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**MEMORANDUM**

**COM-C 6-2022**

**Subject:** Seniors Services Long Term Care Homes Volunteer Report

**Date:** May 10, 2022

**To:** Regional Council

**From:** Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services

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Each year Seniors Services provides a Volunteer Report that outlines the level of contribution provided by volunteers in the past year. At the onset of 2021, volunteer services continued to be suspended as part of the COVID-19 risk mitigation measures. By the fall, each of the long-term care homes had introduced measures to start to reinstate the volunteer program. Heather Wild, Volunteer Coordinator has drafted the update below to provide you with an overview of the return of the volunteer role and some volunteer program highlights in 2021.

**2021 Seniors Services Volunteer Update**

In the first half of 2021, volunteer programs continued to be suspended, but with the onset of fall, Program Managers started the process of gradually and safely reintroducing volunteers back into the homes.

LTC Homes have seen many changes since March 2020 and as such, re-orientation for volunteers was a key component of a safe return. A new re-orientation program was developed to ensure that all returning volunteers were well trained on all of the changes in their respective home. An enhanced focus on infection prevention and control practices helped to ensure the ongoing safety of residents, staff and volunteers. The response from residents welcoming back volunteers into the home was outstanding and heartwarming.

Planning for the return of volunteers presented an opportunity to review the volunteer role and responsibilities. Roles were revised to optimize support for small group activities. Associated training was provided to ensure that volunteers could effectively engage with residents in a meaningful way.

Volunteers helped to support residents in a variety of ways in 2021. Volunteers supported resident participation in virtual church services, provided one-to-one visits and facilitated small group discussions. Volunteers helped as meal-time partners, palliative care visitors, and as friendly visitors and / or virtual friendly visitors.

Auxiliaries also made important contributions to the long-term care homes throughout the year. They continued to provide financial support to the homes and offered the homes the opportunity to purchase some new interactive technological equipment, meaningful activity supplies, and tuck shop treat cart supplies.

Some volunteers have chosen not to return at this time. Staff at the long-term care homes continue to ensure ongoing communication with volunteers who have not yet returned through emails and newsletters.

Recruitment of new volunteers to help re-build the program is a key priority. Staff are working in collaboration with the Region's Communications team on a recruitment campaign, including a social media campaign, to revitalize volunteer services as the long-term care homes transition into COVID-19 recovery.

Plans are currently in progress for the 2022 volunteer appreciation virtual events to celebrate the return of a dedicated group of volunteers and to show appreciation for the support and contributions they have offered through their volunteerism.

We are so thankful for all of our volunteers past and present. Volunteer contributions are invaluable and through their support help the homes to continue to provide exemplary resident care.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

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Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE  
Commissioner