

# The power of volunteering: building skills, networking, job leads, and more

by Heidi Riley

At the **2018 Volunteer Fair** held at UPEI, representatives from 25 non-profit organizations were on hand to explain what they do and how volunteers can benefit their community. Many also pointed out how volunteering helps people learn more about their community and can build skills that could lead to paid work.

**Jennifer Whittaker** is with **Kids Code Jeunesse**, a program that works with Kindergarten to grade 12 teachers and students. “We show kids the basics of coding and computational thinking and we teach educators how they can use it in the classroom, regardless of the subject they are teaching,” says Jennifer.

“In the community, we also set up free, volunteer-run after-school or after-work coding clubs. A curriculum is already laid out, so that volunteers don’t have to have a coding background - they can learn along with the kids.

“I’m not a coder – my background is in agriculture and growing food,” says Jennifer. “This job required someone who had experience working with kids and building community in a not-for profit organization.

“When I volunteered with a different non-profit organization, I learned skills such as working with kids, recruiting volunteers, scheduling, implementing a budget, planning activities for kids, and working with grownups.

“Even though it was a different subject, the skills required for this program are the same. It is still working in the community and with kids, getting them to feel inspired and helping them find out what they love.”

For more information, email [jenniferwhittaker@kidscodejeunesse.org](mailto:jenniferwhittaker@kidscodejeunesse.org)  
Visit [www.kidscodejeunesse.org](http://www.kidscodejeunesse.org)



Jennifer Whittaker, Community Developer, PEI, and Indra Kubicek, Senior Director, Finance & Operations, Kids Code Jeunesse.

## More organizations looking for volunteers

Autism Society of PEI – [www.autismsociety.pe.ca](http://www.autismsociety.pe.ca)  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of PEI – [www.bbbspei.ca](http://www.bbbspei.ca)  
Canadian Blood Services – [www.blood.ca](http://www.blood.ca)  
Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) – [www.cnib.ca/en?region=pe](http://www.cnib.ca/en?region=pe)  
Chantiers Jeunesse – [www.cj.qc.ca](http://www.cj.qc.ca)  
Cystic Fibrosis Canada – [www.cysticfibrosis.ca/](http://www.cysticfibrosis.ca/) – email: [raycar3@hotmail.com](mailto:raycar3@hotmail.com)  
East Prince Youth Development Centre – 98 Water Street, Summerside  
902-436-2815 – [www.epydc.org](http://www.epydc.org)  
Habitat for Humanity – [www.habitatpei.ca](http://www.habitatpei.ca)  
Junior Achievement of PEI – [www.japei.org](http://www.japei.org)  
Learning Disabilities Association of PEI – [www.ldapei.ca](http://www.ldapei.ca)  
Let’s Talk Science – <http://outreach.letstalkscience.ca/upei>  
PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada – [www.peianc.com](http://www.peianc.com)  
PEI Humane Society – [www.peihumanesociety.com](http://www.peihumanesociety.com)

Prince County Hospital – [www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-pe/prince-county-hospital](http://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-pe/prince-county-hospital)  
Prince Edward Home/Beach Grove Home – [www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-pe/prince-edward-home](http://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-pe/prince-edward-home)  
Rotaract Club of UPEI – [www.facebook.com/groups/RotaractUPEI](https://www.facebook.com/groups/RotaractUPEI)  
Start with a Seedling – [www.startwithaseedling.weebly.com](http://www.startwithaseedling.weebly.com)  
TakingITGlobal – [www.risingyouth.ca](http://www.risingyouth.ca)  
UPEI Bahá’i Society – <https://m.facebook.com/communitybuildingpei>  
UPEI English Language Centre – [www.upei.ca/experientialeducation/english-language-centre](http://www.upei.ca/experientialeducation/english-language-centre)  
UPEI Student Union – <http://upeisu.ca>

For more details about volunteering with the organizations listed, visit [www.employmentjourney.com](http://www.employmentjourney.com) and search **Volunteer Fair 2018**.



# Helping students develop and demonstrate necessary competencies for the work setting

by Gloria Welton

When hiring, employers often look for a diverse set of employability skills that are transferable to the work setting. UPEI is helping students develop and communicate their skills by offering a non-credit digital **Professionalization Badge** program during this academic year.

Students earn their badge through completing workshops and experiences that are verified by UPEI. There are no extra fees involved, but the program requires extra time.

“The badge system is an opportunity for students to bridge the gap between what they are learning in their academic studies and what employers are looking for when they graduate,” says **Tara Corman**, Student Advisor with UPEI. Tara does one-on-one career management sessions with students, as well as curriculum and program design for the Professionalization Badge program.

At UPEI, the Office of Experiential Education includes Co-operative Education, Career Services, and the unit responsible for the Professionalization Badge program.

The badges earned are micro credentials in the form of a digital icon graduates can share online through LinkedIn, their e-portfolio, or their resumé. “Employers can click on it to see what the student has done to earn the badge. This system has more information and is more portable than a paper certificate.”

Tara is planning to speak with first-year students in their classrooms to encourage them to start thinking about career management earlier. “As they near graduation, students often realize they don’t have a lot of work experience or don’t know what they want to do after university.

“UPEI is already doing a lot of great things with experiential education, and this professionalization badge program complements classroom learning to help students connect their academic experiences with professional skills and contexts.”

To earn their badges, students focus on labour market literacy, communication skills, and professional skills.

**Labour Market Literacy badge:** In April, students participated in a two-day intensive boot camp to earn that badge. They explored job clusters, skills, and different career paths. “They learned how to identify networking opportunities on PEI, and practiced introducing themselves to different audiences by highlighting their skills and abilities.

“At a labour market panel, Pat Perry from SkillsPEI talked about industry trends. Amber James from WorkPEI and Stacy Dunn from *The Employment Journey on PEI* gave the students a sense of what resources are available and about employment trends happening on PEI. We also covered the components of the hiring process, from the job posting to the interview.”

**Communications Skills badge:** Students learn how to highlight their soft skills to employers during a job interview. “With the changing nature of work, these skills will help future employees to be adaptable and resilient to changes in technology.

“We also focused on how to communicate who you are online, as well as teamwork, collaboration, and conflict management. On November 13, we will offer a one-day intensive delivery of this badge on campus.”



Tara Corman, Student Advisor, Experiential Education and Work-Integrated Learning, UPEI.

**Professional Skills badge:** The third badge begins with online reflection followed by a face-to-face workshop that focuses on intra-personal management, developing adaptability and resilience, learning from failure, a growth mindset, and a life-long learning approach to career development.

Students also do a 10-hour job shadow experience in a field they are interested in, and then submit a learning contract reflecting on what they learned.

For more information, contact **Tara Corman** at 902-628-4304 or [tcorman@upei.ca](mailto:tcorman@upei.ca)

Visit [www.upei.ca/experientialeducation/ex-ed](http://www.upei.ca/experientialeducation/ex-ed)



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