



BEING A STUDENT VOLUNTEER

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For several years, the museum has worked with volunteers aged from 12 to 18 years. More recently, it is university students who respond to the demand. According to Statistics Canada (2007), 48% of young people aged between 15 and 24 years old in Quebec complete, on average, over 100 hours of volunteer work each year.

It is often thought that young people are not interested in society projects. On the contrary, we have so many volunteers under 18 years of age that the museum has difficulty integrating all of them. These young people make up around 30% of our volunteers. Due to their school schedule, tasks that take place during evenings and weekends are reserved for our younger volunteers. Some participate in the preparation of artistic material for workshops while others assist at our annual events.

The majority are here on a temporary basis as they are required to complete a fixed number of hours of volunteer work as part of their school curriculum. However, others are here simply for their own enjoyment and come back regularly throughout the school year. In general, they show a great level of maturity. They are punctual, responsible and efficient. For them, volunteer work is often their first work experience but it is also a way to discover their own interests and use their talents to benefit the community.

We could also presume that university students are too busy to do volunteer work. However, the museum continues to receive a growing number of applications from university students looking for work experience in their field before finishing their studies. Due to the workload of a university student, the positions that are most in demand are those which require less training such as workshop animator, technician or support staff.

For the majority of bachelor degree students in art history, volunteering in the museum is a way to integrate a professional domain where employment opportunities are limited. It is also a way to make contacts to assist them in their search for employment. But above all, it is an opportunity to explore their career options. For these volunteers, it provides an initial experience which allows them to discover their interests within the field of museology or even find out if they are suited for the field.

In general, students provide a major contribution to museum activities and the museum continues to be flexible in order to welcome such motivated, and motivating, volunteers.