SUBJECT: Hamilton Snow Angel Program (SPH05048a) (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

That Volunteer Hamilton be requested to continue the co-ordination and administration of the Snow Angel Program for 2007.

Joe-Anne Priel
General Manager
Community Services Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In January 2006, the City signed a Letter of Agreement with Volunteer Hamilton to coordinate and administer the Hamilton Snow Angel Program in response to two reports (PW03130a/PD03226a & SPH05048/PW05152). The City of Hamilton and Volunteer Hamilton immediately engaged in an abridged communication and marketing strategy. Funding for this program in 2006 and beyond was also approved, however, due to the timing of the report the funds were not incorporated in the 2006 levy and will be added to the 2007 levy.

The City experienced small amounts of snow during the recent winter (2005/06) and it did not afford the opportunity to fully evaluate the success of the Snow Angel Program under usual snowfall activity. However, there were two snow events and the outcome of the volunteer program proved to be successful for this limited experience.

Staff are recommending that Council approve and endorse the continuation of the Hamilton Snow Angel Program and approve continued delivery by Volunteer Hamilton to permit the monitoring and evaluation by the Community Services Department of the
experience and program outcomes that would be gained throughout another winter season.

BACKGROUND:

Based on the Sidewalk Snow Clearing – Harmonization and Enforcement Report (PW03130a/PD03226a) and the Residential Snow Removal Program Implementation Report (SPH05048/PW05152), a compassionate/hardship snow removal program was implemented in January 2006. Council received a verbal and information update on January 24, 2006.

Eligibility for compassionate snow removal include:

- 65 years of age or older, currently receiving the Seniors Tax Credit
- With a disability documented by an Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) cheque stub, a wheelchair parking pass or a doctor’s note, regardless of age.
- Financial eligibility.

Volunteer Hamilton signed a Letter of Agreement with the City of Hamilton and agreed to administer the program from January – May 2006 only. Services were to include:

- Development of policies and procedures (risk management)
- Volunteer recruitment
- Volunteer screening and training
- Volunteer monitoring
- Volunteer recognition
- Service recipient eligibility and registration
- Service recipient matching to volunteer
- Collection of statistical data
- Linking with the City’s GIS system and by-law enforcement program

Volunteer Hamilton implemented the Snow Angel Program and used several venues to take applications on-line or by telephone at:

- www.volunteerhamilton.on.ca
- Snow Angels Hotline at (905) 523-1910
- Volunteer Hamilton at (905) 523-4444
- City of Hamilton at (905) 546-2424

The City of Hamilton partnered with Volunteer Hamilton to develop a cohesive marketing strategy to attract both volunteers and applicants requiring services. The cost of the marketing strategy for the program for the past season was $18,320. This included the development of a visual identifier for the program, print advertisements, promotion to area high schools as a volunteer placement and local media, as attached Appendix A to Report SPH05048(a). The promotion of the program began January 23, 2006 and continued through to March 10, 2006. Funding in the amount of $30,000 was approved for the marketing of the Snow Angel Program in 2006, and only 61% of these monies was spent during this past winter. This adequately met the need for the marketing of the program, due to the limited demand for volunteers related to the “dry"
winter season. There will be additional marketing required during the fall months for the upcoming winter season.

Volunteer Hamilton has developed the policy and procedures for the Snow Angel Program as attached Appendix B to Report SPH05048(a). The agency is committed to matching volunteers with those in need of snow removal services and mapping the areas of need. When a snow event is called, the coordinator calls the Public Works Department to “confirm” that it is an “official” snow day and confirm the time for which the “24-hour clock” will start. The coordinator then records the information on the Snow Angel Hotline at (905) 523-1910 and cellular phone, so volunteers can call in to get the information before being deployed. It is important that volunteers know the start-time of the official “24-hour clock”. After each snowfall, the coordinator follows-up with random calls to volunteers and/or service recipients to ensure snow removal is completed and to receive important feedback from both volunteers and service recipients.

A total of 43 persons registered and received service in keeping with the 24 hour By-Law for snow removal and 74 volunteers were screened and trained to do this. A majority of the applications were registered in late January and mid February. Nine applicants were referred to the Helping Hands Program or Dundas/Flamborough Community Services for assistance in these outlying areas because a volunteer match was not available.

As of May 31, 2006, a total of $68,320 was spent on this program. The amount of $50,000 was issued to Volunteer Hamilton to support the requested program costs. Most of this funding paid the salary of a full-time coordinator to maintain and update the database and maintain program communications. It is estimated that the program (staffing and program costs) for the remainder of 2006 will require $51,680 which was approved from the tax stabilization reserve.

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

Based on the previous review of alternative services contained in a staff report (SPH05048) where pros and cons were reviewed, it is recommended that this service delivery model continue.

The Snow Angel Program was able to meet the limited obligations identified in the service contract.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

There is an option to seek an alternative volunteer provider using a tender process; however, there would be cost implications for program and database set-up and for the redesign of marketing materials. It is estimated that these one-time costs are approximately worth $10,000. Volunteer Hamilton has developed a rapport with the community, expertise in the implementation and ongoing communication with the Boards of Education to initiate volunteerism for the Snow Angel Program. It would be resource intensive for City staff to re-orient and coordinate this activity.
FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Financial

As a result of consultation with Corporate Services, Budgets and Finance it was recommended that the budget for this program be added to the 2007 net levy.

Volunteer Hamilton was asked to prepare a business case for the 2006/07 winter season. Based on their submission, the recommended budget for 2007 is $120,000. The proposed budget breakdown is as follows:

- 2007 Staff wages/benefits/overhead expenses $100,200
- 2007 Marketing and Promotion $19,800

**Budget Total** $120,000

If this program was placed in an RFP process and another agency was selected to deliver this program, additional funding in the amount of approximately $10,000 would be required for one-time set up costs.

The tax stabilization reserve (2005 Corporate Surplus) provides the funding for the 2006 Snow Angels Program.

Staffing

There are no staffing implications for the City of Hamilton as this program is outsourced.

Legal

Volunteer Hamilton is a not-for-profit agency and as such, there is no obligation to provide WSIB because they are exempt. With the initial contract, verification of the liability insurance was obtained however, this would require renewal annually. The cost of the liability insurance is included in the overhead expenses charged by Volunteer Hamilton.

POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2001) states that municipalities must seek advice of the Advisory Committees for Persons with Disabilities (ACPD) whenever the municipality provides services. The program and by-law was identified as important at the City’s ACPD meeting in January 2006. ACPD identified the need to amend the Sidewalk Snow Clearing – Harmonization and Enforcement (PW03130a/PD03226a) by-law to include the clearing of corner ramps. This issue was brought to the attention of Planning and Economic Development staff for their consideration however, it appears that it would be inappropriate to include clearing of the corner ramps in the by-law because this is considered an excessive burden.
RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

Consultation was obtained from Volunteer Hamilton on the development of the proposed budget for October 2006 - March 2007. In addition, the Manager of Finance and Administration was consulted on this report. Full consultation on the development of the 2006 proposal was obtained from Hamilton Police Services for advice on the need for security checks for volunteers, Planning and Economic Development, Helping Hands (Employment and Income Support Branch), Program Policy and Planning Division, and Strategic Services Division (Communication and Marketing).

CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

Community Well-Being is enhanced.  ☑ Yes  ☐ No
The public are involved in the definition and development of local solutions.
Promotes a good neighbour approach to residential snow clearing for seniors and persons with disabilities.

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced.  ☑ Yes  ☐ No
Human health and safety are protected.
Sidewalks are cleared within 24 hours to prevent potential slip and falls.

Economic Well-Being is enhanced.  ☑ Yes  ☐ No
Investment in Hamilton is enhanced and supported.
A small financial investment with a real return by promoting non-profit agencies and volunteerism.

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines?  ☑ Yes  ☐ No

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants?  ☑ Yes  ☐ No
Life-long learning is supported.
By promoting Snow Angel volunteerism to secondary school students this provides an opportunity to teach youth about being a good neighbour!
Is there an act of kindness in you?

Join the Hamilton Snow Angels

No Snow? You know it's only a matter of time. Get ready by calling and registering as a Snow Angel volunteer!

call to register: 905.523.1910 or visit: www.volunteerhamilton.on.ca

Answer the call... join the call to register: 905.523.1910 or visit: www.volunteerhamilton.on.ca
To: Cathy Buffet Director, Community Programs Public Health and Community Services  
From: Christopher Cutler, Executive Director, Volunteer Hamilton  
Date: May 1, 2006  
Re: 2006 Snow Angel Awareness Program-Residential Snow Removal Report

Volunteer Hamilton hired a coordinator to assume duties on February 13, 2006. In the interim, during the hiring process the program intake line, was operated by existing staff at Volunteer Hamilton. The website at www.volunteerhamilton.on.ca is up and running and referrals for registration to receive services and to volunteer can now be made on-line. There are web links between the City of Hamilton website and the Volunteer Hamilton website. Volunteer Hamilton staff, has met with the Customer Service Staff of the City in order to facilitate their use of the on-line registrations for both volunteers and participants. Information on the program has been distributed to the staffing the City Councillors office to ensure.

The program has linked with the Helping Hands Program to ensure coverage of those qualified program recipients who are awaiting a volunteer match. Any calls for volunteers or service recipients from outlying areas e.g. Dundas and Flamborough are referred to the appropriate local agency i.e. Dundas Community Services.

In the event of a snowfall, the Program Coordinator contacts the Public Works Department to determine the status of the walks in various parts of the city. The program volunteers are mobilized once the City has confirmed that, their staff, has been called out and the Snow Clearing By-Law is in effect.

The first snow event since the signing of the contract occurred on February 11, 2005. The Snow Angel Awareness Program had 40 residents registered for the program at the start of this snow event and over 25 volunteers. In keeping with the 24 hr by-law for snow removal, Volunteer Hamilton cleared walks, but in many of the cases, the sun had melted the snow. All of the calls have come from areas within the “old” City Of Hamilton boundaries. Some of the volunteers have indicated that they do not have snow shovels and Volunteer Hamilton has secured a donation of shovels from Canadian Tire.

Social Marketing Plan

The following measures have been taken to communicate the program to the general public and to potential service recipients and volunteers alike.

Print Advertisements

- There were two full colour advertisements for the Hamilton Spectator (first one completed for Feb. 4th for the Sports section to coincide with Super Bowl weekend coverage, and the other was February 25, 2006) and three full colour advertisements in the Brabant community newspapers on Feb 10, Feb 24, and March 10, 2006.

Promotion to High School Students

- Promotional flyers have been designed and are at the printers, for use in targeting students in the schools to use the Snow Angels program towards their 40 hours of
community service time. Approximately 800 snow angel toques are available for
distribution primarily to student volunteers.

- Information packages on the program went out to the Guidance Department Heads of the
  18 high schools in the HWDSB and to the Christian/Community Service animators at the
  7 high schools of the HWCDSB.

Print Promotion

- 5,000 two-colour cards have been printed and are awaiting delivery for distribution
  through city facilities, libraries, and community partners.

Media Promotion

- Christopher Cutler, Executive Director at Volunteer Hamilton appeared on CH Morning
  Live on and the Snow Angel toques are being worn on air by CH Morning Live staff.
- Appearance by Christopher Cutler on Cable 14, ‘Coffee Time’ in March 2006 on a regular
  on air rotation basis

Bus Shelter Ads

- 20 bus shelters were installed randomly across the City from February 20th, for a four-
  week period.

McDonald's Restaurant Point of Purchase (POP) Promotion

- There are POP displays at local McDonald's restaurants promoting the program. As a
  program sponsor, McDonald's is offering coupons for free meals and hot drinks to
  volunteers.

Risk Management

Given the vulnerable populations involved in the Snow Angels Program Staff have assessed the potential
risks and added the following risk management measures to those already implemented

Anyone 14 years of age and older will be eligible to volunteer program. Youth volunteers ages 14 through
18 will be required to have a volunteer buddy. Each volunteer will be required to supply at least two
references, which will be verified by program staff. Program staff will require a CRC (Criminal Reference
Check) from Hamilton Police Services for all program volunteers. All volunteers will be required to sign a
waiver and will receive a safety sheet reviewing the safest injury free manner in which to remove snow.

Each program volunteer will receive a package including a volunteer agreement outlining their
responsibilities under the program, a reference check form, safety tips form, a waiver of liability and
volunteer assignment cards. As there will be no direct contact between the volunteer and the recipient
of the volunteer service, volunteers will be provided with an assignment card to leave in the mail box
indicating their first name only, their commitment to the snow angel program and an indication of the
approximate timeframe in which they can expect their walk to be cleared in the event of a snowfall.

Liaison is maintained with Hamilton Police Services through Jim Greenwood in the Seniors Bureau.
Working with Officer Bernie Mueller, Police Services have agreed to expedite the processing of the CRC
and their standing policy provides for the waiving of the $15 CRC fee in the event the volunteer cannot
afford it.
Volunteer Canada’s Safe Steps Screening Program provides an easy-to-use method for organizations to ensure that the people they serve are safe. The Snow Angel Program is employing the following 10 Safe Steps.

1. **Determine the risk**
   Organizations can control the risk in their programs. Examining the potential for danger in programs and services may lead to preventing or eliminating the risk altogether.

2. **Write a clear position description**
   Careful position descriptions send the message that an organization is serious about screening. Responsibilities and expectations can be clearly set out, right down to the position’s dos and don'ts. A clear position description indicates the screening requirements. When a volunteer changes positions, the screening procedures may change as well.

3. **Establish a formal recruitment process**
   Whether an agency posts notices for volunteer positions or sends home flyers, they must indicate that screening is part of the application process.

4. **Use an application form**
   The application form provides needed contact information. If the volunteer position requires other screening measures (medical exam, driver's record, police records check), the application form will ask for permission to do so.

5. **Conduct interviews**
   The interview provides not only an opportunity to talk to the potential volunteer about their background, skills, interests, and availability, but also to explore any doubts about the suitability of the candidate. In other words, the interview will help determine the "right fit".

6. **Follow up on references**
   By identifying the level of trust required in the position and asking specific questions, the applicant’s suitability may be easier to determine. People often do not expect that their references will be checked. Do not assume that applicants only supply the names of people who will speak well of them.

7. **Request a Police Records Check**
   A **Police Records Check** (PRC) is just one step in a 10-step screening process. PRCs signal — in a very public way — that the organization is concerned about the safety of its participants.

8. **Conduct orientation and training sessions**
   Screening does not end once the volunteer is in place. Orientation and training sessions offer an opportunity to observe volunteers in a different setting. These sessions also allow organizations to inform volunteers about policies and procedures. Probation periods give both the organization and the volunteer time to learn more about each other.

9. **Supervise and evaluate**
   The identified level of risk associated with a volunteer position will determine the necessary degree of supervision and evaluation. If the risk is great, it follows that the volunteer will be under close supervision. Frequent feedback in the first year is particularly important. Evaluations must be based on position descriptions.

10. **Follow up with program participants**
    Regular contact with participants and family members can act as an effective deterrent to someone who might otherwise do harm. Volunteers should be made aware of any follow-up activities that may occur. These could include spot checks for volunteers in high-risk positions.

### Program Activity January – April 1, 2006

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Hamilton Snow Angel Program (SPH05048a) (City Wide)

% Applicants who did not receive snow removal within 24 hrs
Number of Volunteer Applicants
Number of Ineligible Service Applicants
Number of Complaints or By-Law Enforcement Tickets
Number Referrals made to Helping Hands or others per week

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2006 Snow Angel Awareness Program-Residential Snow Removal Final Report May 1, 2006

Snow Angels is a City of Hamilton initiative in partnership with Volunteer Hamilton. In 2003, the city of Hamilton introduced a new by-law stating that all city sidewalks were to be cleared of snow within 24 hours of a snow fall otherwise, imposing a fine to the property owner if found to be incompliant.

In reflection it was felt that the introduction of this by-law could have some major financial ramifications to the low-income senior and disabled members of the community. In recognition of this, the City of Hamilton introduced the idea to recruit volunteers to remove the snow for them. It was from this concept that the Snow Angel Awareness program was initiated. To help with this process they partnered with Volunteer Hamilton.

The partnership with Volunteer Hamilton was a natural fit for having the pulse on volunteer resources. It was necessary to hire a Program Coordinator who could take the concept and transfer it into a fully functional program. This would include the following:

- Development of policies and procedures (risk management)
- Volunteer recruitment
- Volunteer screening and training.
- Volunteer monitoring
- Volunteer recognition
- Service recipient eligibility and registration
- Service recipient matching to volunteer
- Collection of statistical data

On February 13th, 2006, the Program Coordinator was officially hired to develop and implement the city of Hamilton initiative - Snow Angels Awareness Program.

Program Criteria

In order to receive this service, the Hamilton resident must be:

- 65 yrs of age or older, who currently receive the seniors Tax Credit
- A resident with a disability documented by an Ontario Disability Support Program cheque stub (ODSP), a wheelchair parking pass or a doctor’s note regardless of age.
- All interested residents are assessed for financial eligibility.

How the service can be accessed:

- Applications can be made on-line at www.volunteerhamilton.on.ca or
- Apply by telephone Snow Angels Hotline at 905 523-1910 or
- Apply by telephone Volunteer Hamilton at 905 523-4444 or
- Apply by telephone City of Hamilton @ 546-2424.
Who can volunteer?

In order to participate as a volunteer, the following criteria are required:

- You must be 14 years of age or older.
- You must be physically able to participate in the task of snow removal.

How can I apply to volunteer?

- Volunteers are required to complete an application form which can be accessed online at [www.volunteerhamilton.on.ca](http://www.volunteerhamilton.on.ca) or
- Applications can be made by calling the Snow Angels Hotline at 905 523-1910. or
- Applications can be made by calling Volunteer Hamilton 905 523-4444
- In order to be accepted into the program, every volunteer is required to undergo a screening process, which consists of:
  1. 2 personal references.
  2. Criminal reference check.
  3. Mandatory attendance at an orientation/training session

Program Highlights

Within 2 weeks

- Policies and Procedures were written and ready for implementation.
- The first 10 Snow Angel volunteers were trained and screened
- Received 34 service recipient applications.
- Approved 26 service recipients for the program.
- Sponsorship for volunteer recognition was confirmed with McDonalds.
- Support from Canadian Tire for snow shovels

At Conclusion of Program

- 74 service recipients were successfully matched to volunteers
- 43 Volunteers screened and trained
- 74 service recipients registered

Program Benefits

It quickly became apparent that this program had numerous beneficial facets attached to it:

Benefits to the Service Recipient

This program created “peace of mind” to the service recipient by knowing:

- The volunteer has been police screened and properly trained.
- The program is supported by a reputable organization
- The program is supported by the City of Hamilton
- Service recipients can receive answers to their questions by personal communication with the Program Coordinator via telephone.
- The service provided will be reliable, with service back-up.
- Their responsibility is eliminated from having to perform a task far beyond their physical/and/or financial capabilities.
- There is no financial cost incurred for the service.
Benefits to the Volunteer

The Program created many benefits for the volunteer:

- The registration process is easy.
- Anyone 14 years and older can volunteer for this program.
- Involvement is not time intensive.
- Hours are flexible.
- Creates volunteer opportunities to those who have always wanted to “give back” to the community but have not fit the criteria of other organizations requiring specialized skill sets.
- Creates an avenue for high school students to become more involved in their community and earn their required high school community service hours.
- Creates an opportunity to volunteer with friends and family.
- Creates an inexpensive way to keep fit in the winter and experience the “outdoors”, in the winter months.
- A feeling of well-being, satisfaction and accomplishment.

Benefits to the Community

This program creates:

- Snow free streets, which are safer to walk on.
- Public awareness is heightened on the value and availability of “volunteerism”,
- Harmony in our neighbourhoods. (neighbours helping neighbours).
- An opportunity for families to share their volunteer experience together.

Program Development

Due to the fact that this program was being introduced so late into the winter season (mid February), it immediately became a very time sensitive program. The set-up process had to be developed and executed immediately. This fell into several categories:

1. Policy development (See manual) – Volunteers
   Service Recipients
2. Procedural development (See manual) – Volunteers
   Service Recipients
3. Marketing plan development and implementation
4. Service Recipient Registration
5. Volunteer Recruitment and Screening
6. Volunteer Training
7. Statistical data
8. Program implementation – Matching process

Program Implementation

Once the volunteer has been screened and trained, and the service recipient is eligible to receive the service, the matching process can take place.
Matching Process for Volunteer to Service Recipient

The process consists of:

- The Coordinator assesses the geographical information of all volunteers and service recipients and by utilizing the mapping system (explained next) she/he decides who would be a likely match according to their geographical location to one another.
- Once this has been established, the volunteer is contacted with the address of the service recipient. For confidentiality reasons no names are exchanged to either party.
- A map from "Map Quest" is printed out (from volunteers home address to Service Recipients address) and given to the volunteer for location approval, via e-mail, fax or communicated over the telephone.
- Upon volunteer approval, the service recipient is notified that a match has been found.
- A letter of confirmation is then sent and placed in respective files to the:
  - Volunteer
  - Service recipient

Mapping System for Volunteer/Recipient Matches

A mapping system was developed for an easier visual matching process. A large map of the City of Hamilton was placed on the wall in the coordinators office. The following procedure was developed in order for the matching process of volunteer to service recipient to take place. This system enabled the coordinator to identify the matches geographically quickly and effectively.

Volunteer – Green Pin

- Upon acceptance into the program the volunteer’s home address is located on map, and identified with the insertion of a GREEN pin.

Service Recipient – Yellow Pin

- Once it has been established that the service recipient is eligible for the program, their address is located on the map and identified by the insertion of a YELLOW pin.

Matched Service Recipient – Orange Pin

- Once a volunteer match has been found for the service recipient, the yellow pin is REMOVED and REPLACED with an ORANGE pin.
  
  The Volunteer GREEN pin REMAINS in its location without change

Volunteer Procedure at time of a ‘Snow Event’

- Coordinator calls Public Works Department to “confirm” that it is an “official” snow day and confirm the time of which the 24 hrs will start.
- The Coordinator then records the information on the Angel Hotline @ 905 523-1910 and Cell phone, so volunteers can call in to get the information before being deployed. It is important that volunteers know the time of which the official 24 hrs begins.
Program Monitoring

- After each snowfall, the Coordinator follows-up with random calls to volunteers and/or service recipients to ensure snow removal is completed and to receive important feedback from both volunteers and service recipients.

Statistics

Despite a comprehensive marketing plan, the final totals of this 2005/6-program debut can seem very disappointing, as much higher recruitment and registration numbers were expected. According to the statistics received from the City of Hamilton, there are over 2,000 seniors and disabled members of the community who receive the Seniors Tax Credit and are actually eligible to receive this vital service.

Typically, all new programs need to gain momentum, which takes time to build. The statistics do not measure accurately the success of a program, but give us a base from which to work on. Although statistically, the program was disappointing, the success has been obtained by taking a program from being a mere concept on a piece of paper to a fully functional, workable program ready to be implemented in the next winter season.

The statistics were impacted dramatically by:
- The extremely mild winter of 2005/6.
- The program is seasonal
- The program became very time sensitive, due to a late start into the winter season.
- It is difficult for people (service recipients) to think about requiring a snow removal service, when the winter is lacking snow.
- It is equally difficult to recruit volunteers to remove snow when the weather is “spring” like. In order to recruit volunteers and maintain retention volunteers need to be kept busy. Unfortunately this was not possible this year.
- Low registration numbers of both service recipients and volunteers is quite typical at the onset of a brand new program. It is still unfamiliar to the community. New programs require a couple of years to gain momentum and become familiar with the public, to become a “household” name.
- The recruitment of high school students as volunteers could have been more effective had the introduction of this program been much earlier into the season (Oct). Schools need a large lead-time for promotion to happen within their own internal systems, and permission from the school board to do so. Now that permission has been sought, and internal promotion has begun with staff, we should see a much healthier participation in the next winter season.

Successful Program Highlights

- Program was fully developed within 2 weeks of onset.
- 43 registered service recipients
- 74 trained and screened volunteers
- Successful connection and promotion with both school boards for future volunteer recruitment
- McDonalds sponsorship
- Donation of snow shovels from Canadian Tire (Upper James)
Marketing

The City of Hamilton in partnership with Volunteer Hamilton has led an aggressive marketing campaign in order to promote this program, utilizing several modes of communication and materials:

1. Advertisements were placed in the Hamilton Spectator and area Brabant newspapers.
2. Posters were placed in bus shelters around the city.
3. A promotional card was designed by the City and a flyer from Volunteer Hamilton.
4. Snow Angels folders were designed for volunteer orientations and public presentations.
5. A postcard was designed for service recipient use for feedback and quality assurance purposes.
6. Posters were designed by the City of Hamilton to encourage students to volunteer to increase their community service hours.
7. Touques with the “Snow Angels” logo on them, were used for promotional and incentive purposes for volunteers accepted into the program.

Program materials, which included the flyer and promotional cards, were distributed to the following public areas for maximum exposure.

- Red Hill Library
- Terry Berry Library
- Hamilton Central Library – York St
- Barton St Library
- Shopper’s Drug Mart Pharmacies
- IDA Drug Stores
- Herbies Drug Store
- Medical Supply Stores
- CAA Office
- HRDC office Upper James
- Given to Police Officer King Street E – a Snow Angel Volunteer, to distribute during his workday including presentations to health institutions and working with the senior population.
- Good Shepherd food bank

School Boards

Permission from both school boards had to be granted prior to any of this information was disseminated within the school system.

- Principals and guidance counsellors/ Christian Animators, each received a letter describing the program.
- Each secretary received a “Student Volunteer Opportunity” letter for “morning announcements”.
- All 18 schools in the Hamilton Wentworth District and 6 schools in the Catholic board received posters for display in guidance/career areas of the school.
- Coordinator met with teacher from the the Henry Mancini Centre.

MPP and Municipal Councillors Offices

Each MPP and Councillors in the city of Hamilton received a letter promoting the program.

All samples of the aforementioned promotional materials will be attached to this report.

Media

Executive Director, Christopher Cutler made an appearance on:

- CHCH TV News
- Cable 14 – “Coffee Break” segment.
Program Challenges and Recommendations

Like all new programs, the Snow Angels program has faced some challenges during its initial development and implementation, all of which can be overcome and learned from. The following challenges experienced were:

**Challenge - Late Start Date**
Hindered:
- Volunteer recruitment
- Service Recipient registration

**Recommendation**
Start Program at the beginning of October, with an aggressive volunteer recruitment campaign, starting with the schools.

**Challenge – Mild weather conditions**
Hindered:
- Volunteer recruitment
- Service Recipient registration

**Recommendation**
Unfortunately we cannot control the weather, but we can continue to promote the program to gain more momentum and program recognition.

**Challenge - Police reference checks**
Due to the time sensitivity of the program, and its late start date, Chief Brian Mullen had pre-arranged for the volunteers of the Snow Angels Program to have the turn around time for PRC's reduced to 15 days. Due to staffing difficulties at the Records Department, this did not happen.

**Recommendation**
The turn around time should not be reduced for future sessions. It requires cooperation at many levels, of which there is no control. Ultimately this reflects negatively on Volunteer Hamilton.

**Challenge – PRC’s not accepted despite official letter.**
It was learned after the Volunteer orientation that since the implementation of the $15 fee there is now an auditing process at the Records Dept that requires proof that the organization legitimately is requiring the PRC for a “volunteer unpaid” position. Since the Snow Angels program was not identified by an official rubber stamp, it caused much confusion. An official letter was written and given to the volunteers to give to the Records Dept upon pick up. This caused complications for the volunteer.

**Recommendation**
2 rubber stamps identifying the program should be custom ordered for the next winter season to be used to identify all PRC’s coming through the program:

1. Stating: Volunteer Hamilton - Logo
   Snow Angels Program
   627-206 Main Street E
   Hamilton, L8M 1J5
   905 523-1910

2. “UNPAID VOLUNTEER”
Challenge – Difficulty in getting PRC’s back for approval
Despite 2 phone calls and a letter to every individual volunteer, the coordinator had difficulty in retrieving PRC’s back for review from volunteers. This is not an unusual challenge in volunteer management.

Recommendation
All volunteer applicants should receive a PRC before approval is granted. Volunteers can still undergo the training/orientation session, but they cannot be matched until the PRC has been received. The only reason that this procedure was not honored this year was the time sensitivity of the program.

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- Canadian Tire Store # 177 on Upper James for the generous donation of 10 snow shovels.
- McDonalds for gift certificates used for volunteer recognition.

Summary
In summary, although the statistics were disappointing due to the lack of snow this winter season, the program has still reached and attained it’s objective to provide a fully functional volunteer snow removal program for the senior and disabled members of the community. The Snow Angels program is fully implemented and ready to go and has all the elements in place to continue to grow and meet the continued needs of the community.