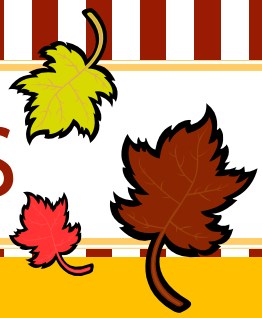




# COMMUNITY TIMES



Options Newsletter

www.familyserVICEToronto.org

## Fall 2011 — Issue 4



There are many ways to get involved in your community. In past newsletters we have shared different examples and ideas. Volunteering your time is a way to share your talents and interests. It can also be a good step towards finding employment. It can lead to making connections, meeting new people, learning new skills, and gaining work experience to add to your resume. Finding the right fit of volunteer work is very important. There are so many different types of volunteer positions available that it can be hard to choose. You can volunteer for a one time event, such as a festival or fundraiser, over a short period of time. Or you can volunteer on a regular basis, such as once a week or once a month.

Through sharing ideas, stories and resources we explore what community means and what it can become. We feature the experiences and expressions of people connected to our work, and aim to share information about positive things that are happening and ways to become involved.

So, please ENJOY, let us know what you think & PASS IT ON!

Thanks to all of the people who contributed to this issue of Community Times, especially the volunteer editorial committee.

Let us know if you have any ideas for future newsletters or you would like to get involved.

What interests you? What kind of work would you enjoy? What issues do you care about? What are you good at and what do you want to learn? Asking yourself these questions is a great place to start. There are also places and people that can help you to decide. Talk about it with people in your life and ask for their support. Volunteer Toronto has many connections to volunteer positions all over the Toronto area. Many organizations such as FST have their own Volunteer department to help find the right position for you. They will ask a lot of questions and can help you fill out the paperwork needed.

### Things to think about:

Is the place accessible, supportive, and do you feel welcome there?

What roles are they looking for and do they shape the job to fit the volunteer?

Will you get help to learn what you need to do and be clear about what is expected?

Do you receive some appreciation?

What is the time commitment?

Think about why you want to volunteer, your list of ideas, and what you may have learned from past experiences? You can ask people what they have tried. You might want to partner up with someone. Getting to know new people and working together is exciting and something meaningful to do. Everyone can learn and grow and have some fun in the process.



Art Work by Jose Angel Olivares

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## **Nadia Asks—Volunteering at FST**

**Nadia:** What do you do as Volunteer Coordinator?

**Mindy:** People call or email me about volunteering. I answer questions. They send me resumes and I try to come up with interesting positions. I interview them on the phone. It helps if I can talk with people in person. I also do reference checks and volunteer recognition. We send certificates to all volunteers and submit to government of Canada and the Volunteer Service awards. I write confirmation letters for jobs or other things.

**Nadia:** Do you like your job? What do you like? What kind of people do you work with?

**Mindy:** I like meeting interesting people. I like it best when I find a good match between a person and the position they are applying to. It's a win-win situation and both are being helped. I work with very caring people. Their values are similar to mine. They value helping people."

**Nadia:** What kind of volunteer jobs are there? How do you become a volunteer?

**Mindy:** Board of Directors, advisory counselors, mailings, sometimes but not very often, office work, volunteer counselors, people who support clients. People can phone or email me. Sometimes postings will be on the website. You will be asked to send a resume if you have one. I ask questions for each volunteer position about why people want to volunteer and what kind of job they are looking for? What time of day are you available? What days of the week? How long? If you have references?

**Nadia:** Why would people want to volunteer? What do you have to do to volunteer?

**Mindy:** Various reasons. Maybe people in school who need community service hours. Maybe you want to meet people, get references for new job. Maybe people new to Canada are looking for new work experience, or just want to help people. If people want to volunteer we should talk – what they want to do is fill out forms. If they need help with forms I can help. Family Service Toronto has forms to fill out to register as a volunteer. Such as reference checks etc. I will ask questions related to what the person will be doing. There is a volunteer package I will go through with people. People can ask questions and I work with them and the FST staff they will be volunteering with so that everybody gets support and can have a positive experience.

Thanks Mindy! Keep up the good work!

**Interview by Nadia Traccitti**



### **Advocates For A**

### **Better Future Meetings:**

Saturday November 12, 2011

Saturday December 10, 2011

Saturday January 14, 2012

1:00–3:30

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Center,

2nd Floor, 750 Spadina Ave.

Wheelchair accessible

## Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Experience



I was thinking about getting a volunteer job. I was bored, looking for more things to do, new interests and hobbies. I was also wanting more job references too. So my Community Network Facilitator, Joel, knew my interests and told me of a volunteer job which was close to my house. It happened to be Habitat for Humanity. He made a phone call to the Habitat for Humanity and said he has someone willing to volunteer. He told me I could try it out first, to see if I like it. If I did like it I could come back and volunteer again my time. He told me where to meet him, told me which bus to take, and went with me the first time. He introduced me to the Manager, he stayed for a little bit to see if I liked it and then he left because I was doing good. I told him I was going to come back to volunteer.

I really like the employees and the customers. I work in the Re-Store. We sell stuff, donate house hold things, take donations. We sell kitchen cabinets, light fixtures, appliances, fridges, stoves, doors and windows etc. I do a lot of customer services, tidying up, answering phones, assisting customers if they need it. I used to do sales. My favourite part of the job is helping the customers and assisting them if they need it. It's great work experience. I liked the support I got from my Community Network Facilitator because I wouldn't have found the job at Habitat for Humanity without him. I liked the idea of helping people out and donating my hours towards low income people getting a house.



Artwork by Costantino Corigliano

Habitat for Humanity is set up that if families, who currently live in substandard housing, work 500 hours for a house. So I use my volunteer work hours to donate to my family partners. They get their house quicker. I helped a lot of people and they always thank me. It goes towards a great cause. I've had a lot of people give me rides home because they are so grateful for what I've done and we trust each other.

**Written by Laurie Woloshyn**

## Volunteering At Sick Kids

I would like to volunteer at Sick Kids Hospital because the kids at that hospital are nice. A few years ago I spent time at the hospital and met lots of kids and I made some good friends. I would like to teach the kids there how to colour properly in the lines. I would like to read the kids stories about trains and deliver lunches to them. This makes me happy as it's giving to kids who are sick. It makes me happy as I know it will make them happy. I would also like to sit with them and talk with them about their lives.

Every Christmas I drop toys off to Sick Kids toy drive and think how happy the kids will be when they get them. I would like to fight for the kids at Sick Kids to go everywhere – to get out and see the whole hospital and take them places outside the hospital so they can have fun outside their rooms and I can see how happy it makes them. If they are too sick to go out I would love for the kids in the hospital to meet the characters on Sesame Street and I would like to bring them to the kids.

Currently I volunteer with a clothing bank where I hang up clothes. This also makes me feel good as its fun. I get to talk with the other people there and the clothes will go to people who need them.

**Written by Quinton**



Art Work by Jose Angel Olivares

*We can not teach people anything, we can only help them discover it within themselves. ~ Galileo*

## Mountains of Mulch

Since the past Spring Maya Reyes—Chebiezkova and her mother Elena have been volunteering with the Westway Horticultural Society, tending to the flower beds at Richview Public Library. We got together to talk about the experience.

### What did you do this Summer?

I was watering the flowers. I was pulling up the dead parts of the butterfly bush and trimming the branches. I did some weeding. There was a lot of mulch donated which I put to the different beds. Mulch protects the soil from getting too dry and protects the flowers from weeds. We went once or twice a week when there is good weather. What I like about this work is that I am enjoying it. The schedule is flexible. We go when we can. I went with my mom so there are always at least two people for safety. We have a good time.



There is a lady, Jean, and she helped too. She is a person, who is a member of the Westway Horticultural Society and she has co-ordinated the volunteer work at Richview Library for the last 8 years. She knows everything about plants and flowers- how to take care of them. She taught us how to correctly trim roses, how to water the flowers, and how much mulch to put in the beds. She is a very nice person. Sometimes we worked with other volunteers. I got to meet people I didn't know before. I now know other people from the WHS who love gardening too. I joined the WHS and became a member. There are meetings every month on different topics. I went for the first time in April. There are very nice people there.

I also have a garden at home. The tomatoes are my responsibility. In the Spring I help with flowers and planting. This year I have harvested oregano, tomatoes and pears. In the garden I feel good. It's very peaceful and the plants calm me down. I feel good having a garden in my house and being involved in gardening at the Library. It keeps me busy and other people will come and see the plants and be able to enjoy them too. Maya and her mom want to thank Maria, Nadia, Lino who put them in touch with Sheila and the WHS, Leah for her support so they could join this work, learn more about gardening, and have fun volunteering with them, and especially Jean who is a great teacher and leader.



*Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.*

*~ Marcel Proust*

## My Experience of Camp

When I was 16 and in High School I heard about a place called Camp Banbury. I have another friend who went there too. It sounded like a lot of fun so when I had the chance to volunteer there one Summer I said yes! It was an overnight camp and sometimes a day camp, for kids and teenagers, and was mixed for people with and without disabilities—which is fair. That’s the way it should be, so that people can be more understanding about disabilities and get to know each other better.



We Able Not Disabled by Doug Hooker

I made a friend at camp who was funny and outgoing. She used a wheelchair and communicated with a computer where she typed what she wanted to say. Every time she saw me she laughed. We had a connection and she really touched my heart. I helped her and we got to be friends. We went swimming together. At lunch she would sit with me and we sang songs like “Listen to the Water” and played games. We did lots of activities like hiking, drama and crafts. We made tambourines, and had campfires with marshmallows.

Then the next year I got a phone call in June from someone at the camp who called my house and asked my mum and me if I could come back as staff. I was happy, in joy! It was a shock but my mum said it was ok and so I said yes right away. I went for staff training. I learned about safety and what to do in different situations. Everyone had journals to write in. I was happy that they made me as a staff. They respected me who I was and made me feel welcome.

That Summer was fun for me and I realized that I like helping and want to work with kids. I have knowledge and experience to be really good with other people with disabilities. So in High School I did co-op at a day care. I went to Monsignor Fraser College and did different jobs. I went to Humber to learn about working with kids. Recently I have been working very hard and taking adult literacy classes to improve my reading and writing so that I can get into Early Childhood education and be a child care worker. I hope this will lead me to a job at a school or in a daycare someday. I know I would be good at working with the kids with disabilities. That’s my dream and I think I can do it if I put my mind to it and focus and study.

*Written by Maria Traccitti*

## Links to Resources

Volunteer Toronto. Near Spadina Stn. Great source of information and listings for volunteering across Toronto:  
<http://www.volunteertoronto.ca/volunteers/> 416-961-6888

Volunteering at Family Service Toronto: <http://www.familyserVICEToronto.org/volunteers.html>  
Contact Mindy Khu at 416-595-9230 ext.234 or [mindykh@familyserVICEToronto.org](mailto:mindykh@familyserVICEToronto.org)

Westway Horticultural Society: <http://www.gardenontario.org/site.php/westw>

Habitat For Humanity: <http://www.torontohabitat.ca/> 416-644-0988

Sick Kids: <http://www.sickkids.ca/CareersVolunteering/index.html>

Through the City of Toronto. Things to do, how to volunteer, a calendar of events and current opportunities:  
[http://www.toronto.ca/special\\_events/volunteer.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/special_events/volunteer.htm) 416-392-9315

Find out about community arts organizations & opportunities by region! Neighbourhood Arts Network guide:  
[http://www.neighbourhoodartsnetwork.org/sites/default/files/Neighbourhood%20Arts%20Network%](http://www.neighbourhoodartsnetwork.org/sites/default/files/Neighbourhood%20Arts%20Network%20)

*Deal with yourself as an individual, worthy of respect and make everyone else deal with you in the same way.*

*~ Nikki Giovanni*



**Connections**

Connecting is my purpose in life,  
It is why we are here.  
My world is connecting the dots:  
You are one dot,  
I am another.  
We live in a world of connections,  
And the lines spread out from here.  
Connecting is building  
A bridge of words,  
A bridge of love.

~ Andrew Bloomfield, Guelph Nov. 7, 2010  
Founding member, Bridges Over Barriers

**Find the newsletter online:**

[www.familyserVICetoronto.org/programs/options/newsletter.html](http://www.familyserVICetoronto.org/programs/options/newsletter.html)

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Art Work by Jose Angel Olivares

Please see insert about our **upcoming Film Night**

November 22 From 6:30—8:30 at 355 Church St.

Featuring **In Our Own Words**. A short film and profiles of members of **Bridges Over Barriers**, a group of passionate communicators. Hear their thoughts about the importance of communication through Supported Typing— in living with Autism, life planning, self expression & belonging.

**Costantino's Volunteering Word Search**

- animals
- assisting
- candy striper
- care
- carwash
- community
- daycare
- delivery
- energetic
- experience
- festival
- foodbank
- greenhouse
- groups
- jokes
- knowledge
- newsletter
- project
- reference
- summer camp
- unity
- visiting
- ymca

S	A	E	K	D	A	Y	C	A	R	E	W	Y	G	G	E
R	S	M	C	E	S	U	O	H	N	E	E	R	G	F	U
E	S	A	Q	N	K	N	O	W	L	E	D	G	E	M	S
P	I	G	P	P	E	K	N	A	B	D	O	O	F	D	F
I	S	C	M	D	R	I	I	G	N	I	T	I	S	I	V
R	T	J	A	N	E	O	R	B	K	C	N	A	Y	D	A
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S	N	E	R	E	W	W	I	E	P	S	S	M	I	R	U
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A	O	G	U	E	B	X	B	B	O	T	Y	A	M	I	O
C	C	E	S	G	M	V	Y	E	A	E	T	C	O	T	J
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Q	D	I	B	L	B	A	N	I	M	A	L	S	R	E	E
E	O	C	M	U	R	E	F	E	R	E	N	C	E	F	L

You know, there's a lot of inspiration out there, there's inspiration out there in everyone. ~ Steve Nash

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