



The Beauty of Giving in Bloom... Since 2005

# Welcome, Volunteers!

An Orientation for New Team Members

## Welcome Aboard

Thank you for choosing to give your time and abilities to the Canadian Flowers for Food Society! We are excited to have you with us. At this point, you probably have many questions about our society and about your role as a volunteer. In order to familiarize you with how CFFS operates, we have put together the following brief overview of our vision, programs, and procedures. You should find the answers to many of your questions here.

## Our Vision

Our society's vision is to provide opportunity and support for the homeless, those who are recovering from mental afflictions or physical addictions, and other marginalized and needy groups in Canada. Although helping these groups to obtain immediate financial assistance is a part of this vision, we also equip individuals to work toward realistic personal goals that will improve their long-term quality of life.

## Terms You Should Know

We refer to all the individuals we assist as clients. Outside clients participate in the Street Floral Outreach Program, distributing flowers in the streets of Vancouver, while inside clients stay indoors to work on our Office Floral Outreach Program. Inside clients are typically young women, elderly people, and others who do not feel comfortable standing on the street with flowers. People who help our cause by donating cash for flowers are referred to as our patrons.

## Our Programs

### Street Outreach Floral Program

The beautifully simple idea behind this program is to collect slightly blemished flowers, which would otherwise be destined for the dumpster, and use them to raise cash donations that provide food and necessities for people

living on the street or in shelters. Various local retailers, distributors, and growers donate their unused flowers, which we store at community centers and other pick-up sites around Vancouver. Our outside clients pick up flowers from these sites and use them to create unique arrangements, which they distribute in public areas in exchange for donations.

Since its inception in 2005, the Street Outreach Floral Program has proven to be a tremendously successful way for Vancouver's homeless and needy to meet their basic needs with dignity. About 1 in 15 pedestrians will stop to donate change for flowers, making the program a significant source of funds that our clients can use for food, clothes, and other essentials. In addition to securing donations, the program encourages Vancouver residents and tourists to view our clients as valuable members of the community. It has been very exciting and rewarding for us to watch our clients develop a greater sense of self esteem as they pick up, arrange, and deliver their flowers around town.

## Office Floral Outreach Program

The Office Floral Outreach Program generates funding by distributing professional-quality floral arrangements to local businesses in exchange for donations. Inside clients contact businesses in the area, asking them to make one-time, weekly, or monthly donations. Business that donate receive beautiful baskets, custom-made by our floral design team at the Haro Senior Center, for their employees to enjoy.

## Composting Project

Still in the planning stage, this new program is working to create employment opportunities for our clients while reducing harmful greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. When operational, the Composting Project will use natural, environmentally responsible composting methods to transform wilted or damaged flowers into nutrient-rich soil, which can be sold to the city or regional government. Outside clients will be able to earn income by working at composting stations, and the production of soil will reduce greenhouse gases by re-using floral waste instead of allowing it to decompose in landfills.

## Special Events

Periodically, we host special events to help pay operational costs and provide for the needs of clients. These events encourage people throughout our community to get involved in the fight against the hunger and alienation of people in need. In 2008, we put together two fun events, the Evening of Art Gala and Chocolatefest '08, to raise funding and awareness for our programs.

# Our Clients

## How We Admit New Clients

Any needy or marginalized person in the Vancouver metro is a good candidate for our programs, and we particularly seek out those who are homeless, recovering from addictions, or living with mental illness. We recruit new clients through personal invitation, supervisor referrals, and voluntary enrollment.

## What We Expect from Clients

In the interest of using our resources responsibly and maintaining a respectable reputation in our community, we exercise caution when inducting new clients, and we check up on current clients on a regular basis. All clients must demonstrate a strong commitment to improving their current situations by setting and working toward practical life goals.

Anyone who is interested in enrolling in one of our programs must complete an induction form and participate in a 45-minute interview with the Operations Manager. During this interview, the potential client discusses his or her suitability for the program and becomes familiar with our *Code of Ethics & Standards of Conduct* and our zero-tolerance policy for drug and alcohol use.

In addition to agreeing to abide by our *Code of Ethics*, new clients identify goals, beyond simply acquiring money, that they would like to accomplish, and they develop action plans for realizing these goals. Putting down a deposit for housing, opening a bank account, purchasing medications, and improving personal grooming are all excellent examples of objectives a client could identify. Throughout their participation in any program, clients meet with the Operations Manager twice per week to report their progress in working toward their goals. The Operations Manager may also conduct surprise visits to ensure that clients are conducting themselves in an appropriate manner and promoting a positive image of CFFS. Failure to adhere to the *Code of Ethics & Standards of Conduct* may result in removal from the program, and use of alcohol or illegal drugs is not tolerated under any circumstances.

## What Clients Can Expect from Us

CFFS is a powerful support network that encourages individuals to pursue their personal goals. The Operations Manager maintains constant, open communication with clients, responding to any questions, concerns, or needs they may have. We always consider clients' suggestions on how to improve our operations, and we put them in contact with social and medical services to address needs we

are not able to fill. Clients are encouraged to attend volunteer meetings, fostering a sense of community and belonging in the society.

## Our Volunteers

The most important quality we look for in a volunteer is a sincere desire to assist Canada's needy and marginalized population, but we do have a few other requirements as well. New members of our team must read the CFFS *Society Act Constitution* and agree to abide by the *Code of Ethics & Standards of Conduct*, and we also ask them to let us know what experiences and skills they hope to gain by working with us.

Volunteers are absolutely essential to the mission of CFFS. All of our programs are driven by the time, energy, and enthusiasm of dedicated volunteers, and we are grateful to have you as a member of this dynamic team. Thank you for taking the time to learn more about the society, and let us know if you need any additional information. We look forward to working with you!