



# Volunteering

## A Great Way to Grow

National  
Volunteer Week  
April 18 to April 22



# If I can plant a seed that blooms . . .

The following article was written by a volunteer at Milton's Maplehurst prison complex. The volunteer wishes to remain anonymous.

I have been a volunteer at Maplehurst for a number of years. Time has not diminished the feelings of satisfaction and accomplishment that I experience in my role as a volunteer.

The work has contributed to my development as a human being, a woman and a mother. My experience with the men at Maplehurst often causes me to examine my own

beliefs, attitudes and ideas. This type of personal growth is one benefit of volunteering that I had not anticipated.

In my discussions with the men, I never condone crime or make excuses for breaking the law. I strongly emphasize the need for all of us to be responsible and accountable for our actions.

One issue I strongly emphasize is the need to comply with the rules of the institution. I work with the men to the best of my ability but always within the bounds of the facility. I

make it clear to them that I would not jeopardize my opportunity for volunteering at the institution. This position has always been received with respect.

I do not perceive myself as a counsellor and I never claim to have all the answers. As a volunteer, I am there to listen, to share some of my life experiences and to help the men establish meaningful goals or objectives.

I also believe that in every individual is an element of goodness. I encourage the men I work with to search for that sense of goodness within themselves and use it as a source of strength. Similarly, I caution the men to be aware of their weaknesses and remind them that they must be responsible for their behaviour and the choices they make.

At times, after talking with the men, I come home feeling a sense of frustration and hopelessness. At times I wonder if my work is making a difference.

However, my spirit is often revived when I feel I am making a connection with one of the inmates. When they are willing to share their experiences, frustrations, disappointments and pain, I believe that my role as volunteer is serving a useful purpose. That connection makes the work worthwhile.

Sometimes I am asked by people who know of my volunteer work at the prison, "do you ever see results?" The answer is yes. Though the process of change is often difficult and occurs over a period of

time, I do believe that the men at Maplehurst can change, they can make different choices in their lives; and that I can contribute to the change process.

If I can help to plant a seed that one day, through another's watering, may cultivate and bloom, it does not matter that I am not present to see the blossoms.

## New volunteer profile

• from NEW FACES on page 14  
volunteer corps, according to the 1987 survey.

Volunteers today are involved in every level of programming and service in myriad organizations — from participating on committees and task forces, providing administrative, clerical, technical, and expert assistance, to direct service work with consumers of an organization's services.

They do their volunteer work in the evenings or on weekends, on weekdays when possible. They work from their homes, or out of the offices of an organization, two hours a week or many more; for short, very specific assignments, or in long-term programs.

The traditional reason for being involved in volunteer work — noble obligation — is also changing, although perhaps not quickly enough.

People today do volunteer work to give something back to the community that sustains them, and to assist those in need.

However, many people volunteer for organizations which assist them or a family member. Many others are looking for job experience, contacts, references, training, or to meet more personal needs — breaking out of isolation, making friends, build-

ing relationships, overcoming tragedy.

Today, despite the recession, private sector firms are becoming more and more involved in corporate or employee volunteer programs of one kind or another, recognizing the benefits of such involvement to their employees as individuals, as a staff team, and the benefits that can accrue to the company from this kind of committed, corporate citizenship.

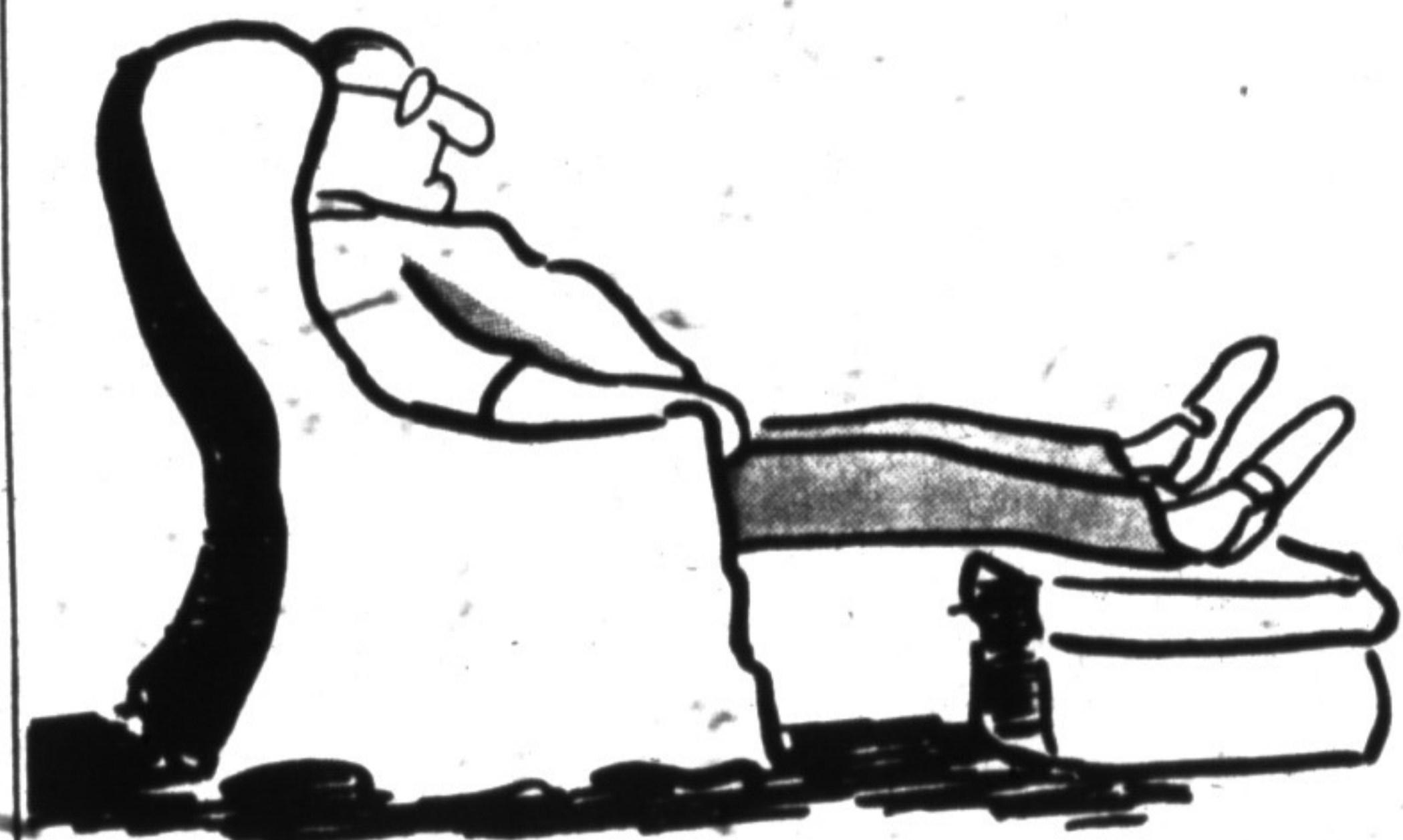
Another new, and rapidly growing face of volunteerism is special-needs volunteering.

People who have a physical, developmental, psychiatric, or emotional disability of some kind; youth; frail seniors; single parents; families with young children — people whose efforts to volunteer must be supported in special ways are coming forward to volunteer in larger and larger numbers every day.

Their participation is an important new aspect of volunteering in Canada, in part an extension of the integration of people with special needs into the community at large, in part an effort to stem the fragmentation of family life by providing families with meaningful activities in which they can all participate.

DON'T BE A COUCH POTATO!  
SPROUT NEW SKILLS

BE A  
VOLUNTEER



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Commerce

The Milton Chamber of Commerce is made up of a dedicated group of volunteers working together to promote economic prosperity in our community.

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Thank You



Thank You

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Sponsored by Austen & Noble

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- Advisory Committees
- Information Milton
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Thank You

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