

VOLUNTEERING IN THE SUMMERTIME

Are your children looking for something to do in the summer to keep them busy? Do you want to take part in some new activities? Have you considered the possibility of volunteering for the Cypress Health Region?

Volunteers give the gift of time, talent and compassion in many areas of our programs and services that are offered through the Cypress Health Region. The time and talents is no less obvious during the summer, but everyone is busy with family holidays and family gatherings, although the enthusiasm of volunteers never seems to fade. Through the generosity and kindness of these individuals, community service groups, and corporate volunteers, we are able to enhance and enrich the quality of life for the clients that we serve.

Although the total number of volunteer hours is substantial, during the summer there are several volunteer programs that are witnessing some shortages due to regular volunteers taking holidays. At the top of the list, those programs that require some assistance include:

- Meals On Wheels > volunteers are needed to deliver nutritious meals to homecare clients. The time commitment is approximately one hour per occurrence.
- Transportation program > picking up and dropping off homecare clients to medical appointments, day programs, and other necessities. The time commitment varies between approximately 25 minutes to 2 hours.
- Friendly visiting > sharing hobbies, playing cards, reading, and visiting are some of the activities that homecare clients are benefiting from. Visits can last approximately one-half hour to 2 hours.
- Walking program > homecare and long term care clients enjoy the outdoors and walking/wheeling during the months of April-October.
- Community Health > supporting immunization and dental clinics during wellness months. The time commitment is approximately 4 hours twice per year.
- Corporate > our one corporate volunteer who is the Bank of Montreal (BMO) is on hold right now due to holidays. This is an opportunity for your business to sign up and help assist and enhance the lives of clients or residents.
- Adopt –A – Grandparent > playing games with, read to, write letters for the client/resident, or take for walks.
- Youth Opportunities > to help make a clients time more comfortable and pleasant whether in a Long Term Care facility or in their own home. Assist with activities in LTC such as wheelchair bowling or nail painting, friendly visiting, play games, read to clients, write letters for clients, take able clients out for walks or decorate for holidays.

In general, volunteering in any capacity provides a wide variety of benefits for both the volunteer and the client:

- volunteer > meet new people, feel needed and valued, learn/develop new skills, build self-esteem and confidence, make a difference in someone's life, make important networking contacts, looks great on a resume, etc.
- client > relief of anxiety, depression, loneliness; give over-taxed family members a break in care-giving duties; helps to keep them active in a variety of mind and body activities, which is good for everybody.

For more information regarding the many volunteer opportunities available, please contact Erin Simpson (Employee & Volunteer Services Coordinator) at 778-5140 or the Activity/Recreation staff at your local long term care facility. Long term, short term, or one-time only commitments are always welcome!