

2010 Winter Olympic Games Alumni & Member Spotlight

CCLNet recently asked the following question of community leadership grads who participated in the 2010 Games:

What were the connections or parallels between the Olympics, and the concepts, principles and practices of community leadership?

Leadership Wood Buffalo alumnus Andrea Hall provided comments on her experiences:

Occupation and Employer: Transition Lead, Suncor Energy, Ft. McMurray, AB

Other community/volunteer experience: Festival of Trees, Suncor day of caring organizer

What was your role during the Olympics: "I was chosen to be a "Host at Large" for Suncor/Petrocan. My role was to attend events with Petrocan stakeholders - mostly business partners and contest winners - to ensure that they enjoyed their Olympic experiences.

What were some of your personal observations/highlights: One of the things I noticed was the great atmosphere in Vancouver, particularly at events where volunteers went out of their way. I believe that the efforts of the volunteers were what made these games successful. The sense of national pride was overwhelming.

What linkages can you make between the Olympics, your volunteer role, and your experience on one hand, and community leadership concepts and values such as inclusiveness, equality of opportunity to lead, and collaborative leadership on the other hand? The 2010 Olympics were to me about triumph over adversity. It was the people who made the event great - from the athletes, to the organizers to the volunteers. Learnings that could be taken out of the experience that would aid in community leadership include contingency planning, and volunteer motivation and recognition.

Leadership Waterloo's John Cammarata provided comments on his experiences:

Occupation and Employer: Teacher/Waterloo Region District School Board

Other Community/Volunteer Experience:

St Andrew's Community/Local Outreach Committee;

The Annual Stewart Exceptional Educator Award: Selection Committee,

Riding Association: Advisory Committee,

Grand River Film Festival (Education Relations Director), Ontario Senior Games/Waterloo Region Organizing Committee, Waterloo Condominium Association Board of Directors

What was your role during the Olympics:

I was an Event Services Host at the Vancouver False Creek Olympic Village: January 30th to March 3rd. We were known as the face of the games; we were the first and last faces that the villagers encountered. With welcoming smiles, we provided directions, control access protect the athletes, delegations and officials, crowd management and access control greeting and providing directions, assisting clients through pedestrian screening areas, verifying accreditation at access points, assisting with emergency situations and other related duties as assigned and work closely with polices and security.

Once you put on the blue jacket, you were on duty no matter where you were in the city and at anytime of day or night. We never refused or ignored anyone who required our assistance.

We were to be aware, understand and respond to the residents of the Olympic Village in a positive, welcoming supportive friendly manner.

The mission statement of the Vancouver 2010 Olympics: "was to touch the soul of the nation and inspire the world by creating and delivering an extraordinary Olympic and Paralympics experience with lasting legacies". It was the mandate of the volunteer workforce to ensure the games fulfilled that mission. I am convinced we accomplished it with flying colours.

The success of the Vancouver Olympics will set the bar for many Olympic years.

What were some of your personal observations/highlights: I experienced an incredibly committed team of volunteers and paid staff members working together at the village. New situations would arise and have to be reviewed and implemented the next day. There was never an opportunity for dress rehearsals. Problem resolution and adaptation was immediate.

It was a wonderful experience working in the village environment with such a varied group of people . The teamwork, the sense of mission and the ability of everyone to stay focused on what we had to do and adapt to policy changes, flexibility and cooperation was essential.

Being downtown and seeing the flood of red hockey shirts, Canadian flags and the spontaneous singing of O Canada was beyond anything I had ever experienced. The emotional display of Canadian pride and patriotism will have changed Canadians forever. I believe winning the final gold medal in men's hockey game cemented, forever a new vibrant Canadian view of ourselves.

I was able to meet and hold Christine Nesbitt's gold medal, and had the honour to speak with our village mayor Rick Hanson.

Attending the medals ceremony at BCE Place which turned out to be Canada's first gold medal. What a spectacular historical celebration.
Viewing the Olympic Flame at the waterfront moved me knowing what the flames means to the history sport and the flame of hope it represents for a better world for our children

What linkages can you make between the Olympics, your volunteer role, and your experience on one hand, and community leadership concepts and values such as inclusiveness, equality of opportunity to lead, and collaborative leadership on the other hand?

"To touch the soul of a nation and inspire the world" great leadership must be visionary and inspirational. Indigenous People's of the Four Nations are equal partners for the first time in the history of the games
The volunteers and staff were from all over the world. There was a variety of ages, cultures, and genders. The games reflected the world.

Leadership values promote the same participation in our leadership society. Collaborative leadership requires trust in your people and confident in one's ability to transfer power and authority to employees and/or volunteers. The Olympic village leadership model exhibited all the qualities necessary for effective leadership, including positive, trusting and supportive environment.

They continuously asked for feedback whenever we saw something that need to be addressed.
The Olympic Games represented a great and successful leadership model.

To have been part of such a successful world movement will always be with me. John Furlong told us, we will always be part of the Olympic movement. I spoke with one of the IOC Physicians from Norway attending a medical conference at the village. I asked him what he thought of the games. He said he has attended the last seven Olympic games and Vancouver was the best he has ever attended. I asked why and commented on the way situations were handled, the excellent venues, the great village facilities, and the support he received from the volunteers.

***Our Olympic Service Excellence Program Values Model included:
caring, trust, teamwork, creativity and excellence.***

Leadership Wood Buffalo alumnus Blake Crossley provided comments on his experiences:

Occupation and employer?

Keyano College, Network Administrator

Other community/volunteer experience?

Alberta rep for Makepovertyhistory.ca, Founder of Oxfam Northern Alberta, Ambassador for impossible2Possible

What was your role during the Olympics:

Olympic Torchbearer, January 19th, 2010 - Crossfield, Alberta

What were some of your personal observations/highlights?

I applied for the relay when they announced the contest in late 2008.. There were three steps involved. You selected your three routes that you would like to participate in. I chose Calgary, Northern Alberta (which was Fort McMurray) and Edmonton. If successful you had to answer a skill testing question. Then if you got it right you had to write an essay on how you make your community better. This essay went before a panel and if successful you were selected as a torchbearer.

I have to say I was very excited when I received the email that said "Congratulations You have been Selected".

My personal highlight was the sense of community on the day and sharing stories with other torchbearers (one being Olympic Swimmer, Curtis Myden). Also, Crossfield, Alberta which is 30 kms north of Calgary, took me in as one of their own - swarms of people wanted pictures, autographs and a chance to hold the Olympic Torch. I have never experienced such closeness in energy and pride and having kids running with you was simply awesome. For 10 minutes I held the Olympic flame and now am an alumnus of the Olympic community.

What linkages can you make between the Olympics, your volunteer role, your experience on one hand, and community leadership concepts and values such as inclusiveness, equality of opportunity to lead, and collaborative leadership on the other hand?

The linkages I can make is I am trying to promote sport through community. I am heavily involved as an ambassador to Ray Zahab's impossible2possible organization which uses expeditions and teaching methods to highlight that anything is indeed possible. I was very fortunate to bring the Olympic Torch to three schools here in Fort McMurray and be apart of their Winter Olympics. It is an amazing feeling because you are reaching out to the kids in the region. I think one aspect of being a leader is to inspire. I think through my own personal experiences and obstacles the youth can follow a story that any dream is possible. Kids love hearing about one's experiences on how you did something and the look in their eyes is amazing because you know its authentic.

Click here for an article from the local paper : http://www.cclnet.org/user_files/images/File/Quest/Torchbearer-BlakeCrossley.pdf

