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# Shelburne Rotary encourages people to join for National Volunteer Week

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As organizations across Dufferin County celebrate the contributions of their volunteer members this week as part of National Volunteer Week, the Rotary Club of Shelburne is hoping to encourage community members to take the leap into volunteerism.

National Volunteer Week, which takes place from April 14 to April 20, is an annual celebratory week that recognizes the work of volunteers and highlights their importance in the community.

?We're proud that National Volunteer Week is being recognized because people need to see how much volunteers do for the community,? said Bill Waite, president of the Shelburne Rotary Club. ?It's also an opportunity for us to reach out this week and let people know about volunteering opportunities with the Rotary Club, and hopefully give them the interest to say ?I can contribute like that and volunteer more'.?

Rotary International is one of the oldest and largest non-profit service organizations in the world and was started in 1905 by Paul Harris in Chicago.

The Shelburne Rotary Club was established in 1938, just 33 years after Rotary International was founded. This year, the local chapter is celebrating 86 years of making an impact in the community and the world through their volunteering efforts.

?I have to think part of it is due to the respect that Rotary has here and around the world,? said Waite. ?It's amazing ? the spirit of people and the volunteerism that people have when they join Rotary.?

Some of the larger projects the Shelburne Rotary Club has been a part of in the last few years include the Shelburne Rotary Splash Pad, which saw $300,000 raised by the community to construct the outdoor water feature at Greenwood Park. Of the $300,000 raised, the Rotary Club donated $60,000 and has since committed an additional $20,000 for picnic tables, benches, and a shaded feature. The remainder of the splash pad funding came from the Town of Shelburne and direct donations for the cause.

The Rotary Club recently donated $10,000 to Headwaters Health Care Centre (HHCC) to help with the fundraiser for a new MRI at the local hospital. Their donations to the hospital now total over $135,000.

Among their larger projects, the Rotary Club also works regularly with initiatives that include the Backpack program, Christmas Hampers, Shepherd's Cupboard Food Bank, breakfast clubs and aiding local minor league sports.

The Shelburne Rotary Club has also worked to help with global efforts, including helping provide meals for children in a small community in Mexico and funding heart monitors for a hospital in a remote area of Zimbabwe.

?One thing I think we're very fortunate about is that we have such a good community. When we have an idea, we reach out, and we get a lot of support,? said Waite.

Like many organizations that rely on volunteers, the Rotary Club of Shelburne is seeing a decrease in their number of members.

Waite told the Free Press that in 2003, when he first joined the Rotary Club, there were 35 members. Now, the service club operates with 15 volunteer members of which 10 are working, four retired and one semi-retired.

?Things have changed a lot in the world and I think it's more difficult for people to have the time to give,? said Waite.

This year, the theme for National Volunteer Week is ?Every Moment Matters'. The theme looks to highlight the importance of each volunteering act or each contribution ? big or small.

Waite noted that the local Rotary Club has evolved to allow for more flexible volunteering efforts from its members, leaning into the ?Every Moment Matters' theme.

?I would encourage people to reach out and see how much we've changed with the fact that we're flexible now too. We've evolved to cater to how things have changed for people.?

For more information visit www.ShelburneRotaryClub.com or contact the Rotary by email at ShelburneRotary@gmail.com to inquire about joining.