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Non-profit workers being recognized with appreciation week]

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They are the people and groups working diligently in our communities supporting everything from housing, sports and recreation, child development, and community health centres to senior support and help for the homeless and people in transition.

Non-profit organizations support many local causes and fill many needs locally through their tireless work and help improve the quality of life for many people.

To celebrate these achievements, Non-profit Appreciation Week recognizes the nearly 850,000 workers in Ontario who work in the non-profit sector.

Non-profit workers have continued essential services through the pandemic making sure things like child care, long-term care, homeless shelters, and senior support have been able to provide services to those who need it in our communities.

Ontario's non-profit sector is the largest in the country. It has a $65 billion impact on the economy, and in addition to its regular workers, it engages 5.2 million volunteers.

While the social contribution to our society is huge, many people are unaware of the work being done and the influence and impact that work has on the community.

?This is a chance for all of us in Dufferin County and across Ontario to recognize the people and organizations that work for the common good,? explained Michele Fisher, executive director of the Dufferin Community Foundation. ?They're the ones who help people and run recreational programs. They're the ones who are doing protection of the environment and human rights. They do counselling and provide mental health supports.?

The Dufferin Community Foundation is an organization that operates the Forever Fund. It receives funds through donations, then provides grants to deserving local non-profit agencies. The Foundation's goal is to raise $10 million in its first ten years of operation. From that, they plan to provide $400,000 annually to the community.

?We have an environment fund, an emergency support fund, an arts and culture fund, and others,? Ms. Fisher said. ?These are permanent funds, they are in perpetuity, so that means we will be able to give out funds this year and next year.?

For a non-profit to be eligible for funding, they need to be a registered charity or sponsored by a registered charity.

To raise awareness of the non-profit sector in Dufferin County, the Foundation is planning several activities to recognize the ?invisible champions' who work for non-profits.

This includes a radio show featuring stories about non-profit activities, posting on social media, and special opportunities for those working at non-profit organizations. On ?Thankful Friday,' on February 17, many local restaurants and food shops are offering a free treat to anyone who works in the non-profit sector inDufferin County.

Non-Profit Appreciation Week is recognized by the Government of Ontario after an MPP introduced a private members bill in Dec. 2021 that was unanimously passed by all parties in the provincial legislature.

The week of recognition offers members of the public the chance to acknowledge the valuable work and contributions non-profit organizations make to thecommunity.

Non-Profit Appreciation week will take place from February 13 to 19.