

Volunteer

MS Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada
Alberta Division



voice

Volunteerism at the MS Society of Canada, Alberta Division & Edmonton Chapter

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The Newest Trend in Volunteering – The Baby Boomer

The “baby boomers” are Canadians born between the years of 1946-1964. Whether they are working full-time or enjoying retirement with their grandchildren, these 40-60 year olds are eager to serve the community. The common denominator when talking about this group is that they are always looking for ways to stay active, things they can do to make a difference, and in the process not only benefit others, but themselves as well.

In the world of volunteering, baby boomers will contribute a vast amount of knowledge as well as a different perspective when it comes to work ethic. Compared to volunteers in a different age group, their expectations will differ in many ways. Flexibility is very important in order to keep this particular group engaged.

“Baby boomers have the potential to become a social resource of unprecedented proportions.”

-Reinventing Aging, Harvard University

Why do baby boomers volunteer?

Research indicates four main reasons why baby boomers volunteer. They want to:

1. Support a cause that they believe in.
2. Make a contribution to society.
3. Share their skills.
4. Do something meaningful with their friends and colleagues.

More importantly, baby boomers want to volunteer on their own terms. The following are some of the challenges that baby boomers face:

They don't have enough time.

- Because their time is occupied taking care of children and aging parents, they have less of it to offer. They belong to what is known as the “sandwich generation.”

They don't have time during traditional work hours.

- Many baby boomers work full time and past the traditional retirement age of 65. Unless their employers have a corporate volunteering program, these volunteers have limited availability and can't always be there when you need them.

They don't identify with traditional images of volunteers.

- The clichéd image of a pleasant white-haired volunteer conflicts with the way baby boomers see themselves – more energetic and dynamic than their parents.

They don't want to do routine or menial volunteer tasks.

- Because their free time is limited, many of today's volunteers expect stimulating and meaningful work that reflects their skills and experience.

Volunteers Wanted!

We are currently recruiting Friendly Visitors to spend time with MS patients living in long term care. We are looking for **engaging** and **dynamic individuals** who want to make a big difference in someone's life. Visitors should be able to give approximately 1 hour per week and be prepared for **a lot of fun!** Contact Volunteer Resources at 780-463-1190 to get more information and become a Friendly Visitor.

Calendar of Events 2011



Mark Your Calendars!

May is MS Awareness Month!

May 1, 2011 St. Albert Enerflex MS Walk

May 2, 2011 Edmonton Enerflex MS Walk Volunteer Orientation

May 15, 2011 Edmonton Enerflex MS Walk, Sir Winston Churchill Square

June 2, 2011 RONA MS Bike Tour – Leduc to Camrose Orientation

June 11 & 12, 2011 RONA MS Bike Tour – Leduc to Camrose

August 31, 2011 Brick MS Drive For a Cure

September 11 & 12, 2011 RONA MS Mountain Bike Tour



Happy New Year!!!

Here's wishing all of our friends, family, clients, employees, volunteers and participants all the best in 2011! We hope you all had a safe and happy holiday, and rang in January 1st with fireworks, family and friends!

Make this the year you choose to donate your time and become involved in a cause that is important to you or someone you care about – volunteering is the gift that keeps on giving!!!

REMINDER

Please update your contact information with us! If you have recently moved or changed phone numbers, please call the Volunteer Resources Department to verify your current information. If you are receiving this newsletter via mail, please provide us with your email address and help keep our newsletter green.

Call Breanne Coffill/Jill Opalka
at 780-463-1190



abvolunteers@mssociety.ca

Volunteer Appreciation Evening was a “Splashing” Success!

Jill Opalka
Coordinator of Volunteer Resources

On Thursday, November 4th, our annual Volunteer Appreciation Event was held at the Old Timer’s Cabin with no shortage of guests! The turnout was spectacular and we thank everyone for coming out to share the evening with us. The food was wonderful as expected, and the entertainment, improv group Apocalypse Kow was very “amooosing”. The theme for the night was “Volunteers Make a Splash” and I think our point was well received. Thanks again to all of our volunteers – we really couldn’t do what we do without your help!



Josh Hathaway is one of our newest additions to our Friendly Visitor Program. He is currently a full-time student at Grant MacEwan College studying Science and Psychology, and working part-time at Roger’s Plus, but still finds time when he can to give back to the community, and we couldn’t be happier to have him on board.

We were able to steal a few moments of Josh’s time to ask him some questions about volunteering and why he enjoys it so much!

Q: How did you get involved with the MS Society?

A: My mom has MS and she participates in support groups and programs offered by the Society. I attended some of these with her, but it wasn’t until fairly recently this past fall that I decided to get involved with the Society as an individual. I wanted to volunteer to a cause that is close to my heart.

Q: How does your volunteer work impact people?

A: When I go in and visit with people, the process of building a relationship with them brings joy to their lives, especially because a lot of these clients are quite isolated to begin with. I free up a couple of hours out of my schedule every week, and that’s all it takes to brighten someone’s day – everybody should be able to do it.

Q: What else do you volunteer for?


A: I worked at a Kids Kamp this past summer for underprivileged children held through Sunnyside Retreat Centre, and donate time to my church as well. I also helped out at Fort Edmonton Park’s “Christmas Reflection” in December, participating in numerous fun activities with 6 children whose parents have MS.

Q: Why do you volunteer?

A: I volunteer because it seems that when you give something back you always get more in return. I admit that sometimes it’s not easy to fit everything in, but at the end of the day it always feels good to give back to the community and make a difference in someone else’s life.

While most Albertans are trying to survive yet another cold winter of shoveling driveways and scraping windshields, the fundraising team at the MS Society, Alberta and Northwest Territories Division is working up a sweat in preparation for our events season this spring!

The volunteer resources team in particular is anxious and excited to work with the amazing individuals who selflessly devote their time to help out at MS Society fundraising events. We are currently looking for volunteers for the following events:



The St. Albert Enerflex MS Walk
May 1, 2011

The Edmonton Enerflex MS Walk
May 15, 2011



The RONA MS Bike Tour
Leduc to Camrose
June 11 & 12, 2011

Thank you to our 50/50 Volunteers!!!

On November 17th, a stellar group of **65 volunteers** braved the icy Edmonton roads to help out with 50/50 ticket sales at Rexall Place where the Edmonton Oilers hosted the Chicago Blackhawks. **A whopping 29,000 tickets were sold** with Jennifer Knowles selling the most tickets at 1020, and Dan Laurie was the volunteer who sold that lucky ticket!



Even though the Oilers lost the game, we still came out on top as the winners – because of your efforts, the MS Society Edmonton and Capital Region Chapter received a cheque for \$13, 711.81, all of which will go towards our Kids Kamp and Teen Escape programs!

If you've volunteered at these events in the past, welcome back! If you've never volunteered at a fundraising event, what are you waiting for?? Get on board and join our team – together, we can end MS.

For more information about volunteering please contact Breanne Coffill/Jill Opalka by email at breanne.coffill@mssociety.ca or jill.opalka@mssociety.ca, by phone at 780-463-1190, or visit our website at <http://www.mssociety.ca/alberta/volunteer-opportunities.htm>



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