

- The role of volunteers in helping new Canadians learn our language is another possibility for a program. Have someone speak about the English as a Second Language program, perhaps someone who teaches it or someone who has actually taken the program.
- Active volunteers from local cultural groups might speak about their involvements with that particular group's community programs and activities.
- What about organizing a program around the work of volunteers in community choirs and theatres. These groups benefit tremendously from volunteers and, in fact, would not exist without them. Help to promote their activities and encourage members to volunteer. We all benefit from having a culturally enriched community.

Education

- Programs for volunteers in education are limitless. Many local schools are actively seeking volunteers. Ask your local principal to come and speak to your Branch. Volunteers assist in school libraries, listen to children read, help children with mathematics and sit on school councils as community representatives.
- Then there are Adult Education and Literacy programs. School board and literacy group representatives are more than willing to provide speakers and reach out to the community to enlist volunteers to help with their programs. The literacy program sponsored by the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada (FWIC) also comes to mind. There certainly is a need for literacy programs and their volunteers in our communities.

Health Issues

- Once again, the possibilities for involvement are endless. And again, it is a two-way street. Numerous health organizations, such as those related to cancer, diabetes, arthritis, alzheimers and heart and stroke, are continually

looking for opportunities to reach out into the community to publicize their message. At the same time, they are continually looking for volunteers to help in this process.

- For more than a year, the FWIO ROSE Health Program has promoted women's health issues in rural Ontario. The possibilities for educational meetings are limitless, as is the need for volunteerism. Invite someone from one of FWIO's current Health Partners to speak at a Branch meeting, along with individuals who have volunteered on their behalf.

Leadership Development

- Having belonged to many organizations, as do most Women's Institute members, I'm sure that the leadership development we experience in the WI is equal to or surpasses that of other groups. Personally, I have been encouraged and have developed tremendously from my association with Women's Institute. Volunteering is one of the many ways each member is encouraged to develop their own style and comfort level of participation. Every time we volunteer, we gain by our giving of time and talent.

Remember, take these suggestions to your Branch program planning meeting in the spring. I'm sure that each Branch will organize worthwhile programs to offer their members and reach out to the community as well. The Education Committee would be pleased if you incorporated even one or two of the program ideas outlined here. Or perhaps this information will spark an idea that will better suit your Branch, District or Area.

Keep up the good work! Spread the word about Women's Institute as a volunteer organization. And, remember to congratulate yourself in 2001, The Year of the Volunteer!

This information was compiled by the FWIO Education Committee under the direction of Education Coordinator Joan King. Joan can be reached at 6487 Oil Heritage Rd., Camlachie ON N0N 1E0, Phone: 519-899-2642, Fax: 519-869-8261, Email: bjking@xcelco.on.ca

Shopping Bag Project

Would your Branch like to fill a shopping bag over the next 10 months? The time and date of the sale of these items is up to you. Or perhaps you might consider donating them to a needy family or cause for Christmas. Here are a few suggestions for filling your bag. Have fun!

January

The task is easy, just drop in holders bright and gay.

Holders made in many a way!

February

February is for mittens, large or small.

They'll be so useful in the fall!

March

Donate a little craft you may have in mind.

A craft you think will sell – any colour, size or kind!

April

A mystery package, any size.

May your selection be good and your judgement wise!

May

Give a towel, as you wish.

One for the hands or one for a dish!

June

Here's a chance to put in something "as good as new."

Almost anything will do.

July

Make an item for baby wee.

Size zero, one, two or three.

August

Something for a girl or boy.

It's sure to give a lot of joy!

September

For our homemade table of jam, pickles or more.

Take a peek at the shelves, see what's in store.

October

A fall or Christmas decoration, I've been told.

Is something that surely will be sold.

Do what you can, have fun, anything at all.

And we'll have a "Shopping Bag Party" in the fall.

Source Unknown.

