



# Volunteering

## A Great Way to Grow

National  
Volunteer Week  
April 18 to April 22



## New facets of volunteering are emerging

By **LORRAINE STREET**  
*Special to The Champion*

Lorraine Street is the executive director of Volunteer Ontario.

**V**OLUNTEERING IS AS OLD as Canada itself, and includes individuals assisting one another informally in life's routine tasks, and in the effort to build a community (being good neighbours, or informal volunteering, and individuals assisting organized groups through formal volunteering).

Volunteering includes providing programs and services to the community in the areas of education, health, social services, culture, recreation, sports, emergency and crisis assistance, abuse and addictions, and so on across the gamut of human services.

Most programs and services that exist today were founded by volunteers and many only continue to exist because of the work of volunteers.

### Trends in volunteerism

It is no understatement to affirm that if every volunteer in Canada withdrew his or her volunteer services, most public and voluntary sector organizations would be forced to dramatically curtail their ac-

tivities, if not shut down altogether.

In just one year (1986/87, the year covered by the National Survey of Voluntary Activity conducted by Statistics Canada), Canadian volunteers completed more than one billion hours of volunteer work.

That number only includes the hours of formal volunteering — volunteering for an organized group or organization. The corresponding number in 1992/93 would be much higher.

### New faces

Over the last 10 years, the face of volunteering in Canada has changed dramatically. The trends and issues which affect volunteerism are numerous.

All but gone is the traditional pool of volunteers — middle-class women with pre-school or school-aged children, who could not or did not have to work outside the home. They were available through the weekdays and had time, money, and transportation.

Canadian volunteers today are primarily adults who work full- or part-time outside the home, are 25-55 years old and are married. Youth and seniors are also important groups of volunteers, but both are under-represented in Canada's

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## GET THE WORD OUT



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