

# NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

APRIL 24-30TH



## Empathy in action: Volunteers bring heart to communities

April 24 to 30 is National Volunteer Week (NVW) in Canada. Every year, a week is set aside in April to recognize and thank volunteers across Canada for the time and energy they contribute to causes that benefit our communities.

The theme for National Volunteer Week in 2022 is Volunteering is Empathy in Action: Volunteers Bring Heart to Canada's Communities (Volunteer Canada). This year's theme highlights the strong link between volunteerism and empathy. This profound human connection is at the heart of healthier individuals and stronger communities.

What is empathy? It is a quality that can help people relate to others and build awareness around different experiences. Empathy can connect people in ideas and actions and helps create bonds forged in common goals and aspirations. Volunteering can help us develop empathy, to see the world through the eyes of others. It can connect people from diverse backgrounds and life experiences, expanding our views. It can build our capacity to work collectively and contribute to a vibrant, inclusive society.

This is the third National Volunteer Week celebration to be impacted by the pandemic. Although we are cautiously moving ahead, shifting into whatever a "post-pandemic" world holds for each of us, the special week is an opportunity



to celebrate and honour volunteers who give their time and efforts to deserving causes in communities across and the country. It also opens a door to invite those who have not yet experienced the impact of volunteering to get involved in whatever way makes sense for them and their circumstances.

During the unprecedented challenges of the past two years, the pandemic has impacted the vital role of volunteers in the community. Organizations have adapted their services and volunteers have stepped in and stepped up. There have been challenges: limited opportunities for young people to fulfill their community involvement hours for graduation and reduced volunteer shift times to allow as many volunteers

as possible to contribute while meeting physical distancing requirements. There have also been opportunities as the rise in virtual volunteer roles has allowed people from different areas of the region and the province to connect and contribute where time, distance, and circumstances may have limited these connections. It has also made the phrase "you're on mute" the new "how's the weather" statement when meeting someone for the first time.

And there have been plenty of successes. Volunteers have come together, informally and formally, fulfilling the many needs in community such as preparing and delivering meals, providing friendly phone calls to the lonely, ill, or isolated, creating messages of hope distributed to older adults, engaging in advocacy work in-person and on-line, shoveling a neighbour's driveway. This is the power that volunteering has – to come together to aspire to something better. It brings people together through liked and shared interests, creates friendships, embraces wellbeing, and brings us together as a society. These things are important to our sense of identity and to our community.

Finding our place in the world of volunteering is a chance to give back to our community. As tennis great Arthur Ashe said, "Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can."



GEORGETOWN  
CHORAL SOCIETY

**A big "Thank You" to everyone who supported the choir through the dark days of the pandemic. With restrictions lifting, we are thrilled to have resumed "in-person" rehearsals.**

**Want to get rid of the gloom of the past two years? Join our choir and feel the energy of *The Joy of Song***

**To join us, visit: [georgetownchoral.ca/membership](https://georgetownchoral.ca/membership)**