

Speech by Senator Vivienne Poy

The 25th Anniversary of the Varsity Division #726 of the St. John's Ambulance

October 20, 2001

Friends:

Thank you for inviting me, and my family, here this evening. This morning I had the honour and privilege of inspecting the Division, and now we have the chance to celebrate with all of you, and to get to know you better.

各位朋友：

好開心今日有機會同大家見面。為表揚義工服務對社會的重要，聯合國特別將 2001 年訂為《國際義工年》。我特別要代表市民多謝義工對社區的服務，同時恭喜今日得獎的兩位青年義工。如果沒有熱心的義工，社區好多服務就不可能推展。希望大家時時記得《助人為快樂之本》這句話，盡可能的幫助須要幫助的人，將我們的社會成為一個充滿愛心的社會。

This evening I would like to talk about volunteering, how important it is to our community, and why the global community should be interested in promoting volunteering. There are two major benefits. Firstly, there's an economic one: volunteers make an important economic contribution to society, and secondly, volunteers help to build strong communities by fostering good relations among citizens.

In Canadian society, volunteers are involved in health care, promoting human rights, working with children, youth and the elderly, international development, environmental education, fundraising, and housing provision. The National Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating, for the year 2000, found that 6.5 million Canadians, or 27% of the population,

volunteered an average of 162 hours per year. That works out to over one billion hours of labour time! Canada and the world, depend on volunteers like you.

The slogan for Canada's celebration of the International Year of the Volunteer is "the value of one is the power of many". I would like to echo these sentiments today. This is certainly true in the case of the St. John Ambulance volunteers who act as the primary trainers of CPR, training thousands of individuals each year, each of whom, in turn, has the potential to save many lives. This is a wonderful gift you give to others.

Every year, the newspapers are full of stories of people who were saved as a result of this knowledge. A few of these real-life heroes receive Governor General's Awards for Bravery or the St. John Ambulance Lifesaving Awards. Many more are silent heroes who are recognized only by their friends, family, and those they saved. I would like to acknowledge all of these individual acts of bravery here tonight.

We have also seen many volunteers come forward to help in the aftermath of the September 11th disaster in New York. In fact, there were so many that they had to be turned away! I am impressed by how a community can come together during a crisis like this to help others. In fact, ironically, it often takes a crisis for people to realize our shared humanity.

Growing up in Hong Kong, I saw how my own father responded to the crisis in post-war China when refugees flooded Hong Kong after WWII. He spent a large part of his life contributing to the well being of his community. I learned a great deal from him, and I have spent my life trying to live up to his fine example. My appointment to the Senate has given me the opportunity to serve my country, as my father did in Hong Kong. The old saying that, it is better to give than to receive, is as true today as it has always been. That is why volunteering is so satisfying, as I'm sure you all know.

Tonight, we celebrate all the volunteers of St. John Ambulance Varsity Division #726, who have contributed so much over the years. I would like each one of you to realize how important you are to Canada, and I thank you for your contributions.

Thank you. 多謝大家的支持。