

# V-POWER

## INTERCOMM VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER



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### Welcome to the Health Centre Volunteer Newsletter!

Welcome to the first Health Centre volunteer newsletter and thank you for reading! It was created by volunteers, for volunteers to help us stay connected and spread some joy & laughter during this pandemic.

In this issue, you will find some information about volunteering online, volunteering opportunities, and volunteer safety. One of the key features is us!!! There are pictures of us volunteering and some small stories of our work.

Thank you to everyone who contributed photos, information, jokes, and stories!

#### **Volunteer Newsletter Committee:**

**Elizabeth Grigg**

**Jemima N. Baada**

**Preye Bayo-Olawepo**

**Kimberley Weber**



# Reflections from our Executive Director

Scott Courtice

## What are some of the ways that volunteering impacts the Health Centre?

Your volunteerism allows us to engage and support our clients and communities in a special way. Volunteers also guide the priorities of the Health Centre through involvement on the Board of Directors and Advisory Councils, and by working shoulder to shoulder with our staff to support clients. We couldn't do our work without the commitment of 130+ volunteers, and we can't thank you enough for all you do!

## What has been the biggest impact of COVID on the Health Centre and clients?

The biggest impact has been the reduction in access to our in-person programs and services, which has made it challenging to meet the needs of the people and communities that we serve. We have continued to offer in-person services for urgent matters and our staff have adapted to provide virtual care for our clients who can access service by telephone or over the computer.

Right now, COVID cases are low in London, and we know a lot more about the virus and how to keep our clients and staff safe so we've been able to gradually re-introduce programs and services. I can't say enough how amazing our staff have been over the past months - they adapted to challenging circumstances and have moved mountains to keep offering care for the people we serve.

## Where do you hope to see the Health Centre in five years?

I have a number of hopes for the next five years:

- Community need for our services exceeds our capacity, so I hope that we'll continue to grow access to our primary care teams, and also grow our other programs and services that improve the social determinants of health.
- Our Old East Village site is in dire need of revitalization and modernization, so I hope the government will fund a capital project to make this overdue need a reality.
- I hope we'll continue strengthening our leadership in harm reduction, newcomer health, and continue supporting other communities who face unjust barriers to achieving good health.
- I'd like us to be stronger advocates to improve the social determinants of health for the people we serve, advocating to improve housing, income, food security, and community belonging.
- For our amazing staff, I hope we become one of the most empowering, caring and supportive workplaces in London.



I am motivated by health equity. I don't think health should be determined by where you live, how much money you make or your gender, culture, race, or sexual orientation. Everyone deserves excellent health and everyone should have access to health and social services that meet their needs. That's what gets me out of bed every morning and it gives our entire team a common sense of purpose. I'm most fulfilled when I hear stories from our team about how we are making a positive impact in our community, and how we are supporting our clients to achieve their goals.

# Everyday Heroes: Volunteer Stories



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Those who say it cannot be done should not interrupt those doing it.

## Karen Hoffman

I have participated in the John Paul II Secondary School garden with NELCE for about 5 years. The garden program has had many rewards for me. I have gotten healthier by tending the garden (weeding, watering, harvesting), but also mentally. In previous years, we have used the garden to help feed people in some of the other programs NELCE puts on. It is a wonderful stress reducer to be with the plants and there is a great feeling getting your hands in the dirt to grow something. I have made some great friendships with people I have worked with and learned so much from other volunteers. Last year, I personally harvested over 300 pounds of food that we served and gave away. We grow fruit, berries, vegetables, herbs, and flowers. We are even working on a butterfly garden. There is a water feature, places to sit and relax, and a wonderful place to feel like you are getting away from it all. Please contact us next spring and join us in helping our neighbourhood be a more beautiful, relaxing place to live. (rainbowhoff@yahoo.com)



# Everyday Heroes: Volunteer Stories



## Margret I. Boos

I made 10 PPE gowns for Indwell Homes when they reached out to community agencies to see if any of their volunteers could sew for them. Only the three gowns on top were all the same colour. Two gowns had very wide horizontal stripes for the body (both the same fabric) with plain green sleeves. The other five gowns all had solid dark green bodies and each gown had loud vibrantly-coloured mismatched sleeves. As I am involved with the Richmond Underpass Community Arts Project (which I learned about through LIHC). In our Zoom craft sessions, led by a NELCE participant, we do one of our favorite crafts while listening to soft music and discussing, if desired. So I made a dishcloth which I plan to use as part of my oldest sister's birthday gift.





# Volunteering During the Pandemic

## NELCE

- Walking Program – In Person Small Groups
- Gardening Program – In Person Small Groups
- Tuesday Chatterbox – Virtual Sessions
- Arts and Crafts – Virtual Sessions
- Weekly Planning Sessions (NELCE leaders)
- Huron Good Food Box
- Huron Site Clean Up

## Francophone Seniors Group

- Virtual Sessions

## Tai Chi Phone Tree

- Weekly Phone Check-Ins

## Women of the World Program

(Middle Eastern, Bhutanese, Afghani and Multicultural)

- Support Groups – Virtual Sessions
- Community Visits – In Person Small Groups

## Social Media

- Content Designers

## Volunteer Newsletter Committee

- Content Designers

## Daily Programs Guide for Homeless People

- Resource Developer

## Dundas Community Garden

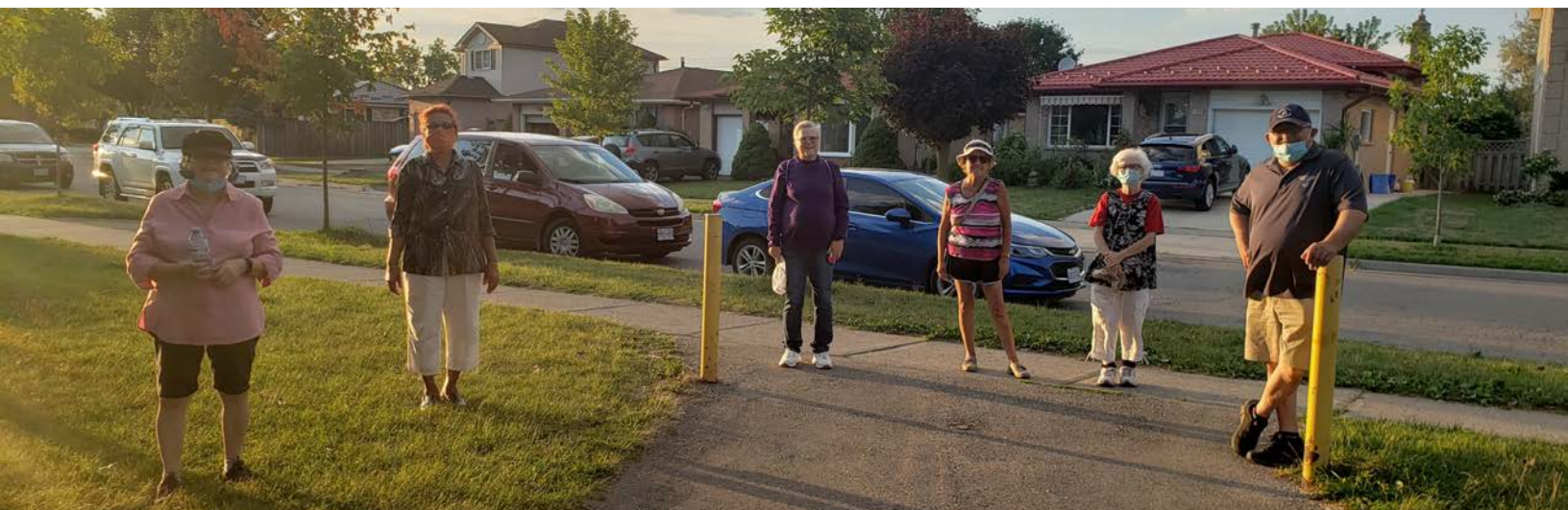
- In Person Small Groups

## Survey Support

- Data Entry



# Volunteering Safely in a Pandemic



**Volunteer Canada offers tips about volunteering during the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are some things to consider before, during and after volunteering.**

- Get the most up to date COVID-19 information in your area.
- Determine if it is safe to volunteer in person.
- Read about the health and safety practices of the organization you want to work for.
- If you feel unwell, self-isolate for at least 14 days and do not volunteer.
- If you are an older adult or have underlying health concerns, consider volunteering online.
- Only volunteer if you are mentally and physically prepared to do so.
- Practice consistent hand washing/sanitizing throughout volunteering process.
- Follow all safety precautions when using public transportation to volunteer places.
- Carry and use personal protective equipment like hand sanitizers, face masks, and gloves.
- Bring along your own food and drinks to avoid sharing.
- Be ready to undergo health screening by the organization you volunteer for.
- If you feel uncomfortable at any point, discuss the option of leaving with your supervisor.
- After every shift, inform your supervisor before leaving and share anything worth noting.
- If you feel unwell after volunteering, contact your local public health agency.

**To learn more about volunteering safely during a pandemic, visit <https://volunteer.ca>**

# Online Safety in a Digital World

## Antivirus Updates

Keep your Antivirus program updated. This is definitely worth a repeat!! Internet security software may not protect against every threat but they detect and remove most malware. Be sure to regularly update your computer and other applications you use. They provide a vital layer of security.

## Background Check

We mean that literally, your surroundings may give away clues as to your identity, physical location and also unintentionally contain private information. Before you join your next online meeting, do a quick scan of your background to be sure your audience see only what you do want them to see. You may consider setting up against a plain wall or downloading some fun backgrounds.

## Choose your Surroundings

With digital work and volunteering, we may sometimes be working from a coffee shop or some other shared space (as things open back up), so it's important to be mindful that people can hear what we are saying and doing. We want to choose surroundings that give us the needed level of privacy.



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Before you join your next online meeting, do a quick scan of your background. What can they see?

## Desktop Manners

We probably are all guilty of saving too many files on our desktops or opening one too many tabs at a time. There have been occasions where people accidentally shared their screens, exposing too much or even some embarrassing information. Be sure to close all tabs and organize your desktop before meetings.

## Password Protection

Having to remember passwords for different applications or platforms can be quite challenging but it's important to remember that your password is kind of like a toothbrush: You never want to share. If you must write them down, it's important to not leave them lying around. Also try to change your passwords regularly.

## Zoom Bombed

With the rise of video conferencing, there have been stories of meetings being hacked. When hosting meetings, try to use different passwords for each meeting and enable the waiting room when possible.



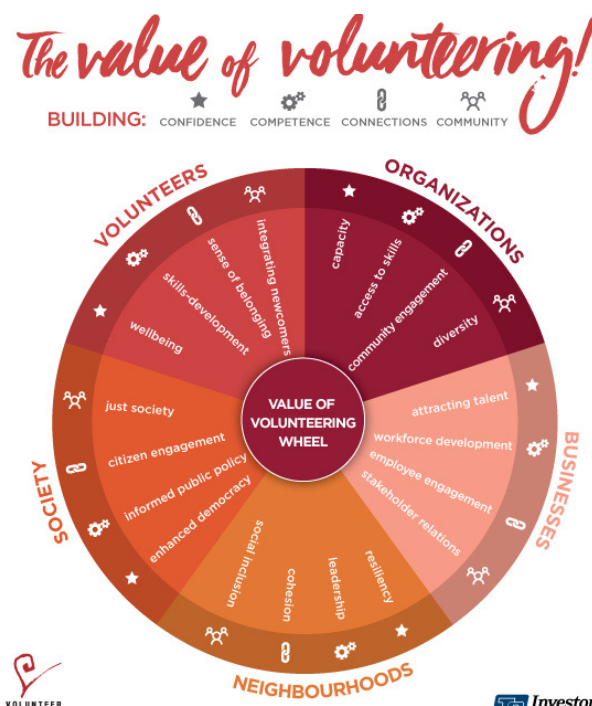
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Be sure to close all tabs and keep your desktop organized with nothing visible.



# Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteering provides many benefits. It helps to build the four C's: confidence, competence, connections, and community (Volunteer Canada). These benefits are felt individually, institutionally, societally, nationally, and globally. At the individual level, volunteering helps to develop new or existing skills, engage with people outside of our social circles, and provide us with a sense of fulfillment. Volunteerism is also important in helping groups and organizations to address the needs of the marginalized and less privileged. It also helps to promote community.



## 1. London InterCommunity Health Centre

The Health Centre has several volunteering opportunities which come with different levels of engagement and time commitment. The Health Centre is dedicated to providing high quality client services and engagement, therefore volunteers are encouraged to make a minimum 1-year commitment to each position. Please visit <https://lihc.on.ca/volunteers/> for more details.

## 2. Pillar Nonprofit Network

Pillar nonprofit is a London-based network committed to helping individuals, organizations, and enterprises in community building. The network provides a platform for sharing resources and establishing connections. It is also committed to increasing awareness about how nonprofits/social projects promote social and economic growth. Pillar nonprofit shares volunteer opportunities within different organizations across London. To see the various opportunities available, go to <https://pillarnonprofit.ca/volunteer>.



### 3. The Ontario Volunteer Centre Network

If you live outside of London, you can still volunteer here virtually. If you live in London but would like to volunteer in a different city, that is possible as well. At the provincial level, you can find information about volunteering on the Ontario Volunteer Centre Network website. To learn about the volunteer centre closest to you, and the different volunteer programs they have to offer, go to <http://ovcn.ca/about>.

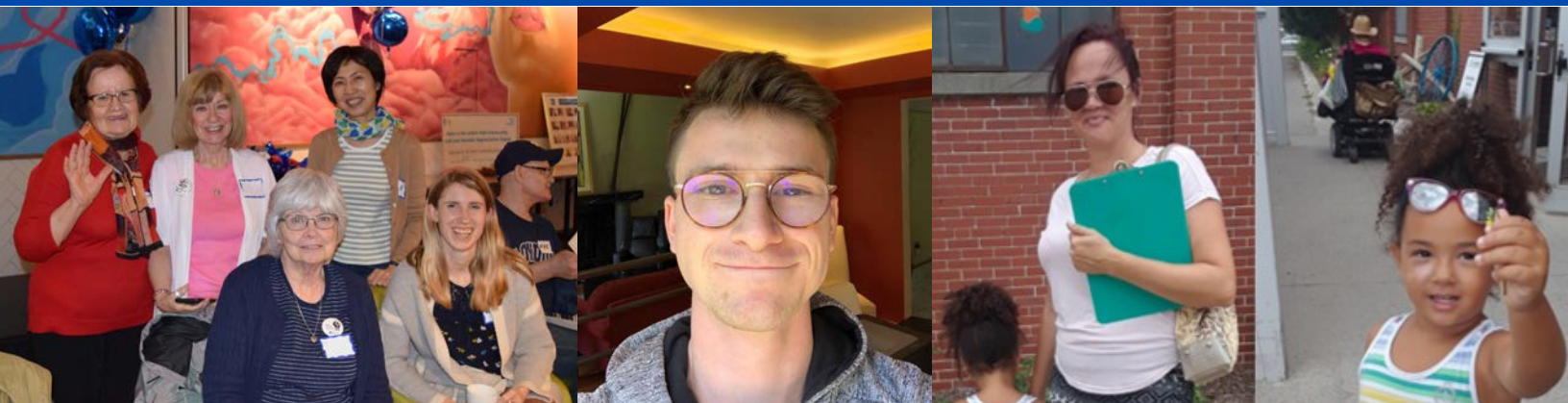


### 4. Volunteer Canada and Charity Village

It is possible to volunteer at the national level. Volunteer Canada is a national charity that provides leadership and skills on volunteerism, to promote a rich and diverse volunteer experience. The Volunteer Canada website also has an interactive quiz to match you up to volunteer opportunities best suited to you. For more information, visit the following link <https://volunteer.ca>.

Charity Village is also a national nonprofit dedicated to gathering and providing information about different volunteering opportunities. Like Volunteer Canada, Charity Village also aims to promote rich and diverse volunteering experiences. For more details, visit <https://charityvillage.com>.

**Volunteer today to make a difference in your community!**



# Jokes for a Good Laugh

A man was delivering penguins to the zoo when his truck broke down on the highway. A fellow stopped to see if he could be of assistance. "Oh, I'm in some real trouble here" said the truck driver, "I've got to take these penguins to the zoo today, and now I'm not sure I'll get there." The helpful fellow volunteered to put the penguins in the back of his SUV and take them to the zoo. The truck driver gratefully accepted this offer and promised to get to the zoo himself, as soon as possible.

After some repairs, the truck driver was on the road again and went immediately to the zoo to make sure that the penguins had been delivered properly. He looked everywhere but did not see the helpful fellow or any of the penguins. In a panic, he took off to head back to where he had the breakdown.

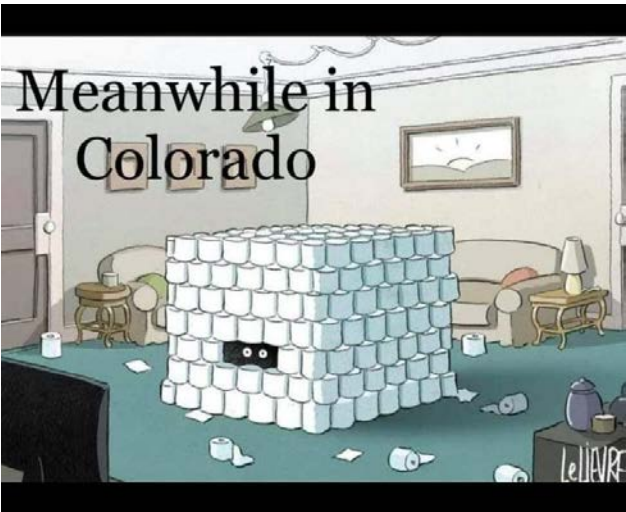
He had only gone a few blocks away from the zoo, when he saw the "volunteer" walking across the street with all the penguins waddling along behind him. He stopped the truck, and yelled from the window, "What are you doing here? I thought you were going to take the penguins to the zoo!" and the volunteer replied, "I did, and we had such a good time there, we decided to get some ice cream."

**Moral: When working with volunteers, clear instructions and good training is always necessary.**

# Jokes for a Good Laugh



Experts recommend keeping your daily rituals even while working from home



# THE 8 AREAS OF SELF-CARE



Self-care - "activities and practices we engage in on a regular basis to reduce stress and enhance our well-being" ~ unknown

At Habits for Wellbeing, we focus on the following 8 areas of self-care...

- 1

**PHYSICAL SELF-CARE**  
Physical self-care involves movement of the body, health, nutrition, sleep, rest, physical touch, and sexual needs.
- 2

**PSYCHOLOGICAL SELF-CARE**  
Psychological self-care involves learning new things, applying consequential thinking, engaging intrinsic motivation, practising mindfulness and creativity.
- 3

**EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE**  
Emotional self-care involves enhancing emotional literacy, navigating emotions, increasing empathy, managing stress effectively and developing compassion for self and others.
- 4

**SOCIAL SELF-CARE**  
Social self-care involves having a supportive group and network of relationships around you whom you trust and turn to when required. Having caring and supportive people around you builds a sense of belonging and connectedness.
- 5

**FINANCIAL SELF-CARE**  
Financial self-care involves being responsible with your finances (i.e. living expenses, income, insurances, savings etc.) and having a conscious relationship with money.
- 6

**SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE**  
Spiritual self-care involves the beliefs and values that are important to you and guide your life. This includes pursuing your noble goals and the practices that support you developing spiritual awareness.
- 7

**ENVIRONMENTAL SELF-CARE**  
Environmental self-care involves having an organised, well maintained and clutter-free work, business and home environment, having clean clothes and a clean and well maintained mode of transport. Also minimising waste and monitoring technology time.
- 8

**PROFESSIONAL SELF-CARE**  
Professional self-care involves sharing your strengths and gifts, having clear professional boundaries, whilst living your purpose.

# A big thank you to all our volunteers!

## Volunteers perform various activities:

- Facilitate peer support groups
- Develop programs that foster a sense of belonging
- Lead food security initiatives
- Advocate for systems change
- Create partnerships with other community groups
- Sit on committees and advisory councils
- Build participant capacity and leadership
- Support clients by making internal and external referrals
- Teach or share skills with other group members

91% of volunteers felt their work gives them a sense of accomplishment.

86% of volunteers felt appreciated and recognized for their contributions to the Health Centre.

93% of volunteers said the Health Centre staff makes them feel a part of the team.

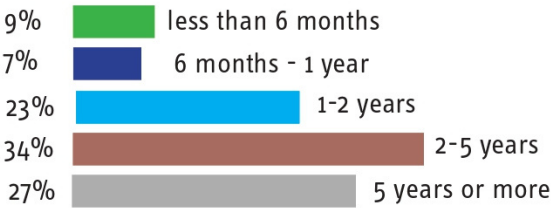
93% of volunteers said the Health Centre provides a positive place to volunteer.

84% of volunteers reported having opportunities to provide feedback on their volunteer experience.

96% of volunteers said because of their volunteer experience, they better understand the strengths and needs of individuals who use the Health Centre.

89% of volunteers reported their orientation and training equipped them to carry out their volunteer responsibilities.

## Our volunteers have been with the Health Centre for:



## The benefits of volunteering (according to the volunteers):

- Helping others and making a difference in the community
- Connecting with new people and working as a team
- Gaining new skills, experiences, and knowledge related to community health
- Learning about the populations the Health Centre serves.



## Our volunteers said:

*“Assisting those who need help allows me to get a glimpse of their personality and experiences. It is often quite an illuminating experience that has helped me empathize with others to a greater degree.”*

*“The Health Centre and especially my supervisor has been encouraging and instrumental in my advancement going back to university to gain skills that will help me serve my community.”*

**40% of our volunteers are Health Centre clients or program participants!**