



# Spotlight on ACL Female Volunteer



## Celebrating Women Who Lead: Honouring Female Volunteers in the Air Cadet League of Canada

This year marks an important milestone in the history of the Air Cadet Program—the anniversary of female cadets serving, training, and excelling within its ranks. As we celebrate the achievements of young women in uniform, it is equally fitting to recognize the women volunteers whose leadership, dedication, and service have helped shape the program's success across generations.

One such volunteer is **Jackie Smith**, a long-time member of the Air Cadet League of Canada whose exceptional commitment exemplifies the vital role women play in strengthening the League at every level.

### A Remarkable Record of Service

Based in **Portugal Cove–St. Philip's, Newfoundland and Labrador**, Jackie Smith has volunteered for an extraordinary **35 years**, including **19 years with the Air Cadet League of Canada**. During her tenure, she served with distinction on the **Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Executive**, ultimately **filling every Executive position** over the course of her service. Most recently, she held the role of **Immediate Past Chair**, bringing continuity, experience, and mentorship to the League's leadership.

Although Jackie was not a cadet herself—familarly referring to her start as an “SIP” (sucked-in parent)—her involvement quickly grew into a profound commitment to the organization and to youth development.

In recognition of her outstanding service, Jackie has received a **Certificate of Recognition, Certificate of Merit**, and the **Presidential Citation**, honours that reflect both the depth and longevity of her contributions.

### Champion of the Effective Speaking Competition

Among Jackie's many accomplishments, her **lengthy and highly impactful involvement with the Effective Speaking Competition** stands out as a defining feature of her volunteer legacy. For many years, she dedicated herself to administering, organizing, and advancing the competition at the provincial level.

One of her greatest joys has been watching cadets return year after year, developing confidence, poise, and leadership skills as they progress through the program—often representing Newfoundland and Labrador at provincial and national competitions. Seeing cadets grow in skill and self-assurance through effective speaking, Jackie notes, has been both rewarding and deeply meaningful, especially as participants matured into articulate, confident young leaders.

### Why Women Volunteer—and Why They Stay

Jackie's desire to serve began long before her involvement with cadets. As a teenager, she volunteered as a church lector, later becoming a children's liturgy leader and catechism teacher. These early roles laid the foundation for a lifelong commitment to community service—one that naturally extended into the Air Cadet League when her children became involved.

Asked why she remained a volunteer for so many years, Jackie explains that service brings its own rewards. By taking on a variety of leadership roles, she expanded her own knowledge and skills while contributing to a program that helps prepare youth for the future.



Mrs. Jackie Smith, NLPC



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## Moments That Define a Journey

Jackie's volunteer experience is rich with memorable moments. One highlight was attending glider graduation at Debert, Nova Scotia, where she proudly pinned wings on her eldest child while representing Newfoundland and Labrador. Additional highlights include observing cadets compete for prestigious glider and power scholarships, and participating in a memorable family glider flight at Argentina with a cadet pilot.

Each moment reinforced her belief in the transformative power of the cadet program and the importance of volunteers in making those experiences possible.

## Service Beyond the Squadron

Professionally, Jackie worked as an **auditor for 13 years** and later as an **accounting manager for a pension plan**, supported by a **Bachelor of Commerce (Co-op)** from Memorial University and a **Chartered Professional Accounting designation**. Yet she considers her most important role to be parenting—an experience that led her naturally to mentorship, leadership, and advocacy for youth long after her own children aged out of cadets.



Photo Credit: CAF

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## A Message for Future Women Volunteers

As the Air Cadet Program celebrates the anniversary of female cadets, Jackie offers encouragement to women who may be considering getting involved:

“Everyone has something to offer—no matter how small. When we work together, each playing a part, we can make a real difference in the lives of youth.”

## Honouring Women Behind the Program

The success of the Air Cadet Program—and the progress represented by this anniversary—would not be possible without the dedication of women volunteers like Jackie Smith. Their leadership, commitment, and belief in young people have helped build opportunities, confidence, and lasting impact across the country.

- As we honour the achievements of female cadets, we also proudly recognize the women whose service behind the scenes helped make those achievements possible.