

Helpers are hospital backbone

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deal with patients or families who are in distress, who sometimes just want someone to sit and talk with them," she said. "When I go home at night, I feel I have helped someone."

Grass began volunteering 20 years ago to encourage her mother, who had retired and wanted to volunteer "but was too shy to do it on her own."

The veteran volunteers still fill an important place at the hospital, Barley said.

"Some of them have been here since 1962 and they are really the backbone of hospital auxiliary."

And "backbone" is the operative word for those fleets of volunteers who keep the Community Home Assistance for Seniors (CHATS) frozen meal program on the road for seniors throughout York Region.

"A great percentage of our volunteers are early retirees, ages 50 and up, who want to keep busy," said Gail Hamilton, co-ordinator for community resources for CHATS in Newmarket.

"They do a lot of driving for us, along with different duties. Some of them drive seniors around in their own cars, or take them out for lunch in a

group," she said. "Most volunteers want to give to the community because it has treated them very well. It also gives them a sense of belonging."

One volunteer who is still going strong is Arnold Fager, 76, of Richmond Hill, who has been a member of the Lions Club since 1972.

He has also volunteered with the Canadian Cancer Society since he retired from the business world in 1987. "Helping out people gives you a feeling of satisfaction," Fager said. "You are doing something useful in your life."

But not all is rosy on the volunteer front, despite the optimism expressed by most charitable agencies who depend on them.

"It's a statistical fact that, nation-wide, the bulk of giving of both time and money comes from a relatively small percentage of the population," warned Michael Hall, director of research at the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.

For example, 86 per cent of all charitable gifts come from 33 per cent of donors.

The last word goes to CHATS' Hamilton and it is an optimistic one.

"While the minority of the population may be volunteers, they are very dedicated. They give with both hands."



Monique Telmosse is a mom, a coach and an employee.

Goal is to have fun says soccer coach

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ment, having only lost one game in her two seasons as a coach.

"The first year I coached my daughter and we didn't lose a game. Last year, I looked after my son's team and we lost only one game."

The saving grace was that her team won the championship in the Boys Under-11 division.

But win or lose, the biggest thrill she gets from coaching is watching the kids have fun.

"When they have fun, I have fun," she said. Which is what volunteering is all about.

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