

Submitted Article  
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## Is Haliburton Canada's Lead Volunteer Community?

Haliburton County is a phenomenal place to live for many reasons. It has beautiful landscapes, four incredible seasons and an amazing array of people -- permanent residents, cottagers, campers, students of the School of the Arts, and other tourists who want to enjoy the many blessings we are graced with. Among those who live, work and play in Haliburton County, are quiet, enthusiastic and inspirational individuals who volunteer. They support dozens of agencies, service clubs, schools, health services, theatre, the arts and more here in the Highlands, and it is through their service that community ownership in Haliburton is fully represented.

The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement outlines the significance of volunteers when it comes to community ownership as being "vital to a just and democratic society that it strengthens communities and it mutually benefits both volunteers and organizations." Thinking one step further about volunteerism, volunteers in Haliburton County are a reflection of our community itself. When we think about the many jobs that volunteers accomplish it is breathtaking -- they are human resource experts, fundraisers, special events coordinators, policy developers, actors, coaches, mentors, teachers, advocates and my all time favourite: change agents. Every individual volunteer effects a change in the lives of others. And there are thousands of volunteers in this community! Permanent residents, cottagers, even visitors!

Volunteers are a vital human resource. As Reeve Murray Fearrey exclaimed at SIRCH's ribbon cutting ceremony for its Volunteer Dental Clinic, "Haliburton County should be the volunteer capital of Canada." By working together with volunteers, organizations not only strengthen their existing volunteer programs but strengthen the capacity of the organization to meet both its mandate and the needs of the community. Volunteerism is alive and well in the Highlands and you only have to attend a local event like ColourFest or Fishstock, visit a local hospital or participate in a local church to see the fruits of many volunteers' efforts. Without them Haliburton County would simply be a less beautiful place to live.

So, if you haven't done so already, make sure to thank the volunteers you know for all that they do!

*Submitted Article written by Nancy Brownsberger of SIRCH Community Services  
For information on volunteer opportunities please see the advertisement from SIRCH Community Services in this issue of the Haliburton County Echo*