

# Volunteers: Get them, keep them and thank them!



**D**o you feel that you have exhausted the pool of volunteers within your school community? This is understandable with many parents working full time the numbers who have the capacity to volunteer seems to diminish each year. Luckily, there are other ways that you can source a helping hand.

There are a number of Volunteer Resource Centres located throughout WA, often associated with local councils. They can provide support, training and assistance to groups looking for volunteers.

## Some of the services they offer:

- Free online listing of your volunteer positions
- Referral of potential volunteers
- Promotion of your volunteer vacancies in the centre and throughout the community
- Training, information and resources relating to volunteering
- Best practice volunteer management advice
- Interaction with other volunteering websites in order to expose a wider range of potential volunteers to your vacancies.

## How to get started:

- Go to your local council website; the City of Melville and the City of Swan have great pages dedicated to volunteering
- Locate the position description and registration forms. Use these to provide a good description of the volunteer role and any requirements that you wish the volunteer to have. For example, age requirements, police clearance, Working with Children Check, etc.
- Email the forms back to the centre
- Once the paperwork has been received they will confirm via email and commence promotion of your position.

Now that you have your volunteers the next step is to keep them. Making sure the canteen is a happy and cohesive environment is vital but so is showing your gratitude. Recognising the important contributions your volunteers make will ensure they return over and over again. Nothing shows gratitude more than simply saying *thank you* often. WASCA has an amazing *Volunteer welcome kit*. The kit outlines everything you need such as how to recruit and retain your volunteers including templates for advertising, what the expectations of volunteers are, and inventive ways to show your appreciation. Download it from the WASCA website today.

Is your school a WACSSO member? If so, you can access their new publication *How to engage your school community*. This resource deals with all aspects of volunteering in particular what the benefits are to parents, students and the school community. Did you know that children whose parents volunteer at school have better attendance rates and have a better attitude towards school? This is great for the canteen as well and the student – it's a win, win!

## Melville Volunteer Resource Centre

Renaë Gillespie and Sarah Stephenson coordinate the Melville Volunteer Resource Centre (MVRC), a free service of the City of Melville, and part-funded by the Department for Local Government and Communities. Their role is to assist not-for-profit organisations and government departments within the City of Melville and in the wider South Metropolitan area with the promotion of volunteer positions and the matching of suitable volunteers.

They promote volunteer positions and agencies via an online database which is linked to National Volunteer Databases and the City of Melville website, and to walk in and telephone clients.

Training and networking opportunities for Volunteer Managers are also offered to agencies that are aligned with their service. Training courses for 2016 have included *Dealing with difficult volunteers* with Dr Megan Paull, *Understanding and engaging 21st Century volunteer & social media* with Rob Jackson (in conjunction with Bassendean and Swan Volunteer Resource Centres) and a workshop on attracting volunteers with Andy Fryar (in conjunction with Nedlands and Subiaco Volunteer Resource Centres). They also hold an annual *Volunteer Recognition Event* and *Mayor's Valued Citizen Awards* in November which celebrates volunteers and volunteering within the City of Melville.

You can subscribe to receive their monthly *City of Melville Volunteer eNewsletter* that details a variety of volunteer positions, particularly those that are new or are listed as urgent. It also details up-and-coming events that are seeking the assistance of volunteers and events that the general community can attend. Schools in all areas are encouraged to subscribe to the eNewsletter.

Visit the website for further details <http://www.melvillecity.com.au/itswhatido> or call 9364 0662.

### Testimonial

*I have been using the MVRC for around three years now and I have found it invaluable and so easy! All of our MVRC vollies are fantastic and have more availability than most of our parent community. I think this is due in part to many of them being retired or past the stage of having young children to care for. They are particularly vibrant, lively people with a thirst for keeping active and we have found them all to be a fantastic addition to our volunteer list. I recommend calling your local volunteer resource centre immediately as it really is so simple for such an enormous benefit. The MVRC vollies have kept us going on more than one occasion!*

*Cre Millar, Canteen Supervisor, Applecross Senior High School*