Surrey International Children’s Festival
Volunteer Program
Festival Overview

• First annual 2005
• 18,000 attendees in 2014
• 4 major ticketed venues with international and national performances
• Over 18 hands on art activities such as Clay Arts,
  – Such as Clay Arts, Mehndi, Circus, Preschool PlayZone...
Volunteer Program History

• The first festival in 2005 had 90 volunteers

• Volunteer numbers increased every year but primarily on Saturday

• 2007 got approval to hire a volunteer programming dedicated to the Festival volunteer program
Recruitment

- Past Surrey International Children’s Festival Volunteers
- General Call Out
- Targeted emails to accepted volunteers
- In-school presentations
- Website
- Monthly Information Sessions
Problem-Solving

What was happening on site that was working:
• Celebration Arts artist Claire Cilliers’ bringing her own volunteers from her daughter’s high school art class

How can we start looking at things differently?
• Invitation to meet with high school business club
Group Recruitment – Volunteer Numbers by Day

![Bar chart showing volunteer numbers by day and year. The chart displays data for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday across different years: 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014. The colors used are blue for Thursday, red for Friday, and green for Saturday. The y-axis represents the number of volunteers, ranging from 0 to 250.]
2014 Overview

- **343 volunteers** (275 in 2013; 286 in 2012; 90 volunteers in first year)
- **3310 hours** contributed during event (2730.5 in 2013; 2923 in 2012; 3074.24 in 2011; 2335 in 2010)
- Average **9.65 hours** contributed per volunteer (9.93 in 2013; 10.22 in 2012; 10.15 in 2011; 9.08 in 2010; 11.45 in 2010)
- **3310 hours x $12.50** (national average) = **$41,375** (City cost savings)
- **29%** volunteered at 2013 Surrey Children’s Festival
- **77%** between the ages of 14 and 19
- Volunteers support each art activity & other tasks throughout festival
Application Process

• Online application
• 2 references
• 1 to 1 interview
• Police Information Check
Group Recruitment

- Usually high school groups (classes or clubs)
- Provides students with half of their mandatory volunteer hours in a short period of time
- Students get a reference letter
- Introduces students to the City of Surrey’s volunteer opportunities
- Fills gaps on Thursday and Friday shifts
- We bring the application process to the volunteers
Mentorship

• When a group is scheduled for one activity, we organize a group training session with the art activity coordinator
• It gives the volunteers an opportunity to work closely with an artist mentor and to learn the activity
• The activity coordinators are equipped to facilitate event volunteer training and that helps to make sure that volunteers are aware of their responsibilities
Orientation

- Tuesday before the festival
- Uniforms distributed to new volunteers
- Large group introduction to the festival and overview of agenda
- Break out into group sessions (based on activity)
- 2 consecutive sessions – first session: volunteer expectations + activity training, second session: activity training
Staff Hours & Benefits

- December to May there is one staff member dedicated to the SICF volunteer program and they are supported by a supervisor.
- They work between 22-24 hours per week on the program.
- The group recruitment and mentorship opportunities have helped to fill the need for volunteers on the Thursday and Friday of the festival since 2011.
- The program continues to grow to suit the needs of the festival and provide a great experience for the volunteers.
Conclusion