

# Volunteers shifting shifts to meet need during coronavirus pandemic

*Catherine Whitnall*

Dave and Anne Blackburn's volunteer shifts with Community Care Kawartha Lakes have been hot stuff lately.

Normally, he would be driving people to medical appointments, such as dialysis treatments, and she would be working in the office, helping out with Diners Club or assisting with meal packaging.

These days, the couple are kept busy delivering Meals-on-Wheels to a growing number of clients, the majority of whom are elderly and taking directions to stay at home to reduce the spread — and the risk of being infected — of the coronavirus.

The organization has seen a substantial increase in meal deliveries and have redeployed volunteers to help meet the demands, “so it’s definitely been an area of focus for us in order to help people be comfortable at home,” stated Kerri Daley, home support services program manager. “And it provides peace of mind for families who are isolating as well.”

Volunteers are taking extra precautions to stay safe themselves, including handing off meals at the door instead of dropping off inside.

“This service is very vital for everyone involved because so many things have changed or stopped happening for seniors. We don't have time to visit with anyone but we’re still checking in on people, which makes a difference,” said Dave.

His wife agrees, noting, being on the delivery end of things instead of production is offering her a new perspective on the program and the impact it can have on people's lives.

“The people we are delivering to are very appreciative and are always saying thank you,” said Anne. “The smiles on their faces when they see you ... they just make your day.”

While many volunteers like the Blackburns have found themselves helping out in other ways lately, or have some extra time on their hands due to the suspension of programs like SAGES, Diners Club and blood pressure clinics, Community Care is still actively seeking volunteers.

“Once this (pandemic) clears and everything is back up and running, I think we’re going to be very busy,” quipped Daley.

Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer is welcome to complete the form at [www.ccckl.ca](http://www.ccckl.ca) to get things started.