

CILT' Volunteer Vibes

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National Volunteer Week and Appreciation 2011

Canadians have a rich history of volunteering and community involvement. Volunteers are on the front lines of all of our community services – community health care, heritage and arts, maintenance of green space, disaster relief, volunteer firefighting, minor sports – the list is endless. The work of the volunteer is essential work. National Volunteer Week (NVW) pays tribute to the millions of Canadian volunteers who donate their time and energy.

National Volunteer Week was first proclaimed in 1943. Initially the week was implemented to encourage public recognition of women's contribution to the war effort. In the late 1960s the focus shifted to acknowledge the contribution of all community volunteers.

Canada's 68th National Volunteer Week kicked off on April 10th, and until April 16th organizations across the country celebrated those who donate their time to make their communities a better place.

This year's theme is Volunteers: Passion. Action. Impact - three words that attempt to capture what volunteers bring to their communities. But when it comes to what volunteers contribute three words can't begin to sum it up.

Volunteers are the fuel that keep communities going, whether they're donating their time on the executive of minor sports associations, acting as a mentor to a young person, organizing a local event, or providing administrative support in a non profit organization.

In every community there is a multitude of ways for people to give their time and many do. But the call for more volunteers is always there as well. Many groups are constantly looking for new volunteers to share their ideas and lend a hand. Some organizations require a long term commitment for monthly meetings, ongoing fundraising and events. Others are just looking for an afternoon or a few hours to help make an event run smoothly.

Although we say “thank you” on an ongoing basis, we think it’s nice to take one day out of the year to celebrate the spirit of volunteerism at CILT. Volunteering is and always has been a reciprocal relationship between you, the volunteer, and

us, the agency. You provide us with valuable assistance and support in exchange for the opportunity to learn new skills and meet new people.

Your support, smiles, encouragement and enthusiasm has been a tremendous asset to CILT. From assembling mailings to over 700 self managers in the Direct Funding Program to photocopying and putting together information kits, updating resource material, helping out in the library, with the PDN and assisting staff with filing and other clerical tasks, each of you have made, and continue to make, a huge difference in all of our lives. Your support frees up time for staff to focus on larger issues at hand.

Since our volunteer program began in April 1998, CILT has had the pleasure of working with over 573 volunteers, contributing a total of over 67,000 hours of volunteer time to our staff.

So, in the spirit and celebration of volunteerism and of our volunteers, CILT staff would like to thank all our volunteers, past and present. Cheers! Thanks to:

DARCY ATTAS
DENZIL BARKER
CRYSTAL BICKNELL
ORATHAI BOWERS
MIRIAM CHONG
FARAH FATIMA
MARY HENDERSON
CLAIRE HURST
CATHY LINE
GOMTI MODI
BOBBI MOORE
ALNOOR NANJI
ELISA PALMA
MELISSA SIMAS
SUZETTE YEARWOOD
JON YU

Volunteering and Healthy Aging

By Volunteer Canada; volunteer.ca; www.volunteer50plus.ca; May 2011

Volunteer for all the right reasons! Connect and contribute... for healthy lives and vibrant communities. As one of Canada's 11 million baby boomers, you are a member of a diverse group. Born between 1946 and 1964, you are now in your late 40s, 50s or early 60s. You're coping with teenagers, sending them to university, or enjoying your grand-children. You're working full-time or part-time.

You're thinking about retirement, or are already retired.

Your interests and aspirations are as diverse as you are. You run marathons or bike in remote parts of the world or go on yoga retreats. You're learning a new language, taking an art course or planting a perennial garden.

You're always looking for new experiences, personal challenges and how to make a difference. That's **where volunteering fits in — and you are going to redefine it.**

Volunteering builds your social networks, increases your skills, reduces stress and promotes health and wellness. In Canada, there are over 161,000 non-profit community organizations, charities, service clubs foundations and aid agencies that are looking for new volunteers. Volunteering is a way to bolster community ties. It offers individual rewards too.

Volunteering is a big part of Canadian life. Many Canadians are generous when it comes to helping others. Every year, 12.5 million volunteers give their time, energy and skills to make our communities better.

According to Volunteer Canada, much of what Canadians take for granted is delivered to us by volunteers. The work of volunteers is essential to our communities and to our social fabric.

Canada's Volunteer Crunch

Over twelve million volunteers in Canada is a lot, but a small percentage of Canadians are carrying most of the load, and most of them are already in their seventies. As they step down and become fewer in number, a whole new generation of volunteers needs to fill their places -in new and varied ways.

Volunteering – Your Way

Whatever your interests may be, you can make a valuable contribution as a volunteer, in lots of different ways.

Four Main Reasons to Volunteer:

1. Make a contribution to society.
2. Share your skills.
3. Support a cause.
4. Do something meaningful with your friends and colleagues.

One of these reasons probably makes sense for you. You may already be working as a volunteer or are thinking about what you might want to do next.

Whatever your reason, there are many different opportunities out there-and organizations that need your help.

Finding the right volunteer opportunity can be like finding the right job fit--and it can change, just like a job can.

You might want to think about ways to:

- ▶ Connect to a cause that matters to you.

- ▶ Respond to a need in your community.

- ▶ Make an inventory of your skills and experience and match them to opportunities.

- ▶ Join your friends and family on their favorite projects, or bring a friend to one of yours.

Some important questions to ask when your child decides to volunteer

www.fourinfo.com/volunteer

Students that volunteer gain excellent work experience that will help them gain future employment. Getting involved with different opportunities can help you make some lifelong choices on careers and hobbies. Most students find that volunteering is like a break from the everyday norm where they can do something productive and have fun at same time. In addition to the obvious benefit to future employment, many post-secondary institutions will now include volunteer work as a condition of acceptance to programs. The Ontario Ministry of Education and Training has now mandated 40 hours of volunteer work as a requirement to an Ontario Secondary School Diploma:

1. What are the duties that my child will be performing?

2. Will I be comfortable letting my child work with this organization?

3. What will my child gain from this experience?

4. Are the times and location convenient?

5. What is the organization's history, mission and environment like?
6. Who will be working with my child?
7. Is there volunteer screening?
8. Does the agency have insurance to cover my child?
9. Will my child have fun?

Visually impaired woman volunteers for organization that saved her life
eVOLution Blog; Volunteer Canada, Written by Shannon K. Harvey, April 2011.

The dedication of volunteers from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind empowered Pat Gates to reclaim her life, and inspired her to devote her time to others struggling to adjust to their vision loss.

“CNIB saved my life,” Gates said. “I’ve got my positive attitude back; I’m a lot more independent. I don’t need people to do things for me anymore. I’ve learned to do things for myself, just in a different way than I used to do.”

Gates, 57, of Halifax was diagnosed with diabetes at the age of eight. Nearly 30 years ago, she developed diabetic retinopathy and lost the vision in her left eye. Things got worse when Gates was diagnosed with glaucoma in her right eye, another complication from her diabetes. It left her legally blind.

She had to go on long-term disability leave from her job at Dalhousie University. She could no longer do the things she loved. Gates no longer left the house by herself because she was afraid of falling. An avid reader, she was only able to read for short periods of time.

“Following the diagnosis, my life took a complete turnaround. I lost practically everything I knew,” Gates said. “For 10 years, I lived in isolation. My whole life changed. I lost my social contacts. I became a very negative person.”

Two years ago, Gates was determined to reclaim her life. “I decided something needed to change. I wasn’t living my life – I didn’t have a life. I had lost what I considered to be myself.”

With that realization, Gates phoned CNIB.

Reclaiming her life: She went through an eight-week vision loss adjustment program, which helps people cope with their vision loss. With the assistance of CNIB volunteers, Gates learned to adapt to her vision loss, shed her negativity, and regained her independence.

Gates was so grateful for the help she received from CNIB volunteers that she decided to become a volunteer herself. She speaks with people about their experiences and listens to their frustrations. Gates also volunteers at a CNIB booth at an eye centre. There, she talks to people about the services offered by CNIB. On top of that, she does public outreach and speaking engagements.

“Pat’s story is a perfect example of the impact of volunteers,” said Anne Perigo, Volunteer Canada board member and Director of Volunteerism and the Non-Profit Sector for the Department of Labour and Advanced Education of Nova Scotia.” The contribution of volunteers can go unnoticed, but the fact is they’re creating positive change and strengthening our communities. That’s why we celebrate National Volunteer Week, to thank volunteers for their great contributions and caring.”

For Gates, it’s a small contribution to give to the organization that helped her rebuild her life.

“Volunteering keeps me active mentally and emotionally. I don’t think there’s any reason for people to lose as long a period of their lives as I did, because I had no support. I’m giving back and helping people, and it gives me a purpose in my life. I’m doing a little bit for the organization that gave me my life back.”

DISABILITY AWARENESS CORNER:

Dealing with chronic pain

By Invisible Disabilities Society of Canada; <http://www.nsnet.org/idacan/>

What is Chronic Pain?

One in three Americans (and probably Canadians) suffer from some form of chronic pain. CHRONIC PAIN is pain that does not go away despite your efforts. It disrupts your home life and work, affects your emotional and social life, is often misunderstood by others, and can take over your life. Pain tells you what you can do, when to do it, and how much to do. It keeps you from living a full life. There are, however, steps that you can take to gain back control of your life.

1. Understand the pain. ACUTE PAIN (short term) tells you there is something wrong and then goes away. It usually starts with an illness or injury. Pain messages are released through pain 'gates' and go to the brain. The brain responds by protecting the injury from further damage by closing down the pain gates to reduce the level of pain. CHRONIC PAIN doesn't go away. It is constant and often difficult to treat because the cause of the pain may be unclear or cannot be removed (i.e. arthritis pain). When the chronic pain bell sounds, it does not necessarily mean you are injuring yourself so you do not need to stop the activity.

2. Learn to manage your pain. Managing pain means making the necessary changes that can help you meet your physical, emotional, and social needs.

3. Assess the role chronic pain plays in your life:

Physical Effects

Does the pain make it hard for you to do what you want? Yes or No

Do you put off doing things until the pain goes away? Yes or No

Do you take pain medications even though they don't seem to help?

Yes or No

Emotional Effects

Do you often feel angry, depressed, or frustrated because of your pain?
Yes or No

Do you find it hard to accept yourself the way you are now? Yes or No

Do you ever feel that other people think your pain is not real? Yes or No

Social Effects:

Are you unable to plan or join in family activities? Yes or No

Do you find yourself taking more time off from work? Yes or No

Are you alone most of the time, away from your friends? Yes or No

4. When you are in pain it is natural to limit activities. This, however, can make the situation worse by leading you into a chronic pain cycle.

(a) Chronic pain causes you to rest for long periods of time. This lack of activity can cause you to lose strength and flexibility. This leads you to feel less able to do things and you rest even more.

(b) This leads to frustration and depression.

(c) This leads you to push yourself to catch up on everything, trying to prove to others as well as yourself that you can still do what you did before chronic pain started.

(d) Pushing too hard aggravates your symptoms. This causes you to rest more, feel discouraged and depressed, afraid of doing things.

What Can You Do?

Attempting your pain and taking responsibility for controlling it is primary for gaining back your life.

- Learn to relax (deep breathing, relaxation exercises, visualization).
- Do a little more each day.
- Exercise according to your body's abilities and needs.
- Modify your environment (you can avoid pain by accepting to use tools to help yourself, i.e. reaching high places with a special stick), the physiotherapist or the Arthritis Society can help in this regard.
- Treat flare-ups as they occur, don't ignore them or you'll find yourself suffering more than necessary.
- Do not overuse medications, decrease their use slowly (never cold turkey), medications can lead to other problems such as addiction, depression and tolerance (if the level of medication isn't helping you'll take more and more to relieve the pain, eventually, the medication will not work), do not use alcohol or illegal drugs to dull the pain or depression as they can lead to physical and psychological problems.
- Seek out a medical professional who can identify treatable conditions.
- Physical therapists can evaluate problems with strength, flexibility, and balance. They can give you exercises to help with each. They also can show you ways to decrease pain while doing activities.
- Use of TENS (a small box-shaped device controlled by a dial that creates electrical impulses and interrupts pain messages), nerve blocks (local anaesthetic that blocks the nerves from sending pain messages),

Biofeedback (your body is hooked up to a machine that produces signals telling your body how tense the muscles are) so you can learn to control tension (tension increases pain), increases your tolerance and may reduce pain.

Compiled from: “Dealing with Chronic Pain”, Krames Communications

CILT News

Staffing Changes:

You may or may not have noticed that there has been a bit of shifting around in the office. There have been some staffing changes as some staff have changed positions, as well as the addition of one new staff member in the Direct Funding Program. Andrea Rae, has returned to her original position as Inquiries Generalist, working in partnership with Melanie Moore.

Please join us in welcoming Mel Dell to the Direct Funding Program as the new DF Accountant. Ian Parker’s responsibilities have shifted a bit – formerly the manager and founder of the DF Program, Ian is now the Senior Advisor of the program, while Leisa DeBono is now acting Manager. Leanne Larmondin has now taken on Leisa’s former role as Administrative Coordinator of the DF Program. Another position has been created in the program – an ad for DF Clerk will be posted shortly.

Please review the following list of CILT staff, their positions and their extensions for your information:

Sandra Carpenter, Executive Director , x236;
Nancy Barry, Peer Program Lead , x227;
Carling Barry, Peer Support Assistant , x270
Katrin Birkenhake, Finance & Administrative Assistant , x225
Leisa DeBono, Acting DF Manager , x233
Susan DeLaurier, DF Audit , TTY: 416-599-5077
Mel Dell, DF Accountant , x231
Zdravka Gueoruieva, PIC Assistant , x237
Leanne Larmondin, Acting DF Administrative Coordinator , x240
Judy Lu, Administrative & PIC Assistant , x226
Chris Lytle, Community Development Worker
Melanie Moore, Inquiries Generalist , x222

John Mossa, **IL Skills Trainer**, x238
Ian Parker, **DF Senior Advisor**, x232
Andrea Rae, **Inquiries Generalist**, x228
Vaughn Rowan, **Reception**, x221
Rolita Siu, **PIC Coordinator**, x223
Jamie Wong, **Administration & Systems Manager**, x224

Aging With a Disability Initiative:

People living with lifelong disabilities are now living longer than expected, and are now embarking upon another life transition - the aging process. They should be able to do so with dignity; this includes having access to all information and resources, having the choice of living at home with appropriate supports and services versus living in long term care facilities, accessing educational programs on health and nutrition, fitness programs and those designed to decrease social isolation as it relates to aging with a disability.

In the past getting older was a not as large of an issue for people with disabilities as it is now, so how well will we live as we age? Now, people with disabilities are asking questions about the quality of our living and the quality of our aging. It is important that we keep ourselves as informed as possible on wellness, self care, health care, exercise and advocacy.

Secondary medical conditions such as respiratory illness, renal failure, accidents, infections, and depression, coupled with a general lack of adequate primary medical care, prevented most persons from experiencing their true life expectancy.

The "AGING WITH A DISABILITY WORKING GROUP" is comprised of consumers and representatives from the cross-disability community who want to be able to anticipate the type, severity and course of age-associated changes focusing on experiences of aging. Through a consumer approach, we want to help identify what to expect, what preventative steps can be taken to ease the effects of aging on disability, how to translate living longer into living better and actively, how to prevent losing our achieved independence, and what to do to delay new conditions and increasing disability. We want to support aging consumers in mitigating risk factors (including effective use of assistive technology), accessing helpful resources that will offer knowledgeable review, assessment and intervention, and find options and choices regarding fitness, physical, social and financial options.

We intend to produce and promote change in civil society including government to integrate improvements and implementation of supports and services to ease

the aging process for persons living with disabilities. This will be done through conducting a literature review of existing research, conducting consumer and service provider surveys, and raising awareness with a view to develop an action plan.

CILT is the lead on this initiative, working in partnership with the following organizations:

- ACCESS Apartments
- Anne Johnston Health Station
- ARCH Disability Law Centre
- Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre
- CPA Ontario
- Ethno-Racial People With Disabilities Coalition of Ontario (ERDCO)
- Huntington's Society
- Muscular Dystrophy Canada
- MS Society
- North Yorkers for Disabled Persons
- Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy
- Tobias House Attendant Care

Gateways to Cancer Screening Project: Phase II

How we got started

- In 2007, the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) recognized the need to increase the level of awareness of screening for breast, cervical and colorectal screening among disabled women in Toronto, ON
- Partnerships were developed:
 - * Mount Sinai Hospital
 - * Canadian Cancer Society

- * Faculty of Nursing, U of T
- * Ismaili Cancer Support Network
- * Springtide Resources
- * Other community groups

Gateways I Project (2007-2008)

- Community-based, participatory action research (PAR) project, conducted as a qualitative needs assessment to explore the experiences and needs of women with mobility disabilities accessing breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer screening
- Focus groups conducted with 24 women with mobility disabilities from diverse communities in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), ON
- Key findings: women with disabilities face architectural, systemic, and attitudinal barriers to effective cancer screening; there is a need for greater disability awareness by healthcare providers who provide cancer screening.

Gateways II Project (2009-2012)

- Improving the Breast Cancer Screening Experience for Women with Physical Disabilities: An Educational Intervention with Healthcare Providers
- Phase 1: Focus groups with healthcare provider at a cancer screening centre to learn about their experiences, perceptions, and learning needs when caring for women with disabilities
- Phase 2: Creation, delivery, and evaluation of innovative disability education program for healthcare providers
- Phase 3: Produce facilitator's guide and education materials
- About Intersectionality:
 - The intersection of ethnicity, race, class, gender, age, ability, sexual/affective orientation, physical size, etc., in the lived experience

of individuals, which is influenced by the simultaneity in time and/or place of these factors

- In other words, it is "people's exposure to the multiple, simultaneous and interactive effects of different types of social organization or oppression in which they are located" — a person's social location.

Impact of partnership on Disability Education Program

- Innovative Disability Education Program for Healthcare Providers at a Breast Cancer Screening Centre
- Combines the lived experiences of women with disabilities, the expertise of community members, and evidence-based teaching methods to address the learning needs of healthcare providers.
- Small group immersive learning in the form of role-playing clinical scenarios with Standardized Patients (actors trained to portray typical patients).
- Stories from Gateways I project used to create composite characters and clinical scenarios based on the lived experiences of women with disabilities.
- Gateways Team members trained Standardized Patients to realistically and authentically portray these characters during role playing.

Intention of Disability Education Program

- Bring the voices, needs, and lived experiences of service-users into the walls of an institution
- Assist healthcare providers to develop embodied empathy for women with disabilities
- Improve the mammography experience of women with disabilities who get screened for breast cancer
- Promote health equity for women with disabilities accessing cancer screening.