



What the Torch means to me

By: Elizabeth Toombs, Planning Volunteer, Media, Community Relations & Communications Division,
2009 Canada Games

Last week in Summerside, the 2009 Canada Games Host Society unveiled plans for the PEI Mutual 2009 Canada Games Torch relay.

The relay will float into Wood Islands on the Northumberland Ferry during a major Games kickoff event on August 10th and will be passed from one Islander to the next, snaking through communities stretching from one tip of the Island to the other.

Organizations, teams and groups of all kinds are encouraged to enter the contest to win the opportunity to run one of 19 legs of the Relay, covering 232 kilometers before finally landing at the Credit Union Centre for the Opening Ceremony in Summerside.

Although I can't recall who the torch bearer was at the 1979 Games I attended in Brandon Manitoba, I do remember the hush that came over the crowd as the torch entered the stadium - the feeling of pride as we stood there united and saw the reflection of joy and accomplishment in each other's faces.

I still remember holding my breath until the torch lit the cauldron and the flames jumped from it to signify the official start of the Games.

Now 30 years later, I am already looking forward to seeing the torch proudly carried high as the PEI Mutual 2009 Canada Games Torch Relay makes its way across the Island from Souris all the way to Tignish.

Thousands of Islanders will be able to witness the torch carefully being passed from one runner to the next symbolizing the long and challenging journey that athletes must travel to pursue the sport they love.

The burning torch really does symbolize the life, excitement and spirit of the Games. It symbolizes perseverance, competition, and energy. It's everything that we hope to make the 2009 Canada Games for the participants, for the fans, and for our community.

The torch should also remind us that we are linked as Canadians and through our unity, like the torch, we all have the capacity to illuminate, enlighten and instill strength and tradition in one another.

When I see the Games torch coming through my community I will also think of all the benefits the Games have brought our special province. It's a long list ranging from the development of our athletes and community volunteers to the impressive facilities that will ensure a legacy of resources supporting our community events long after the Closing Ceremony.

What does the torch mean to you? There is only one way to find out... get involved and carry the torch yourself!

PEI Mutual 2009 Canada Games Torch Relay applications are available online at <http://www.2009canadagames.ca/en/news.php>.

Volunteer update:

At this point in recruitment we are on track to meet our goal of 6000 volunteers. We encourage anyone interested in volunteering to do so as soon possible online at www.2009canadagames.ca or pick up a paper application at any police station or Access PEI location across the province.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact the 2009 Canada Games at 1-888-438-2009 or volunteer@2009canadagames.ca.