aspects of each sector's size, region, demographic focus, and service type. Further data collection saw NFP organizations, staff, volunteers, clients, and the general public invited to share their views on the Partnership Project's website, creating a more diverse body of information for Project analysts to observe.

The NFP is recognized as the third pillar of our economic society, contributing almost \$50 billion to the economy, employing over a million people across the province. It is "a powerful influence on our lives, our culture, our society, our economy, and our future. That's why the work of the Partnership Project is so important," Dr. Hoskins explains.

The information gathered from Partnership Project recommends that the Ontario Government:

- 1. Promote a culture of respect and recognition within government and across the province:** Appoint a minister to be responsible for the NFP sector and an annual report on the state of the sector and its relationship with the government.
- 2. Provide the not-for-profit sector with an identifiable, central, and authoritative point of contact within government:** Create a coordinating body within government to act as a central point of contact and establish a public advisory board to guide the work of the coordinating body.
- 3. Address the funding, operational and capacity challenges facing not-for-profit organizations by adopting an approach - across all ministries - that provides similar supports, consideration, and recognition received by for-profit organizations in Ontario:**
Develop avenues for greater collaboration in policy development and legislative and regulatory oversight, create new approaches to funding, and appropriate performance and accountability measures, and invest in projects that support intra-sector cooperation, communication and networks.
- 4. Support new ways to reinvigorate Ontario's tradition of volunteerism:** Organize a forum on the future of volunteerism in Ontario to mark the ten-year anniversary of the International Year of the Volunteer, and further strengthen, support, and acknowledge volunteerism to all Ontarians via social media and recognition awards.
- 5. Leverage technology to break down silos, increase transparency, and share information:** Establish an online portal to act as a one-stop-shop for sector-related information and resources, and create a province-wide database to streamline applications for funding and to better coordinate with ministries and agencies.
- 6. Invest in social innovation:** Work with the Government of Canada and Canadian financial institutions to address regulatory and legal barriers to

social innovation, make a range of social financing tools available to Ontario's not-for-profit sector, and find new resources to encourage innovation and collaboration within the not-for-profit sector.

To read the full report, please click [The Partnership Project](#).

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Making the BAD good

2011 saw the 14th annual [BAD Ride](#) support of the Distress Centres of Toronto. It is a well-known fundraising event that collects 20% of the annual operating costs for the Toronto DC, or as Executive Director, Karen Letofsky, puts it, "the financial lifeline of Toronto Distress Centres". Every dollar donated by

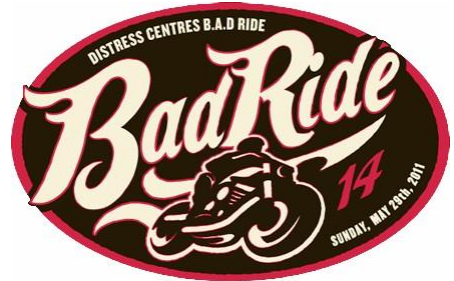
BAD Ride participants goes directly to the delivery of life-sustaining support services for the vulnerable and at-risk Torontonians, 24 hours a day.

The event, Bikers Against Despair, takes place at the end of May each year but the planning begins several months before. In September, planning meetings begin and design work commences to create a new logo for that year (annual BAD Ride merchandise has become collectors' items). By December, the brochures must be designed and printed, the venue booked, and infrastructure should be in place to promote the event to big ticket bike shows (i.e. the Super Show in January), motorcycle shops, and bike magazines. Ms Letofsky says that there is enormous outreach for the event to the varied biker community, and all of this requires a tremendous amount of planning and energy.

Over its 14 year history, the BAD Ride has accumulated several dozen friends, supporters, and sponsors of the BAD Ride, all of whom need to be approached and organized to make the event a success and to ensure that 100% of all funds generated through the Ride attendees itself go directly to the Toronto agency by way of donations - printing, food, drink, t-shirts and other merchandising items, raffle items, and entertainment are all covered by sponsors.

Ms Letofsky calls the BAD Ride a "hybrid event" that sees the Distress Centres partner with various volunteers from the business community who spend countless hours on planning committees; with DC service volunteers providing the "on the ground" physical work like set up, stuffing loot bags, posting signage, operating the silent auction, dishing out the food, and clean up.

In the early days of the ride, there were maybe a half dozen rider events in the whole province, but now there are dozens of bike events every weekend in Ontario, inspired by the BAD Ride. The event formula has been tweaked



and replicated by other rides, creating a fiercely competitive environment for participants and dollars.

Knowing that most events have limited life spans with aging formulas and committees, in such a saturated fundraising atmosphere, the Distress Centres and the event's planning and sponsorship committees must plan for succession, asking questions about what to do next to keep the event fresh, and how much change the event can withstand and still keep riders coming out to support the cause.

A stressful concept to be sure, but the amount of passionate commitment, fun, and good will shine through every year, making the BAD Ride worth every moment.

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Learning Forums - What's New?

Highlights by Lynn Brewin

The Learning Forums has just recently launched Part 2 of *Understanding Abuse in Intimate Relationships*, an exceptional

presentation by Irene Gabinet, a clinical counsellor with over 20 years experience working with women in abusive relationships.



We continue to add to the website and work diligently in providing the DCO membership with insightful topics that will enhance call takers' ability to effectively respond to those who phone distress lines.

In the coming months watch for vignettes that highlight valuable information on topics such as, *A Family's Response to Suicide*, *Living with a Mood Disorder*, and *Elder Abuse*.

Self Management of User Lists is coming! The Memorandum of Understanding will soon be sent out to all Executive Directors of the member distress centres for their approval and signatures.

Web casts for leaders, staff and decision makers is a new initiative that we have recently offered to DCO Membership. In June we launched our first Lunch and Learn sessions which focused on Cultural Competency in Community Services.

Currently, we are in negotiations with a speaker who will present on the merits of social media in the business place, to be scheduled in the fall, 2011. Watch for notices for registration that will come out in late September.

Additionally, a few topics for other web casts have been suggested but we are still seeking your input for recommended sessions and speakers. To share your ideas just click this [link](#).

We look forward to hearing from you!

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Millennial Engagement: New Ways of Engaging Volunteers

Original article by Trina Isakson, edited by Leah Morrigan

Young people, Millennials, are our next generation of community leaders, philanthropists, staff, and board members, the people that will be running the future. They self-identify as passionate, connected, and optimistic people who want to make an impact in the world.



Recruiting volunteers isn't a challenge for all organizations. I recently completed a series of interviews for my master's research on volunteer engagement and had the opportunity to speak with individuals who had been identified as effectively engaging volunteers.

I found that these individuals weren't just sticking to the traditional tasks associated with volunteer management - writing a role description, recruiting, training, and rewarding volunteers. Instead, I found other very interesting trends among these non-profit professionals. One important note is that they *did not have problems recruiting volunteers*, which gives weight to the themes that were found:

1. Incorporating a *big-picture approach* to their work. These people were not just responsible for volunteer engagement and saw volunteer engagement as the responsibility of everyone. They linked the work of volunteers to the larger mission of the organization and stayed true to the philosophies and values of the organization.
2. They adapted volunteer roles to accept current realities of volunteers. They attributed a lack of commitment of volunteers to their full lives, and not to character flaws. To react to these realities, they often worked with volunteers in *episodic roles* - where volunteers have a role for a few months, then leave, but then possibly come back in a different role six months or two years down the road.

3. They saw volunteers as *peers, not subordinates*. Volunteers were seen to bring special skills to the organization and even to be smarter than the interviewees. They also often developed long lasting friendships with volunteers.
4. They acknowledged the *time and energy* required to engage volunteers and to get to know them as individuals. They made sure to only engage a number of volunteers that could be effectively managed given the time they had.

Though not unique to Millennials, these trends speak strongly to the interests and realities of Millennials - young volunteers want a clear connection to the mission of an organization; balancing multiple priorities like school, work, and family in addition to volunteering; wanting to use and gain skills and connect with organizational leadership; and having an interest in connecting with people and feeling personally appreciated.

Unfortunately, many organizations are not set up to engage volunteers in these ways and will delegate volunteer management to a single Volunteer Coordinator, design long-term commitments instead of shorter and more manageable programs, assign administrative and/or repetitive jobs, and will not have the human resources to handle increased numbers of volunteers.

Changing course on the way we engage volunteers isn't easy. Colleen Kelly, Executive Director of [Vantage Point](#), a company that builds leadership in the volunteer sector, recently lamented the [challenges of "renovating" the ways organizations engage volunteers](#).

Engaging volunteers requires buy-in from all levels of an organization, especially the formal leadership, and challenging organizational structures and job descriptions. Volunteer engagement requires completely re-thinking how we deliver our programming and our client services if these rely on volunteers, and it requires a larger investment in volunteer engagement overall.

We need architects designing a new system, not carpenters patching up the old. And until we implement these new ways of doing, we won't be able to guarantee that our Millennial volunteers will stick around.

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DCO Annual General Meeting - Notice to the Membership

The Annual General Meeting of Distress Centres Ontario (The Ontario Association of Distress Centres) will take place at 5:00 pm. on Friday, September 23rd, 2011 at the [Lionhead Golf and Country Club](#), 8525 Mississauga Road, Brampton, ON L6Y 0C3.

An AGM package with meeting notice, agenda and proxy form will be forwarded to all DCO member organizations in good standing in August, 2011.

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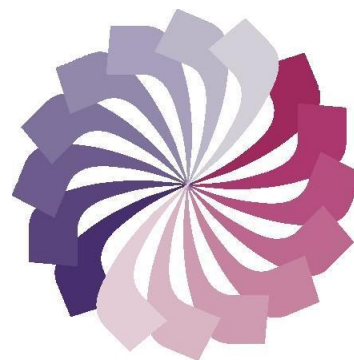
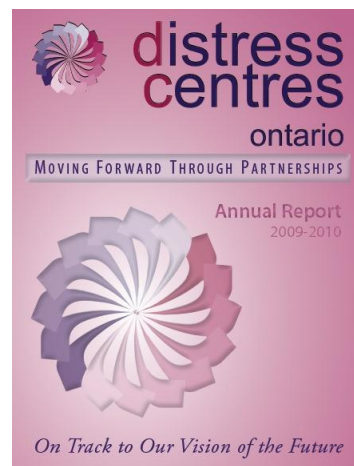
Call for Distress Centres Ontario Committee Members

As many of you know, DCO is a voluntary, member-driven association that depends on the support and leadership of its member organizations. Our governance structure includes a board of seven (7) individuals. Four (4) individuals are generally leadership or staff from our member centres and three (3) are individuals from the community at large.

At this year's Annual General Meeting we will be saying good-bye to two centre leaders, Donna Martin from Sarnia (who has served as Board Member, Board Chair and Past-Board Chair); and Jessie Baynham from Community Torchlight, Wellington-Dufferin (who served as Board Member). Their contributions have been significant and we are happy to confirm that the Nominations Committee will be recommending two new centre leaders to take their positions. Our Community-at-Large board members have all agreed to let their names stand and will all be returning for another term.

However, we are calling on all centre leaders, staff, and leadership volunteers to volunteer their services on the various committees that DCO relies on. We need your input, help and direction as we move forward with our regular programs and our many new and intriguing projects.

The Committees of the Membership include the Education Committee, the SIOM or Statistics, Information and Outcomes Measures Committee, the Volunteer Management Committee, the Accreditation Committee and various 1-800-suicideOntario committees.



The Standing Committees of the Board include the Governance Committee, the Planning and Priorities Committee, the Finance Committee, the Nominations Committee and the Personnel Committee.

We need additional support on our various Committees of the Membership and hope that YOU might be interested in helping out the association. Do you have skills or experience in related fields that would be beneficial in moving us all forward? Please consider these rewarding opportunities.

Please express your enthusiasm to participate to the DCO Executive Director, Liz Fisk, at 416-486-2242 or evfisk@dcontario.org and she will give you some more information on the work of the committees and provide you with the current CALL FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS and the current APPLICATION FORM. Expressions of Interest and/or completed applications should be received by September 7th, 2011.

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