

# Volunteer mascots needed for Canada Games

*Greg Gairns gives some information on the how and why in volunteering*

By **Martha MacIntyre**

*Panther Post*

## Tell me about the Canada Games.

The Canada Games take place August 15 to 29. Because of the provincial scope of these Games (the P.E.I. Games will be the first Games with venues province-wide) sport competition is centred at venues in the Western Region during Week One and in the Eastern Region during Week Two.

The Canada Games is a multi-sport and cultural event that brings together the best athletes and artists in a specified age group from each Canadian province and territory. The primary objective of the Games and the Games movement is national and provincial sport development of Canadian youth. The Games provide the stimulus for Canadian youth to reach their athletic potential, pursue personal excellence and develop socially and culturally within the context of ethical competition. The Games rotate across the country and facilities built for the Games often serve as a sporting legacy to the host communities.

During the Canada Games, athletes are housed, fed and entertained in an area called the Athletes' Village. At the 2009 Games in Prince Edward Island, there will be two Athletes' Villages, one on the outskirts of Summerside at Slemon Park during the first week of competition,

and one in Charlottetown on the University of Prince Edward Island campus during the second week.

## Why do you need volunteers?

Volunteer positions are many and varied. Requirements range from personnel in our Media Centre, to greeters at venues and committee members.

## Who are the mascots?

Abbie and Eddie are the brother and sister mascot ambassadors for the 2009 Canada Games. They were inspired by Prince Edward Island's culture and history of sporting tradition.

Abbie takes her name from Abegweit, a Mi'kmaq word for Prince Edward Island meaning 'cradle on the waves', and competed at the 2005 Canada Summer Games in Regina for Team P.E.I. in soccer. While competing, she learned all about fair play and was thrilled to meet other participants from across Canada. After being part of a national, multi-sport Games, Abbie became inspired to study journalism at college and hopes to travel across the country someday, covering the stories of Canadians. In addition to soccer, Abbie also enjoys highland dancing and step dancing.

Abbie is an example to young athletes who are striving to reach their athletic and personal goals and is representative of P.E.I.'s youth and community spirit.

Eddie's name comes from

the name of our province, Prince Edward Island, and is the exuberant 12-year-old, younger brother to Abbie. He is aspiring to compete in golf at the next Canada Summer Games in 2013. He is training hard, but also has a lot of fun with his golfing buddies on the beautiful golf courses of Prince Edward Island. He loves to be outside, and has developed a keen interest in the environment, becoming a member of the young environmentalist program at his school.

The mascots are busy already fulfilling many public appearances. Since their Consolidated Credit Union debut in August, Abbie and Eddie have been booked for a number of public appearances – and those appearances are quickly increasing.

Abbie and Eddie helped raise money for literacy with Transcontinental's Raise-A-Reader Program, by selling newspapers to the public. Sister Abbie cheered on aspiring golfer Eddie when he hit the links at the Transcontinental Golf Tournament at Fox Meadow.

Abbie showed off her floor hockey skills in early October at the P.E.I. Activity Challenge at CARI.

Eddie joined Newcap Radio's Hands Across the Island shaking hands and raising money for QEH's Cancer Treatment Center. And on Halloween, he travelled the Island to give out candy and presents to children and dropped into hospitals to meet children who couldn't



**The 2009 Canada Games mascots Eddie and Abbie.**

Submitted photo

get out for trick-or-treating.

The mascots did a meet-and-greet at the P.E.I. Teacher's Federation Annual Convention.

Major sponsors also have the opportunity to invite Abbie and Eddie to their own events. Both mascots have attended several sponsorship announcements. At the Insurance Company of P.E.I.'s recent announcement, the mascots both posed for official photos with staff and for media photo ops.

## Why should someone volunteer for a mascot?

Mascots must be friendly and outgoing and like to meet people, especially children. People with dramatic experience are especially

welcome. We encourage those who wish to volunteer with friends.

The 2009 Canada Games will require a number of mascot 'pairings' – multiple Abbies and Eddies – and a number of mascot guides are needed because the mascots are in such demand already and because that demand will surely increase leading up to and during Games time.

As a mascot volunteer, entrance to Canada Games events is free. All volunteers receive a free 2009 Canada Games t-shirt. Volunteering as a mascot with the Games looks great on a resume. For high school students, volunteering as a mascot is an excellent way to fulfill volunteer hours requirements.