

OPINION

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Volunteers hold communities together

Volunteers.

They are the lifeblood of caring communities like Halton Hills.

While their efforts go largely unnoticed, without volunteers the social and cultural fabric of our town would unravel, leaving many of our most vulnerable residents to suffer and many of our most cherished community events extinct.

Volunteers are the foundation of nearly every facet of community life.

This week (April 16-20) is National Volunteer Week, a chance to thank the legions of silent heroes who offer their time in exchange for the satisfaction of knowing they have in some small way touched countless lives.

Volunteers come in all shapes, sizes and abilities.

In its purest form, volunteering doesn't require a university education, endless hours of on-the-job training or even a specific skill set. All you need is a caring heart and a willingness to lend a helping hand.

Volunteers can be students working toward the 40 hours of community service required to graduate high school, or grandmothers who turn a lifelong passion for knitting into a contribution of sweaters, mittens and socks to their neighbourhood church.

Behind the scenes of just about every health-care organization beat the selfless hearts of small armies of volunteers, ready to offer a ride to and from doctor's appointments, often with the wisdom of having previously faced a similar ailment or perhaps just a sympathetic ear in a time of anxiety and uncertainty.

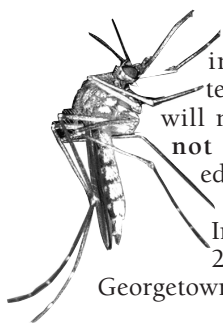
No matter what your interest, there are opportunities out there to give something back to your town and its residents.

Without the vital cultural contributions of volunteer-driven service clubs, sport leagues and community arts groups, much of what we value about living in Halton Hills would simply vanish.

We should always be grateful for our volunteers. Without them, our community would lose a large chunk of its soul. For your contribution to the quality of life we all enjoy, please accept our gratitude.

Something bugging you?

Send us a letter!



Letters to the editor must include an address and daytime telephone number. Unsigned letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 200 words and may be edited for content and/or length.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CAS-hh could use your helping hands

Dear editor,

With so many worthy groups raising money to fight cancer, choosing the best place to direct charitable dollars may be difficult.

Cancer Assistance Services-Halton Hills (CAS-hh) is a volunteer organization comprised of your neighbours, offering various support services, free of charge, to local people affected by cancer.

Examples include counseling, palliative care, nutritional supplements,

programs like tai chi and yoga, equipment such as wheelchairs and transportation. Volunteers drive patients, usually on an individual basis, to various treatment centres with the driver remaining at the hospital until the passenger is ready to return home.

Funds raised for CAS-hh remain in our community and, because of low overhead, go primarily to patient support.

CAS-hh needs your help as a vol-

unteer, canvasser or donor to continue offering invaluable assistance to the people of Halton Hills.

Nancy Anderson-Nelson,

Georgetown

Keep Acton small

Dear editor,

As a developer, Fred Dawkins pleads for more development. As a longtime resident, I plead for no more development.

I grew up in Burlington when it was a small town. When the developers and their friends took over the town I moved to Acton. Having studied the situation in Acton, I see no advantages, but many disadvantages, to more development.

We have a good infrastructure for a small town and the many advantages of living in a small community. We don't need more congestion, pollution, crime, motorized toys, traffic and demands for water, etc.

The only people who benefit from expansion are the developers and their friends. Ask the residents of Georgetown and Milton how they like the expansion of their communities. Let's keep Acton the pleasant, small town that we love and enjoy.

In closing, who do you think will foot the \$20-million bill to improve the water and sewage system to facilitate more expansion? It is us, the taxpayers, the very people who do not want more development.

D. Craig Acton

Georgetown Guiders are the best

Dear editor,

With Volunteer Week set for this month (April), I would like to recognize a group of very dedicated Guiders in our community. These wonderful women take many hours from their busy lives to provide opportunities and fun for the girls of this community.

In addition to the hours they spend planning and attending weekly meetings; they also devote many others to attending District events, organizing camps, going on outings and completing trainings so that they may continue to contribute in the development of our daughters. This assists our youth in developing the self-confidence and skills required to succeed in the world—both today and in the future.

The talents, flexibility and capabilities of these wonderful ladies are endless; and they provide a great role

model who may influence personal, academic and athletic achievements of our girls. Their biggest reward is the smile on the face of a girl who has met yet another challenge and is looking forward to facing the next one.

These ladies do a much more than sell Girl Guide Cookies! Although the sale of these cookies is our major, often sole, fundraiser and is used to provide extra activities within their units and keep the cost reasonable so all may participate, it is only a small part of their role.

On behalf of the girls, I would like to thank the Guiders of Georgetown District for all their on-going dedication. Guiders of Georgetown, you are the best!

Lynn Clark,
Halton Division Commissioner,
Girl Guides of Canada