

Welcome to



Squadron Sponsoring Committee for 781 "Calgary" Squadron

Parent/Guardian & Volunteer
Information Package
2017 - 2018

This information package and all of the attached materials are extremely important.
Be sure to read everything very carefully and keep it for future reference.

TO: All Parents and/or Guardians

FROM: The Executives and Directors of the Parents Association of 781 Squadron

The Parents Association of 781 Squadron also called Squadron Sponsoring Committee (SSC) warmly welcomes all newcomers to 781 Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron and parents/guardians!

The Air Cadet program is jointly funded and operated by the Department of National Defence (DND) and the Air Cadet League of Canada (through the Alberta Provincial Committee). For 781 Squadron, the Parents Association of 781 Squadron represents the Air Cadet League. The DND provides uniforms, officers, publications (cadet manuals), summer camps, and very limited funding for certain transportation and other training costs through the Regional Cadet Support Unit (Northwest) in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The SSC is responsible for providing the squadron with a place to parade and train, any equipment not provided by the DND to carry out that training (telephones, photocopiers, transportation, etc.), and paying for fun things like special events, band instruments, effective speaking competitions, awards, and local familiarization flights (power and gliding).

You can see that there are a number of costs that we as a squadron sponsoring committee must pay for in a timely fashion (rent, telephone, transportation, insurance, etc.). Because the DND only covers a portion of the training that the cadets receive, the SSC must fundraise to meet the annual squadron training budget, which ranges from \$85,000 to \$100,000 in any given year. After facility rental costs, one of the largest expenses is the annual Alberta Air Cadet League assessment of approximately \$70 per cadet (as counted at the end of June); this can be over \$10,000 per year. This assessment is paid by every squadron in the province to support effective speaking competitions, volunteer screening, the selection process for advanced cadet training courses and international exchanges, regional gliding centres, insurance for all cadets while at cadet functions, public relations, and other activities of the Air Cadet League.

There are no fees associated with participating in the Air Cadet program. What we truly need is a small commitment of your time as the parent or guardian of a cadet. The SSC holds various fundraising activities during the year that need and deserve your support both by attending as well as in the planning and operating aspects. Without your active support, the squadron budget cannot be met and the cadets risk losing out on many activities. Financial donations are gladly accepted, of course, with tax receipts being provided for any donation of \$25 or more. If you choose to make a donation, please also check with your employer to see if they offer a matching donation program. The cadets are expected to participate in all of the fundraising events (other than the casino), and we appreciate your support and encouragement so that your cadet can participate and help us succeed in our efforts.

As the parent or guardian of an Air Cadet in 781 Squadron, you are automatically a member of the Parents Association of 781 Squadron. As such, you have a right to speak, ask questions, and vote at the monthly SSC meetings and the Annual General Meeting, and to serve as a member of the SSC Executive or as a Director. Monthly meetings are normally held at 7:00 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month at Vecova. We encourage you to attend, and use the opportunity to voice your opinions and/or concerns and be involved in your cadet's activities, and to hear first-hand from the Commanding Officer about the cadets' activities and opportunities. On all other Wednesday evenings, in addition to squadron staff, there are usually a few SSC Directors in attendance who can answer questions and respond to concerns.

We invite you to resist the urge to just drop your cadet off or wait in the parking lot for your cadet to emerge each Wednesday night – come on in and find out how you can help your cadet by participating in the Parents Association of 781 Squadron. And remember to attend the Annual Ceremonial Review and Annual Awards Banquet in June of each year!

The Executives and Board Directors look forward to meeting and speaking with you as the year progresses. Welcome to 781 Squadron!

Welcome to 781 Squadron for the 2017/2018 training year. This package will provide you with a bit of general information about the Air Cadet program and 781 “Calgary” Squadron. If you need more information or have any questions or concerns, please refer to the “New Cadet and Parent/Guardian Information Package” or contact one of the Executive or Directors of the Parents Association of 781 Squadron and we will do our best to assist you. Your cadet can also ask a senior cadet or one of their instructors or any of the officers if they need help or information. There is also a wealth of information available on the Internet; various website addresses are provided at the end of this information package. We are sure that you will find the Air Cadet program has much to offer both your son/daughter and you as a parent/guardian. We very much look forward to having you as an active supporter of your cadet’s involvement in the Air Cadet program!

History

The Air Cadet League of Canada is a nationally registered charitable, non-profit organization that was formed in April 1941 with the idea to create “a select corps of teen-aged youths who would devote some of their spare time to preparing for the day when they would take their places as aircrew in the ranks of the RCAF.” (from the Air Cadet League of Canada website, August 27th, 2006). After World War II, the League continued to provide aviation training and citizenship activities for Canada’s youth in partnership with the Royal Canadian Air Force (1941-1968) and later with the Department of National Defence (1968 – present). In July 1975, participation by girls in the cadet movement was approved by Parliament and female cadets now account for about 30% of the total air cadet enrolment across Canada.

The Alberta Provincial Committee represents the Air Cadet League of Canada in Alberta, and the province is further divided into zones. All Calgary-area squadrons are in the Southern Alberta Wing. Each squadron has a sponsoring group that is responsible for funding all aspects of the training program not covered by the Department of National Defense (DND). At 781 Squadron, the sponsoring body is the Parent Association of 781 Squadron, also called Squadron Sponsoring Committee (SSC). Branches of the Royal Canadian Legion and corporations sponsor other squadrons across the country. You will find more information about this relationship and the responsibilities of the sponsor and DND elsewhere in this document. For more information about the Air Cadet League of Canada, please see their website at www.aircadetleague.com.

781 “Calgary” Squadron was formed on March 6th, 1969. Since then, many young people have been trained to become better individuals and have enjoyed the many benefits associated with being a part of a dynamic team of dedicated air cadets, officers and instructors.

Squadron Funding

The squadron’s activities are funded by the Department of National Defence (training, uniforms, officers / civilian instructors, travel) and by the local sponsoring committee (training facilities, storage, insurance, specialized support equipment and all other costs not covered by DND).

Although there are no fees involved in becoming an air cadet, the squadron needs to raise money on an on-going basis in order to operate. 781 Squadron has a Parents Association, also called Squadron Sponsoring Committee (SSC) that is responsible for providing much of the funding necessary for the squadron’s activities. The SSC organizes various fundraising activities throughout the year and all cadets are expected to participate in these events (excluding the casino). Parents/Guardians are also expected to get involved and help out where needed. This package contains further information about the SSC and how you can support your cadet’s time at 781 Squadron.

ALTHOUGH THERE ARE NO FEES, THE PROGRAM IS NOT FREE. THE COST FOR EACH CADET IS THEIR COMMITMENT – TO THE SQUADRON, TO THE TRAINING, TO THEIR FELLOW CADETS. THE COST FOR YOU AS A PARENT OF A CADET IS YOUR COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING YOUR CADET AND THEIR SQUADRON THROUGH YOUR INTEREST AND ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT.

How Can Parents Help?

As a parent of a cadet in 781 Squadron, you are automatically a member of the Parents Association of 781 Squadron and have a vote at every monthly meeting and at the annual general meeting. Upcoming events are discussed, funding needs are raised, and we have an opportunity to hear from the Commanding Officer and raise any concerns we may have. This is the best way to stay connected and find out what is going on at 781 Squadron! Parent Information Meetings are held the first Wednesday of every month at Vecova starting at 7:00 p.m.

The tremendous success achieved by the Canadian cadet organizations over the years is the result of great co-operation between the Canadian Forces and various civilian partners. To run a successful cadet corps or squadron, the Commanding Officer requires the support of a dynamic and resourceful sponsoring committee along with the active involvement of many volunteers (parents/guardians) willing to spend a few hours each year lending a hand in support of the corps/squadron activities. As a parent/guardian of a cadet, there are many ways by which you can help. Depending on your availability, you might decide to become a director of the Squadron Sponsoring Committee or volunteer a few hours once in a while during fundraising events or in support of cadet activities. You can also, if you so desire, join the ranks of the Cadet Instructors Cadre (CIC) and become an officer with the squadron or serve as a specialty instructor if you have special knowledge in the field of aviation.

The most successful cadet corps/squadrons across Canada can count on the committed support of parents/guardians. The following are a few examples of activities where parents/guardians will make a difference.

- help during fundraising activities and propose new, innovative ways to raise funds,
- staff a booth or table whenever the squadron is recruiting new cadets,
- perform “kitchen duties” during cadet weekend activities so that officers can focus their attention on training the cadets,
- volunteer professional support in your field of expertise, or
- become a voluntary assistant with the administration or supply departments.

Also – and this is very important – you can help by supporting the squadron staff in their decisions and by ensuring your cadet attends weekly training parades and additional training events. As members of the Parents Association of 781 Squadron, our primary objective is to support the officers and staff of the unit so that they can offer the best possible training to our cadets. It is NOT our function to tell them what to do.

Your child has joined an organization that puts the emphasis on discipline and teamwork. Progression through training is based on very clearly defined regulations that are the same across Canada. All cadets are made aware of the regulations right from the start and must abide by them. Ranks, summer camps, and awards are given to the most deserving candidates based on official standards. Most of these standards are detailed on the national cadet website at www.cadets.ca but you can also learn about them by participating in the monthly Squadron Sponsoring Committee meetings. Parents can easily make the difference between a good training year and an extraordinary training year for the cadets and officers. If you are interested in volunteering your time and talents, please fill out the volunteer form and/or contact any member of the Executive or Directors of the Squadron Sponsoring Committee.

Now that my son or daughter is an Air Cadet, how do I get involved?

The strength of the Parents Association of 781 Squadron is the parents/guardians who freely volunteer their time, energy, and talents. We are always looking for people to bring new ideas, innovations and fundraising opportunities!

We are looking for volunteers from time to time; we will start to ask for additional volunteers during our month meetings. If you are committed to be a volunteer, you will need to fill out the Parent Information and Volunteer Form.

Volunteer Opportunities – Many Ways to Help!

- **Member of the Executive or Director of the SSC:** Jump in and get actively involved with the operations of the SSC. We always need enthusiastic people to serve on the Executive or as Directors in support of the many SSC responsibilities. Elections are held in May or June for the next training year. Positions available include Chair, Vice-chair, treasurer, secretary, and directors.
- **Fundraising, Event Planning:** Fundraising events like bake sales, wake-a-thons, bike-a-thons, casinos, soliciting corporate or private donations, and applying for grants are essential to keep the squadron going. Volunteers are needed to bring forward ideas for new events as well as to organize, administer and oversee these very important activities.
- **Casino:** About every 18 months, the SSC is granted a casino that can bring in more than \$60,000 to support the squadron (without the casino, we cannot pay the rent!). The next casino dates should be in the fourth quarter of 2017. There Approximately 40 volunteer positions must be filled; the call for volunteers will go out when time comes.
- **Bottle Drives:** We need a coordinator for a couple of full-scale bottle drives in 2017/2018, as well as many volunteer drivers who have completed the volunteer screening process (see page 7 of this package for more information).
- **Donate your bottles:** We also have a perpetual, never-ending bottle drive because of our unique location at the Vecova. Just bring all of your CLEAN, bagged refundables (pop cans & bottles, milk containers, tetra box, and juice containers – please no glass bottles) to Vecova Bottle Depot on their working hours, inform the cashier that you are dropping bottles off to be put towards the 781 Air Cadets.
- **Canteen and Kit Shop:** Every parade night (Wednesday evening), a canteen is open for about half an hour halfway through the night for cadets to purchase drinks and healthy snacks. While a group of cadets staff the canteen each week, parent volunteers are needed to help supervise the cadets who run the canteen and ensure that the canteen is restocked as needed. The canteen also carries a small selection of items such as shoe polish, Kiwi cloths, lint rollers, t-shirts, pins, and other squadron items that are available for sale. Parent volunteers operate the canteen during the Annual Ceremonial Review.
- **Telephone Fan-out:** If a “phone-out” is required to find volunteers or notify families of squadron events, a main contact will call a number of volunteers who in turn call four to six other volunteers, and so on, until everyone is called. This system has worked very well in the past (even when cadets number over 200).
- **Cadet Supply, Squadron Administration, Training Support:** There is an urgent need for parent volunteers to assist in Supply, Administration and Training (administration) in a direct support role to the Squadron officers. These are longer-term volunteer positions since you would be working one night per week in ‘your department’. You would be instructed on the tasks required and would work with a Cadet Instructor Cadre officer. If you can help out for several weeks to a few months, please let us know and we’ll pass on your contact information to the Commanding Officer.
- **Volunteer Coordinator, Carpool Coordinator:** These are exactly what they sound like – one person to help keep track of volunteers (making sure they are being contacted and kept informed of help needed), and one person to help arrange carpooling among parents who live in different districts and may need help getting their cadet to and from training nights and activities.
- **Practice Selection Boards:** Practice selection board interview sessions are held from mid-January through mid-February to prepare those cadets who have applied for advanced training (scholarship) courses and international exchanges. For 4 to 5 consecutive Monday evenings, a number of individuals are needed to participate as interviewers on the “mock” boards. Interviewers are provided with the sample questions and answers. The more volunteers we have, the fewer nights each will be asked to help out. This is a very enjoyable and enlightening experience as you see the cadets improve from week to week. Experience shows that the cadets

who attend these “mock” boards do much better and have more success at the actual scholarship boards held in late February each year.

- **Band - Instructors:** 781 Squadron has a pipe & drum band and military brass band that play monthly at CO's parades as well as participating in various activities throughout the cadet year, such as Remembrance Day ceremonies, city parades, military tattoos, and competitions. The SSC owns the drums and some of the instruments, although most of the band members do use their own instruments. The band practices once a week in addition to the regular parade night and optional training night. If anyone is a marching band, bagpipe or drumming instructor or if you know someone who is, the Band Officer would love to speak with you about getting involved with the band! The SSC also needs volunteers to manage the equipment and instrument inventory in cooperation with the Band Officer.
- **Effective Speaking Instruction/Coaching and Competitions:** The Air Cadet League runs annual effective speaking competitions at the local, zone, provincial and national levels. Cadets begin training and practicing in the fall, working toward the competitions that start in January of each year. Volunteers are needed as judges for the squadron and zone-level competitions. If you are a Toastmaster or have lots of public speaking experience, your help would be most welcome as an instructor or coach to support the squadron officers. You can also nominate a friend or colleague who may be interested or qualified to assist in any of these areas.
- **Handyman helper:** This is a periodic requirement, and may include painting, electrical work, and general carpentry. This could mean anything from reinforcing shelves and racks in Supply to building a cabinet-quality trophy display case, to outfitting a utility trailer with racks, hooks and storage shelves to properly store all of the Squadron's camping equipment. Time and work is whatever the individual volunteer is willing to commit and depends on the needs of the Squadron.
- **Cleaning/organizing:** Occasionally, it is necessary to give the squadron offices, storage areas and canteen a cleaning, above and beyond any regular cleaning done by the Vecova janitorial staff. This would require three or four volunteers to work an hour or two as needed.
- **Equipment Inventory:** The SSC owns all of the items that it purchases for use by the Squadron – from laptop computers to stainless steel cooking pots to sports equipment and bagpipes. We need to do a complete inventory at least once per year. With just a few hours of time from a few focused people, this task gets done quickly.
- **Technology opportunities – Computer & Systems, Photocopier, Website, Fly Paper:** Periodically, the squadron requires the assistance of technical people who have the skills, time and resources to help with setting up, maintaining or upgrading the squadron's electronic equipment. These items include computers, printers, fax machines, scanners, photocopiers, cellular and landline phones, overhead projectors, DLP projectors, televisions, VCRs, and FM portable communications equipment. The squadron computers are on an internal network as well as being connected to the Internet; this is essential for meeting the administrative needs of the squadron since the cadet program is steadily increasing the amount of material and information distributed on-line and in other digital or electronic formats. Right now, the need for a photocopier technician is most urgent!
- **Special Technical Instruction:** If you are an expert in any area relate to aviation, please let us know – guest speakers and specialist instructors always make the information more interesting for the cadets!

Note to Potential Volunteers

Any person (parents or members of the public) wishing to volunteer to work directly with air cadets will be required to complete the Air Cadet League of Canada volunteer screening process. The Air Cadet League of Canada requires a current Police Information Check (PIC or CPIC) report and does not recognize any other security screening that may have been done in the past – e.g. Transport Canada aircrew cards or previous military/civil security screening. The Air Cadet League of Canada screens all volunteers in an effort to ensure that all persons working with/or on behalf of cadets have work histories that are consistent and acceptable. Persons wishing more information regarding this policy should consult the Air Cadet League Representative or an Executive member or Director of the SSC.

Contact the SSC Chair during the monthly SSC meeting for the forms and information to start the screening process.

Parents Association of 781 Squadron Executive and Directors 2017 – 2018

Position	Name	E-mail
Chair	Shailesh Bhagawatula	chair@781aircadets.ca
Vice-Chair	Martin Ponciano	vicechair@781aircadets.ca
Secretary	Sam Leung	secretary@781aircadets.ca
Treasurer	Lynn Sinclair	treasurer@781aircadets.ca
Director (Casino)	Li Li	casino@781aircadets.ca
Director (Awards)	Ray Yang	awards@781aircadets.ca
Director (Fundraising)	Vacant	fundraising@781aircadets.ca
Director (Audit)	Lucy Li	audit@781aircadets.ca
Director (Event)	Vacant	event@781aircadets.ca
Director (Volunteer)	Peter Mansour	volunteer@781aircadets.ca
Director (Communication)	Vicki McPhee	communication@781aircadets.ca
SSC Advisor	TBA	advisor@781aircadets.ca

Staying in Touch, Staying Informed – e-mail is the way to go for the SSC!

The SSC uses a variety of ways to get information out to parents/guardians. We post notices on the website <http://781aircadets.ca> as needed, sometimes put up sign-up sheets for anything that needs parent volunteers, and occasionally a mail-out is done. We also use the phone-out committee to get critical information out when time is short.

The quickest and most way to send other information and requests these days is definitely by e-mail. We use e-mail to send reminders of upcoming cadet events, requests for volunteers for specific activities, and we send out agendas and minutes of the monthly meetings (you must be able to receive attachments). To sign up to the email list, please send an email to 781aircadets+subscribe@googlegroups.com and follow the instruction afterwards. This email list is self maintained, you can unsubscribe anytime you want by following the instruction at the end of any email you received via this email list. If you have any concerns about this, please speak with the SSC Chair or Secretary.

Join the FORUM for online access to time-critical and weekly Squadron announcements

The Squadron's on-line forum is used to publish weekly announcements, information about additional activities, level-specific training information, general information about being a cadet, and the Squadron calendar – and to issue short-notice information when situations change suddenly. Cadets also use the forum to sign up for activities so they MUST have an account if they have internet access.

Access to certain areas and functions within the forum is restricted to people with an approved account. Weekly announcements and the calendar are in a public section of the forum so everyone can read them without an account. Cadets and staff are required to register for an account, and parents of cadets are encouraged to get their own as well. Please get in touch with squadron officer to get your account created.

Due to regulations regarding adult screening, parents are not allowed to directly communicate with the cadets on the forum, and in turn cadets cannot access the parents-only group. Registered parents can, however, read any of the cadet posts in the other sections of the forum. At the CO's discretion, parents who have a verified volunteer security screening may be allowed to post to the rest of the forum. Posts in the parents-only group are visible to adult Squadron staff and other registered parents only.

Online Information

There are many websites with information about cadets in general and air cadets in particular. Here are a few to get started:

Official national website of the Canadian Cadet Organizations: www.cadets.ca

Website for 781 Squadron: www.781aircadets.ca

781 Facebook: www.facebook.com/781RCACS

Official website for the Air Cadet League of Canada: www.aircadetleague.com

Official website for the Alberta Provincial Committee Air Cadet League of Canada: www.aircadetleague.ab.ca/

Have we missed anything?

If there is something you are wondering about that is not included in this booklet, contact anyone on the SSC Executive and Directors list or ask one of the officers when you are at the Vecova on a Monday or Wednesday evening.

Note to Parents/Guardian(s) and Cadets

Regarding Advanced Summer Training Courses, International Exchanges and Selection Boards

**** This information and process does not apply to cadets under the age of 15 years ****

This is a brief explanation of some of the concerns that parents have raised in the past regarding the preparation and selection process for advanced training (scholarship) courses and international exchanges.

- Advanced summer training courses (also called scholarship courses) involve a selection process in order to choose the most deserving cadets.
- The Air Cadet League has primary responsibility for conducting the selection process that typically includes submission of an application form, essay, and school transcript, followed by a selection board interview. The whole selection process is conducted with the input and assistance of Cadet Instructor Cadre officers and members of the Regional Cadet Support Units.

- There are a limited number of applicants allowed from each squadron for each advanced training course or international exchange.
- As the cadets are preparing for selection, please understand that one of the reasons for the school transcripts is to offer another means of selection grading. While it is very important to have a grade average that is good, it is as important to have a good attitude. Cadets need to understand that they must prepare to sell themselves to the selection board and they will only get one chance to do that. Some of the selected cadets from previous years will tell you that they did not have very good school marks but they had the determination and will to succeed!
- Encourage your cadets to try and prepare by taking as many cadet training summer courses that are of interest to them and for which they qualify. The classic stepping stone progression for a cadet interested in the power pilot scholarship course might be:
 - at year one – take a basic two-week summer camp;
 - at year two – take one of the three-week leadership or interest-area courses
 - at year three – take another three-week summer course or, depending on cadet’s age, begin the advanced training course selection process;
 - at year four – apply for gliding scholarship;
 - at year five - apply for power pilot scholarship; and
 - if there is another year – apply for the international air cadet exchange.
- The more summer courses taken, the better the chances of selection for advanced training.
- It is imperative that cadets being instructed by squadron staff about advanced training courses pay very close attention to all the details, take notes, study, and ask questions if they do not understand the material.
- Squadrons will usually hold a series of practice selection sessions (also called pre-selection boards or pre-boards) to give the cadets a feel for the real thing. This is the place and time for cadets to be corrected on their uniform and general knowledge.
- Dress and deportment must be of the highest standard. Body language and ability to speak well as young leaders are important factors in the selection process. With each course that a cadet takes after a basic (two week) camp, they will continue to develop the skills and confidence required for success at progressively higher levels. Appearing before a selection board is a privilege that cadets must earn. Wearing a neat and tidy uniform is a great way to start the process (including the pre-board process).
- Preparation is one of the keys to success in the scholarship program. Prepare by keeping up on the media reports of the day about world, national, provincial, and civic affairs.
- Understand the command structure of the Air Cadet League and the Canadian Armed Forces. It is important to know who the key individuals in these organizations are and their functions.
- Please feel free to discuss your questions or concerns regarding the above with squadron staff, members of the SSC, or our Squadron Sponsoring Committee Advisor.