
MEMORANDUM

COM-C 24-2023

Subject: Seniors Services LTC Homes Volunteer Update

Date: April 4, 2023

To: Public Health and Social Services Committee

From: Henriette Koning, Director Seniors Services

2022 Seniors Services Volunteer Update

Seniors Services is grateful for and values the volunteer contributions made by members of the public, community groups and students. Volunteers support a wide range of programs across the eight (8) long-term care (LTC) homes including meal time assistance, friendly visiting, pet visits, help with cards and games, bingo, sing-a-longs, birthday parties, pastoral visits and services, meaningful activities, and pubs. Volunteers provide palliative care support, operate the tuck shops and help to coordinate fundraising events. Volunteers make an invaluable difference to the lives of all of the residents of the Niagara Region long-term care homes.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on long-term care homes and that includes an impact on volunteerism. The many infection prevention and control related restrictions that support resident safety (e.g. masking, testing) also pose challenges for both volunteer recruitment and volunteer retention. Despite the impact of the pandemic on volunteerism, many volunteers and students continued to provide support in 2022. There were 642 people overall who volunteered their time to Seniors Services including 65 volunteers and 577 students. In combination, they provided 97,843 hours of support.

In April 2022, Seniors Services rolled out a recruitment plan including a social media and news campaign entitled “Volunteers Bring Heart to our Communities”. The campaign focused on recruiting new volunteers across all eight (8) LTC homes. In 2023, there will be a continuation of this volunteer recruitment campaign with targeted recruitment of students, family members, local service clubs and individuals within our local communities. It is recognized that volunteers truly make a difference in the lives of residents who call the Region’s long-term care homes “home” and we hope to encourage as many community members as possible to join our volunteer program and make life better for those who are in need.

“Volunteers remain in the hearts of the residents in our long-term care homes. They are always available to share a kind word, a smile or a laugh. We are so thankful to our volunteers for the impact they have on our lives.” (Harold Arp, Resident’s Council President, Linhaven)

“This is my 15th year of volunteering at Upper Canada Lodge. Trained in Palliative Care I have had the privilege of offering comfort and support to numerous residents during and at their end of life journey. Some residents have no family or friends that visit; some just need someone that they can share their memories with. The end of life journey is also difficult for the families and they are appreciative of someone who can be there at a time when their loved one is slipping away. My reward is knowing that I have in some way eased the inevitable journey. They give back tenfold in the many treasured memories they have shared with me.” (Caroline Kindness, Volunteer at Upper Canada Lodge)

This memorandum was prepared by, Heather Wild, Program Manager Seniors Services and reviewed by Henri Koning, Director Seniors Services.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

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Commissioner