

Halk devotes endless hours to volunteering in the community

“Afterward,” she added.

Holding true to that promise she stepped forward to help out shortly after her husband died.

April 6 to 12 is National Volunteer week — a week when volunteers such as Braam are recognized for the time and commitment they’ve shown. It’s a time to recognize, celebrate and thank Canada’s 13.3 million volunteers. Go to volunteer.ca for details.

Volunteering is something that brings Braam great satisfaction and she’s learning some

things she never got taught in school.

She’s been matched up with McEgan for more than two years, and she said she could write a history book based on the stories the “bright, sharp-as-a-tack senior” has shared with her. “She grew up in rural eastern Canada...with-out hydro — basically horse and a plow,” she said. “I think I could write a history because she remembers everything — you never know what she’s going to say or do.

“I’ve learned a lot from her; whatever she taught me isn’t in the history books.”

Braam, who’s a medical radiation technologist at Milton District Hospital, said, like most people, she has to make the time to volunteer.

But it’s equally rewarding for Braam, who said she will volunteer as long as she’s physically able to, and as long as she feels what she’s giving is appreciated.

“This is time set aside that’s without interruptions,” she said. “Less than an hour, you’re coat barely gets warmed up.

“When I travel (on vacations) she gets post-cards,” she added, noting she went to Asia for six weeks last year.

Acclaim Health, which has an urgent need for weekday friendly visitors, is a non-profit organization that sees caring volunteers provide social support to lonely, isolated or frail seniors and adults with limited mobility.

Visits usually take place once a week for about an hour in the client’s home. Depending on the client’s ability, volunteers may also take the client out for a walk or a drive.

Each year, Acclaim Health helps more than 18,500 people in Halton improve their quality of life through some 400 staff members, 600 volunteers and many donors and supporters. To learn more, go to www.acclaimhealth.ca/volunteer/.

Braam said her volunteer commitment is nothing compared to that of her sister, Petra Halk.

Halk, who’s an elementary school teacher, is a volunteer with the Ontario Senior Games Halton District among other non-profit community organizations such as the Ontario Women’s Triathlon run series and the Canadian Association for Women in Sports Activity.

Locally, as co-ordinator of the senior games, Halk devotes endless hours. Most recently she helped to bring an eight-team curling tournament to Milton as part of the Ontario Senior Games Association (OSGA). It’s the first time in 10 years that Milton’s hosted the tournament. “It’s a full-time job,” said the Halton District Catholic School supply teacher, who retired 12 years ago, but still supplies. “I don’t do a lot of house work.”

Halk, a long-distance runner who’s competed in 56 marathons, including one in every state of the U.S., is behind pickleball in Milton as well. Four years ago, she arranged for grant subsidies to get the sport going. Initially 16 people came out. It’s since grown, and now she’s convener for the OSGA’s pickleball event taking place at the Haber Recreation Centre in Burlington on May 6.

She said she enjoys volunteering and wouldn’t trade it for the world.

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