

Submitted Article  
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**It takes a village...**

Over the past several months we have discussed the importance of volunteering, the impact that it has on the community and how Haliburton County fits into the landscape of volunteerism. Today I want to talk about synergy. In terms of organizations or groups, synergy is the ability of a group to outperform even its best individual member. The value added by the group or system as a whole is created primarily by the relationship among the parts, that is, how they are interconnected. Synergy means that partnerships will produce an overall better result than if each person within the group were working toward the same goal individually.

Often times, volunteer partnerships begin as an ad hoc group of individuals who come together to share their passion and concern over a specific issue. A good example in Haliburton County is Foodnet. In 2007 a network of various organizations came together to share challenges and successes surrounding the ever prevalent issue of Food insecurity within our geographical borders. According to Rosie Kadwell, Foodnet Chairperson, *"Food insecurity includes problems in obtaining nutritionally adequate and safe foods due to a lack of money to purchase them, or the limited availability of these foods in geographically isolated communities."* The Haliburton County Foodnet believes that all residents of Haliburton County should be able to access food in a way that upholds basic human dignity and that the food is safe, nutritionally adequate, personally acceptable and culturally appropriate. FoodNet works together as a community partnership to help move toward every one of our residents having nutritious food.

Within this partnership, 26 members sit at the table, 10 of which are volunteer agencies. The reach of this group extends throughout Haliburton County and provides food support through various programs and services such as Good Food Box Program, Community Kitchen, Shepherds Table, Foodbanks and school based food services. There is synergy – together Foodnet accomplishes a lot! And it impacts people in our community, makes their lives a bit easier. One beneficiary stated *"My family simply would never eat fresh fruits and vegetables if I didn't receive my Good Food Box each month (subsidized by a local service agency), we have to decide between what we need and healthy food – and we choose to pay for heat or electricity first, we don't have enough money to do it all."*

If you have a passion to change something, share it with others. If you have a concern over an issue that you care about, gather people or organizations or businesses to talk about it. It does in fact take a village of individuals to be the change agents surrounding issues affecting ourselves and our neighbours – to make life easier, better, healthier for everyone. Coming together to accomplish a common goal is not a new concept, but here in Haliburton County there are many partnerships that create synergy, and change lives. I for one am grateful for being a part of this village.

*Submitted Article written by Nancy Brownsberger of SIRCH Community Services  
For information on volunteer opportunities visit [www.sirch.on.ca](http://www.sirch.on.ca) or call 705-457-1742*