



“Broadening Horizons”

2011 - One-Off Corporate Volunteering Activity - Survey Results Report

Executive summary: Since 1999 Ardoch Youth Foundation has co-opted the support of corporate organisations to assist our partner schools in providing their students with educational experiences beyond the classroom. Corporate support includes both funding the activities and where possible enabling the important voluntary participation of their employees. In June 2011 we began to survey employees who participated in these activities to understand their experience from both a personal and professional perspective. Connecting communities is an area of expertise for Ardoch Youth Foundation and the engagement of corporate volunteers provides a unique opportunity to enable meaningful interactions between different social sectors of our community. Our experience shows that these interactions create greater awareness and empathy for disadvantage in our community; and provide a unique opportunity to introduce children living in disadvantage to ‘positive working role models’ who may motivate or influence their future aspirations. It achieves a most basic need in our community for different people to meet and learn from each other. In developing this report we aim to inform corporate volunteers and their employers of the thinking that guides Ardoch and our partner schools in developing activities for their students and the role that the volunteers play. The survey is designed to measure the effectiveness of the activity in providing a meaningful experience; to provide a formal feedback mechanism to ensure continuous improvement in meeting the needs of all our community stakeholders; and to capture important anecdotal information which conveys the true human value of these activities.

1. Corporate Volunteers – a value add to wellbeing and learning opportunities

Ardoch partner schools are limited in their ability to provide students with experiences beyond the classroom. Costs of excursions and incursions are prohibitive for the parent demographic and ‘high needs’ school budgets are commonly stretched to accommodate the social and health challenges of their particular student population. Availing these schools with opportunities to take classes on excursions to Museums or have Theatre Performance come to the school is welcomed as the teachers know how powerful these experiences can be in engaging children socially and academically. In other cases activities such as Breakfast Clubs not only assist the students ability to participate in their education but also support the development of the school community, Career Days and Mock Interviews are invaluable for teenagers who may come from unemployed households or lack basic social skills in presenting themselves. The participation of Ardoch corporate volunteers is welcomed by schools. The impact of ‘positive working role models’, extra adult resources to facilitate supervision, learning and engagement in public environments and the demonstration of support from the broader community – ‘makes a lasting difference’.

2. Activity and data collection

An online survey was sent out to Corporate Co-ordinators to pass onto volunteers within a week of them having participated in an activity. Respondents were required to provide their name and email, answer all multiple choice questions and comment on their experience, providing additional feedback and choosing further communication from Ardoch was optional.

The activities surveyed included:

Early Learning Centres

Collingwood Children's' Farm Kinder Visit
 South Melbourne Kindergarten Mini Olympics
 The Mouse's Tale Performance (Cooke Court & Rupert St)
 Pancake Breakfast with Parents (Wirilda Kindergarten)

Primary Schools

Billycart Building (Fitzroy Primary & Sacred Heart Primary)
 Games Day (St Brendan's Primary/Richmond West Primary)
 Lunchtime and reading activities (Stonnington Primary)
 Immigration Museum (Ardeer Primary School)
 Tutankhamen Museum Visit (Mahogany Rise)
 Sports Days (Ardeer Primary, Sunshine North Primary)
 Cooking Activity (Sunshine North Primary)

Secondary Schools

Breakfast Club (Monterey Secondary College & Elwood Secondary College)
 Career day/Mock interviews (Elwood Secondary College and Sunshine Secondary College)
 St Kilda Youth Service (Headstart Program)

55% Survey Response Rate (200 volunteers participated and 110 responded to the survey)

3. The Results

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My experience was positive	76.4%	21.8%	0.9%	0.9%
I felt that I was supporting my community	63.6%	35.5%	0.0%	0.9%
I enjoyed interacting with the kids	77.3%	21.8%	0.0%	0.9%
The day was well organised	60.0%	32.7%	4.5%	2.7%
I understood what was required of me	50.0%	45.5%	3.6%	0.9%
This activity complements my professional development	44.5%	49.1%	5.5%	0.9%

4. What volunteers take away from the day

What makes a day memorable is highly subjective. In addition to the value that they bring to the school it is apparent that volunteering provides a fulfilling and meaningful experience.

- Largely volunteers remember the joy of the children; they are often surprised at how the children welcome them into their activities and are fascinated by the change in schools since their days.

Lots of smiling faces!

Loved the interactions with Ardoch staff, other volunteers and especially the kids. Was wonderful how I was immediately made to feel welcome and involved. It was great chatting and interacting with the kids and watching them become more confident talking to us and each other over the course of several weeks - everyone just seemed to have a great time.

- The diversity of the children is often surprising and while the activities are times of fun it is quite common for a volunteer to be told by a child that they have not had breakfast or that they are not currently living at home, which can be confrontational. Volunteers also see first hand the challenges and professionalism of teachers in these schools.

"I felt I wanted to do more than just ask interview questions ... exposure to teenagers from low socio-economic backgrounds and underprivileged kids is a real eye-opener."

"..A lot more to being a school teacher than I expected. Organised school with a lot to offer the community."

"enthusiasm and multi-culturalism - kids don't seem to care; adults put on labels."

- Overwhelmingly volunteers consider it important that the companies that they work for provide them with these opportunities and support disadvantaged communities. Volunteers also value the activity in relation to their workplace – sometimes it is an observation on human behaviour and at other times, spending time with colleagues outside of the work environment.

"Satisfaction that I've made some kid's day. Also having to deal with various kids was interesting. I had a group that was working well together and another where not so well. Kind of reminds me that even though they were kids - they reflect what's also in happening in my profession!"

"It was a very interesting experience and I felt we were able to add some value to the kids (some more than others) as well as practise our communication skills, working together and thinking on the spot when it came to tailoring questions that were suitable to kids of this age bracket. A very worthwhile exercise all round I thought!"

"I enjoyed seeing all the children participate in an activity that they would not normally get an opportunity to do. My buddy said that she had never visited a museum, so I was proud to be able to accompany her on her first visit."

"The way everyone from Company B was taken out of context and thrown into another culture. It was amazing and encouraging to see how they adapted and how many of the faces of my fellow employees lit up."

- Importantly volunteers feel that they are needed and their participation 'makes a difference'.

"Helping the kids' experience something that they may not have otherwise have had the opportunity to do. Helping them understand some more about the subject matter"

"It was a great half day experience where I felt we got a great insight the challenges of a young person developing the skills to get a job/perform well at interview...and also a look into how a Secondary school runs and what role modelling is beneficial for the school."

"The challenge that these young people have got in front of them and the enthusiasm of the student I interviewed."

5. Other feedback

For the majority the experience is positive, however volunteers let us know on the occasions where they feel the activity was not well organised, that they had not been briefed adequately regarding: time commitment: meal and water preparations or the location activity i.e. being in the sun. This feedback is invaluable and has been reviewed to improve our briefing and activity preparation for 2012.

6. Further engagement with Ardoch

Volunteers are important advocates for Ardoch's work in the wider community, so where possible we would like to keep them informed on what Ardoch is doing and how they can support us.

Quarterly Newsletter	33.6%
Bi-Monthly Corporate Update	10.9%
Annual Report	6.4%
Other volunteering opportunities	36.4%
How to donate to Ardoch?	14.5%

We respect that information overload deters people from choosing to receive 'yet another' newsletter. However based on our results we are confident that they will share the stories of their Ardoch volunteer experience with friends and be more informed about the challenges facing education in their community.

Ardoch Corporate Volunteer Feedback

Thanks for volunteering with Ardoch and helping us to make education a reality. Your participation adds support to learning, and means a lot to the students and the school ...so we would love to know what it meant to you.