

## **Are you a Sports Volunteer? – If so, please read on ...**

The Irish Sports Council has commissioned research to investigate the needs, capacities, and profile of the Irish volunteers working with children's and youth sport and physical activity programmes. It is part of a larger study investigating the sport and physical activity patterns of children and youth. The aim of the study is to investigate how best to enhance the experience for all involved in sport and physical activity, including the volunteer.

The research team is eager to hear from volunteers and club administrators about the volunteer experience, examples of best practice, and barrier to recruiting and maintaining a volunteer workforce. This will be done through an online survey that will take no more than 15 minutes to complete. This is the first in-depth study in Ireland to focus on the volunteer experience. Those who participate in the study are entered into a prize draw. **Administrators are placed in a draw to win a 3 day training camp for their club and the volunteers have the opportunity to win sports vouchers.** Visit the web address below for more details on the prizes.

The online survey is located on the Irish Sports Council website [www.irishsportsCouncil.ie](http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie)

Further information is available from Tony Cunningham at the Irish Sports Council at 018608800.

*Note: According to a 2005 ESRI/Irish Sports Council report, sport contributes more than €2 billion into the Irish economy every year. This includes volunteering, club membership, attendance at sports events, sports equipment and sports tourism. Volunteering alone contributes €267 million based on the labour input of the 400,000 sports volunteers making a very significant contribution to the Irish economy. Sport is dependent on these volunteers for the quantity and quality of sport experiences available to participants. The volunteer also gains benefits from participation, volunteerism contributes to the volunteers own engagement in physical activity, it provides an opportunity for volunteers to stay connected to their sport, it allows them to contribute to the community, work with young people, and to follow their passion. The benefits to volunteers and participants build social connection and capital within the community.*

*Volunteerism is the lifeblood of Irish Sport but there has been little research that has focused on the need of the Irish volunteer working with children and youth. Sports organizations are always looking for volunteers and how best to recruit and keep them in the programme. The findings from this research will assist in policy development aimed at developing programmes and resources to support volunteers and clubs.*