

School of East Indian Languages & Performing Arts

Professionalism in Volunteer Services

INCA Seminar
October 3, 2009



SILPA Mandate

- School of (East) Indian Languages & Performing Arts [SILPA] was incorporated in 1981 to:
 - provide suitable means to the citizens of Calgary to study the languages and culture of the Indian sub-continent
 - conduct classes in these areas
 - promote Indian languages and Indian culture

- Over the years, SILPA has grown to offering over 15 courses and having over 175 registered students with courses in Languages, Performing Arts and Sports
 - classes are held every Sun afternoon from Sept-May
 - time: 2pm – 5pm
 - location: Lester B. Pearson High School

Definitions

- Volunteering is any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group or cause.
- Professionalism refers to: competency, efficiency & effectiveness. General elements of professional behavior include:
 - Competence
 - Proper dress & language
 - Avoiding conflicts of interest
 - Appropriate relations with and respectful treatment of peers and collaborators
 - Obey any regulations & requirements
 - Well run
 - Committed
 - Inclusive
 - Ethical

Examples of Un-professional behavior amongst volunteers

- showing up late or not at all;
- leaving early;
- inappropriate dress;
- violation of cultural norms;
- being overly demanding;
- laziness;
- negligence;
- unreliability;
- a condescending, disrespectful, or arrogant attitude; and
- noncompliance with direction.

'chalta hai' attitude is a big No-No!

What is SILPA doing to increase professionalism?

- More timely e-mail or phone response
- Coordinator to be present at SILPA every Sun to attend to any queries
- Streamline registration process
- Clearly articulated annual goals
- Enhance quality of the courses
 - course curriculum for each class
 - commitment contract with teachers
 - plan for backup teachers for each course
- Source quality music instruments
- Annual parent-teacher meetings
- Volunteer commitment requirements
- Work towards greater collaboration between SILPA & other Indian community organizations
- Long-term strategic plan will be developed

Professionalism in Volunteering will ultimately result in achievement of excellence!!!

- well-organized resulting in delivery of quality & timely results
- improved image
- more volunteers will want to participate

Professionalism will lead to your organization delivering better services to the community – fulfillment of the mandate of your organization!