

*Because sport matters... Parce que le sport est important...*

## ***BECAUSE SPORT MATTERS TO OUR SENSE OF COMMUNITY FACT SHEET***

*Sport builds and strengthens communities in many ways, bringing together youth, their parents and coaches, volunteers, sponsors, and supporters. Sport works by creating social networks that generate trust and a willingness to interact with others outside of sport.*

- More than 2 million Canadians volunteer for sport and recreation organizations, filling 5.3 million volunteer positions (Statistics Canada, 2004).
- There are some 34,000 sport and recreation organizations across Canada, constituting the single largest segment of the voluntary sector at 21% of the total (Statistics Canada, 2004).
- Nearly 13.7 million adult Canadians (55%) take part in sport as active participants, volunteers, attendees, or some combination of the three (Conference Board, 2005).
- The involvement by Canadians in sport and recreation is one of the most important core activities that help to shape us as individuals, to differentiate our communities, and to define our nation's collective identity (Bowen, 2004).
- Involvement in sport and physical activity is a prime form of citizen participation, whereby Canadians learn and practice skills that make civic engagement and democratic decision-making practical and meaningful. Participants learn how to work together, trust each other, and organize their common interests (Bowen, 2004).
- Almost three-quarters (72%) of Canadians believe that sport makes a significant contribution to the quality of life in their community (The Strategic Counsel, 2005).
- 90% of Canadians believe that community-based sport reinforces broader societal values, such as honesty, respect, fairness, inclusion, excellence, and fun (Strategic Counsel, 2005).
- The vast majority of active participants believe that sport generates a wide range of benefits for the community as a whole (Conference Board, 2005):
  - provides a venue for meeting and interacting with people (97%);
  - encourages people from different backgrounds to work and play together (96%);
  - provides an opportunity to volunteer in the community (95%);
  - teaches people about responsibility and respect for other people and property (93%);
  - gets people of all ages actively involved in their communities (91%);
  - gives people a sense of purpose (90%);
  - provides opportunities for family members to get to know one another better (89%);
  - helps prevent juvenile crime (87%).
- Sport and recreation programming contributes to the development of skills that help at-risk youth to avoid criminal behaviour in the future (National Crime Prevention Centre, 2003).

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## References

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