

Giving Back: Community Volunteering



One of the best ways to connect with the community is by volunteering. According to several studiesⁱ, those who volunteer have reported gaining interpersonal and specific work-related skills and experience, along with reduced depression and feeling more 'socially connected'. According to a Harvard Medical School blog, there is also a link between being engaged in volunteer work and benefit to one's physical health.ⁱⁱ

While many of us lead a busy life, taking time to help a cause can become a lifelong, fulfilling commitment that enables us to make a difference. Of course, volunteering does not mean a life-long commitment or even a long term one; it is up to individual preferences, time, and ability.

Choosing a Cause

Finding an organization that will help you contribute the best of what you can offer may take a little time. The following are a few ideas in three general areas of interest.

1. Social Causes

There are a variety of ways to give back to social causes in your neighbourhood, city or beyond. Examples of social causes include poverty alleviation, education, equal rights, and accessibility to name a few. Volunteering to help fight poverty can include helping stock shelves at a food bank, serve a hot meal to the homeless, or help a family shelter with deliveries of donated goods. Volunteering in a senior home or helping newcomers acclimatize to their first year in Canada are additional ideas. There are also many youth organizations that look for those who can donate their time to mentor young people on how to put together a resume, hone in on their creative skills, or simply being there to lend an ear.

2. Environmental Causes

From planting a tree to helping shape policy, environmental groups are important component to shaping a sustainable future. For those interested in expanding their skills in a work-related capacity, there are professional environmental associations in the fields such as water, green buildings, renewable energy, and so on. Grassroots organizations tend to have limited budgets but a lot of opportunity to contribute in a variety of ways: from campaign work, to communication, or sitting on a board committee.

3. At Work and Home

❖ Charitable Campaigns at Work

Many companies provide opportunities for employees to join a campaign as part of a corporate community giving program. Inquire with your Human Resources or Corporate Responsibility department for opportunities.

❖ Faith Based Organizations

Sometimes the best way to give back is through your own church, mosque, synagogue, temple or other faith-based organization. If your place of worship has no organized giving, perhaps help with a campaign by gathering a few members.



Get Started! Lists of Organizations

- ❖ Charity Village provides a comprehensive list of environmental, social and faith-based charities and not for profit organizations.
To see organizations by subject A-H, [click here](#).
To see organizations by subject I-Z, [click here](#).
- ❖ GoodWork Canada provides an extensive database of environmental organizations and social clubs, along with a list of volunteer opportunities. To learn more, [click here](#).

More Information

Want to join us in future community giving activities at the Complex?

- ❖ Send us an email at ccto-sustainability@quadreal.com

Have suggestions or questions about community giving?

- ❖ Phone: 416.364.0758
- ❖ Email: ccto-sustainability@quadreal.com

End Notes

ⁱ Studies refer to: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy: National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating 2000: The Benefits of Volunteering http://www.imaginecanada.ca/sites/default/files/www/en/giving/factsheets/benefits_of_volunteering.pdf

ⁱⁱ Harvard Health Publications: Volunteering may be good for body and mind, Harvard Medical School <http://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/volunteering-may-be-good-for-body-and-mind-201306266428>

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead