



## MEDIA RELEASE



### NEW DIGITAL RESOURCE CENTRE CONNECTS NEW CITIZENS TO THEIR COMMUNITIES THROUGH VOLUNTEERING

**TORONTO, ON - January 25, 2012** - The Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC), Manulife Financial and Volunteer Canada have partnered to create an easy-to-use online resource centre for new Canadian citizens that connects them to volunteer resources across the country.

“Through our work we know new citizens have a desire to participate in all kinds of Canadian experiences,” said Gillian Hewitt Smith, Executive Director and CEO, Institute for Canadian Citizenship. “This new volunteer resource is the perfect complement to our current mix of programs because it provides new Canadian citizens with another way in which they can feel welcome and become active members of their communities.”

Developed specifically for members of the ICC’s new citizen programs, but open to anyone, the resource centre is housed on the ICC website ([icc-icc.ca](http://icc-icc.ca)) and is divided into three sections to provide access to information on volunteering in Canada, why it’s important and how to get involved.

The ICC, Manulife Financial and Volunteer Canada came together to support new citizens and promote volunteering as an important part of the Canadian experience. According to the [2007 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating](#), almost half of Canadians volunteered their time, energy and skills with charities and nonprofit organizations donating just over 2.1 billion volunteer hours, the equivalent to almost 1.1 million full-time jobs.

“Building a better future is important to us at Manulife and volunteering is a fundamental component to that process,” said Nicole Boivin, Chief Branding and Communications Officer. “Volunteers are Canada’s lifeline and all Canadians, especially new citizens looking for ways to create meaningful long term connections, should have access to volunteer opportunities that inspire, support and engage them as active citizens.”

Creating this resource was a natural fit since each partner is a strong advocate of volunteering and wanted to help address the notion that many Canadians don’t know where or how to look for volunteer opportunities best suited to their interests, needs and skills; a finding uncovered in the 2010 research study, “[Bridging the Gap](#)”, produced by Volunteer Canada and Manulife Financial.

“At Volunteer Canada, we encourage all Canadians to get involved in their communities, and we work with all types of organizations to engage today’s volunteers,” said Ruth MacKenzie, President and CEO of Volunteer Canada. “Community involvement is a wonderful way for newcomers to Canada to integrate themselves into their communities, and we feel this portal will certainly help them find opportunities to do that.”

## ABOUT THE ICC

The Institute for Canadian Citizenship is a national, non-profit organization that engages Canadians in citizenship through innovative programs, campaigns and partnerships designed to ensure new citizens are welcomed and included as equals, to create meaningful connections among all Canadian citizens, to foster a culture of active, engaged citizens and to celebrate what it means to be Canadian. Our Building Citizenship program brings together new and established Canadians at community citizenship ceremonies; our Cultural Access Pass (CAP) offers new citizens the chance to visit more than 1,000 attractions across Canada for free for a full year from the time they're sworn in; and our annual LaFontaine-Baldwin Symposium fosters a debate on the future of Canada's civic culture. The ICC was founded and is co-chaired by the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson and John Ralston Saul. The ICC is supported by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). For more information, visit [icc-icc.ca](http://icc-icc.ca).

## ABOUT MANULIFE FINANCIAL

Manulife Financial is a leading Canada-based financial services group operating in 21 countries and territories worldwide. In 2012, we celebrate 125 years of providing clients strong, reliable, trustworthy and forward-thinking solutions for their most significant financial decisions. Our international network of employees, agents and distribution partners offers financial protection and wealth management products and services to millions of clients. We provide asset management services to institutional customers worldwide as well as reinsurance solutions, specializing in property and casualty retrocession. Funds under management by Manulife Financial and its subsidiaries were C\$492 billion (US\$473 billion) as at September 30, 2011. The Company operates as Manulife Financial in Canada and Asia and primarily as John Hancock in the United States. Manulife Financial Corporation trades as 'MFC' on the TSX, NYSE and PSE, and under '945' on the SEHK. Manulife Financial can be found on the Internet at [manulife.com](http://manulife.com).

## ABOUT VOLUNTEER CANADA

At Volunteer Canada ([volunteer.ca](http://volunteer.ca)), we encourage all Canadians to get involved in their communities and we work with all types of organizations to engage today's volunteers. We are Canada's experts on 21st century volunteering. Our expertise is backed by original research, practical knowledge, and our unique network of insight, which includes a broad range of organizations, from individuals to small volunteer centres to national corporations with thousands of staff. When we all work together and get involved in our communities, everyone benefits. Participate in change. It's time to Volunteer, Canada.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

**Jess Duerden**  
**Institute for Canadian Citizenship**  
(416) 593-6998 ext.225  
[jduerden@icc-icc.ca](mailto:jduerden@icc-icc.ca)

**Tracy Van Kalsbeek**  
**Manulife Financial**  
(519)747-7000 ext. 248601  
[tracy\\_vankalsbeek@manulife.com](mailto:tracy_vankalsbeek@manulife.com)

**Brendan Glauser**  
**Volunteer Canada**  
(613) 231-4371 ext. 227  
[bglauuser@volunteer.ca](mailto:bglauuser@volunteer.ca)