

# **The Canadian Volkssport Federation**

## **101 Actions to Better Your Club Increasing Fun = Increasing Membership**

### **Club Activities**

**Reward Members**

**Fun, Fun, Fun**

**Encourage Volunteers**

**Use the Media**

**Attitude – Be Positive**

**Network**

**Try New Things**

**Energize Events**

### **Club Activities**

1. Hold monthly club meetings.
2. Minimize the business at meetings. Maximize the social aspect.
3. In warm months, hold outdoor potluck/brown bag meetings and do a walk.
4. Invite speakers to club meetings.
5. Give new members a ‘nice’ nametag when they complete at least three club activities, i.e. working at an event, attending a meeting, hosting a YRE.
6. Wear your nametags at every club function.
7. Develop an annual schedule of club events. Include monthly meetings, club walks or your own YREs, road trips to other events, workers walks and test walks of next year’s walk routes, club picnics.
8. Change officers rather than continue with the same person in office for many years. Changes in officers can lead to fresh viewpoints and a variety of alternative ideas for events. One indication of club health could be the number of former officers in your club.
9. Hold a club picnic and invite the clubs from the north, south, east and west of you. Get to know your neighbours.
10. Ask a regular member to meet and greet guests at meetings, learn a little about them and introduce each guest during the club meeting.
11. Plan a group road trip to another club’s event. It might be fun for the day or even for a weekend.
12. Hold an annual picnic for members, families and guests. Have the club buy the bratwurst.
13. Do something with all those ‘B’ awards. Give them to kids under 12 who complete a volkswalk. Or donate them to the Special Olympics.
14. Hold an annual survey among members to determine favourite walks held by clubs other than your own. Create a ‘best walk’ certificate and send it to the winning clubs.
15. Design a club pin. Wear it often.
16. Display your patches and pins at events and club meetings.
17. Always invite guests to every meeting.
18. FOCUS ON FUN!

### Reward Members

19. Recognize member's Volkssport achievements in the club newsletter and in club meetings.
20. Give 'pats on the back' for member contributions, both verbally and in the newsletter (officers in particular should do this).
21. If you have left over New Balance giveaways from your last event, give them to new members and guests at meetings.
22. Give a small door prize at each meeting.
23. Involve new members by finding out what they like to do and giving them the opportunity. Involve them, but don't overwhelm them.
24. Reward the members who are always there at events and meetings. Why not design a club T-shirt award for each member that walked all the club's walks in one calendar year or attended all your events including meetings, etc.
25. Buy each member that participates in three events – meetings, walks, etc. – a NICE nametag.
26. Give a club certificate or award to the club member who walked the most club events during the calendar year. Why not call it "The Busted Boot" Award.
27. Recognize the club's 'idea people'. Give them the 'sparkplug' award.
28. Make it a point to share positive comments from other clubs and nonmembers at meetings or in your newsletter.
29. Make it 'fun' for members to get involved.

### Encourage Volunteers

30. Create a volunteer for Club Historian. Find the person who loves to create scrapbooks and ask them to organize club event brochures, awards and photos into a club scrapbook.
31. Ask for a volunteer to act as Club Photographer. Ask them to use their judgment in creating a photo record of club events. Have the club pay for film and processing.
32. Make it easy for members to volunteer. Ask them what they want to do.
33. Treat prospective members like they are important, 'cause they are.
34. Frequent praise makes an activity FUN.

### Attitude – Be Positive

35. Always be positive.
36. Use courtesy with new people. They are 'company'.
37. NEVER, EVER say "But that is the way we have always done things."
38. Delegate but don't dump.
39. Step down from a job before you get burned out so that you will be there to help your successor. No one is indispensable. Everyone is important.
40. When a prospective member shows up make sure they are welcome – but don't push them to join right away.
41. Take a look at everything that you do. Does it help to attract new members? If not, how can it be changed to do so?
42. Use your imagination. Think of new themes for old walks.
43. Be flexible and willing to change schedules when members want to do so.
44. Look at everything your club does through new or prospective members' eyes. If you can't, ask new members.
45. When others are negative, refuse to join them. Negative attitudes are infectious. The good news is that positive attitudes are infectious, too.
46. Tell others about the fun events and fun people in your club. Word of mouth is more effective than advertising.
47. Focus on having FUN!

### Try New Things

48. Conduct a survey of club members to ask them what kind of programs they wish to have at club meetings.
49. Try an 'ice cream social' where the club buys ice cream and the members bring their favourite topping (sure to keep the meetings short!)
50. Set up a club schedule to walk your own club's year-round events.
51. Go on road trips as a group to other club's events.
52. Why not create a 'walk free card' to promote your club's walks.
53. Use Volunteer bucks, given to members for contributions.
54. Certificates – for whatever you can think of.
55. If a new member comes up with an idea, try it! Even if you think it won't work.
56. Having FUN takes a bit of work and creativity, but it's worth it!

### Energize Events

57. Create a club logo and make/sell club pins and patches.
58. Make it the 4-F's of Volkssporting – Fun, Fitness, Fellowship and FOOD. Add a group meal to your walk. For some strange reason, more people show up to walk when food is involved.
59. Have a new walker review both event brochures and walk directions for correctness and clarity (during a club walk of your new or revised directions).
60. If possible, have volunteer work slots for Traditional Events last only 3 or 4 hours.
61. At events, try to pair new members with experienced members. The training will happen naturally.
62. Try to have more than one volunteer at each work station.
63. Wear your vest of patches or pins.
64. When you plan an event, recall what you thought was interesting when you started volkssports and build excitement into your event.
65. Locate your start point and/or checkpoint where there is a lot of non-volkssport traffic.
66. Appoint a "Schmoozzer" (the President is frequently a good choice) to talk with people at the start point. The schmoozer floats around the area, answers questions and explains what volkssports are while relieving congestion at the start/registration table.
67. Bring back the "A" Award – but be creative with it.
68. Make changes to your year-round routes at least every couple years.
69. Make changes to your traditional event routes to keep them fresh.
70. Have your start location where there is a lot of non-volkswalker traffic.
71. Any reason why your walk directions can't be humorous? If you have a hill in your walk, let the directions compliment the walker for making it up the hill!
72. At your traditional events, schedule an informal group walk with one of your members who can provide history, local knowledge, or knowledge of flora and fauna to those interested.
73. Provide local history information in your year-round event walk directions. Add humour, too. One club in Colorado offers a flower identification book for you to carry on the walk (on a loan basis) to enhance the walking experience. An Idaho club identified all the varieties of trees along a walk route. If they can do it, you can do it.
74. Find creative ways to make each of your club's walks educational.
75. Make events FUN for new walkers.

### Fun, Fun, Fun

76. **Most Important Rule: HAVE FUN**

### Use the media

77. Create a regular club newsletter.

78. Create a club web page.
79. Designate a webmaster to control the website. If you can't find the expertise among members to make a website, ask your nephews or nieces or ask your high school. Many computer students get course credit for creating websites. Just ask!
80. Place your club's annual schedule of events on the website and invite all readers to attend.
81. Set up a club email address and use it.
82. Designate a 'shepherd' to assure that emails are answered promptly and referrals made to others in the club to provide newsletters, directions, car pooling, etc.
83. When you get a request for information from anyone, respond immediately with interesting information.
84. Answer info requests received by email with email, but also ask if they would like a free copy of your newsletter by snail mail.
85. Send three free copies of your newsletter to anyone who requests it. On sending the third copy, include a "Last Free Issue Notice".
86. Publish brochures for your events.
87. Distribute your brochures in places there are walkers – not just where there are volkssporters.
88. Make your brochures interesting to non-volkswalkers!
89. If your newspaper has a "What's Happening" section, make sure you get an entry in – especially for meetings where you will have interesting speakers.
90. If your newspaper does an article on your club or on volkssports, send at least one letter to the editor to thank them for the coverage.
91. If you know someone who works for a newspaper, invite them to come to your event as a reporter. Give them a creative angle to use to tell others about volkssports.
92. If your club covers a large geographic area, ask members to "adopt" the local newspaper where they live. Provide press releases to members to forward to their local paper. Publicity often goes to those who create a relationship with their local media.
93. Identify club members who enjoy public speaking and ask them to explain volkssports to civic organizations and local government.
94. Set up a booth at your local health fair. Check with your hospital to see if they have one.
- 95 Show others how much FUN there is in volkssports.

#### Network

96. Network with other clubs.
97. Jointly sponsor an event with a neighbour club or have each club hold their own walk, but route them so that the walker can do two clubs' walks at the same time.
98. Walk a neighbour club's event as a group. Let them know you will attend.
99. Invite another club to come walk one of your year-rounds with a group of your members and have a potluck after. If you get together socially with your neighbours, why not get together socially with your neighbour Volkssport clubs.
100. When your club walks another clubs' walk, send them a thank you email or post card to tell them how much you enjoyed their walk.
101. When you have FUN at another club's event, make sure to tell them!