Submitted Article
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We Need Your Ideas

Over the past several months I have had the good fortune to write about how wonderful it is to be a part of Haliburton County and how we as a County are inextricably linked to each other through a common thread of giving and support. You can imagine my delight when our Governor General, David Johnston, recently urged Canadians to volunteer in 2012. Mr. Johnston's call to arms involved a wonderful point that Canadians are "a nation of barn raisers," stating that more than 80 percent of us make some kind of financial donation to a worthy cause every year and more than 12 million Canadians spend over two billion hours volunteering on an annual basis! These statistics are awe inspiring.

Well, based purely on anecdotal information – talking to friends, family, colleagues, people I run into – I think that Haliburton County really could be the "Volunteer Capital of Canada." People here are amazingly generous! Time, money, services, goods and expertise are given willingly and often in this county. It seems pretty much everyone helps out a junior hockey league, gives to the food bank, volunteers for an organization or somehow makes a difference by volunteering.

I'd like to issue an invitation: if you volunteer, send me an email and tell me (nancy_brownsberger@sirch.on.ca). It can be as simple as writing in the subject line "I volunteer at" with the place that you volunteer. Or, even better, you can write me your story about where you volunteer, how you got started, and why you do it. Are you donating your time to sit on a committee? Volunteering at your child's school? Ploughing a neighbour's driveway? Are you a volunteer for a local agency? Tell me your story. And I'll share the stories I get (only with your permission) in future articles.

And I'd like to ask a question: how can we *show* we're the Volunteer Capital of Canada? How can we prove that Haliburton County has set the bar for communities everywhere? How did Eagle Lake declare themselves the "Rhubarb Capital of Canada" or Gooderham the "Mineral Capital of Canada?" I'm not sure how those things get decided but I think (as did Murray Fearrey when he opened the SIRCH Volunteer Dental Outreach) that Haliburton County should be declared the "Volunteer Capital of Canada." What a great message to send from our county. So if you have an idea of how to do this, send it to me and to Jenn Watt, Editor of the Echo. Let's get on the map!

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For information on volunteer opportunities visit www.sirch.on.ca or call 705-457-1742