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Volunteer Dufferin encourages residents to give back]

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Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

As the Dufferin County community gives appreciation and recognition to non-profit employees this week, there's no better time to start thinking about opportunities to get involved in volunteering in 2023.

Volunteer Dufferin, a project of Headwaters Communities in Action (HCIA), is a web-based platform that helps pair volunteers and organizations.

?Volunteering builds a strong sense of belonging and purpose. It makes us feel good to ?do good.' You'll meet new people, expand your own network of contacts and build on employability skills, all while helping to create a strong and vibrant culture and community,? said Sheralyn Roman, community engagement coordinator at HCIA.

Volunteer Dufferin is able to match individuals with a broad range of volunteering opportunities through its web-based portal.

By creating a profile on the Volunteer Dufferin website and identifying personal areas of interest, volunteers can browse a list of available opportunities in the community.

?Our volunteer portal takes the guesswork out of both the search for volunteers and those seeking volunteers,? said Roman.

She added Volunteer Dufferin has over 50 volunteer opportunities, and the number is growing.

?Even though opportunities are posted on our stie throughout the year, we are hearing more frequently from our registered member agencies that the need for volunteers, post-pandemic, is acute,? said Roman. ?Many are looking for board members with governance, financial expertise or lived experience, or for volunteers to help with ?hands-on' tasks. We also know that students will soon be looking for opportunities to complete their 40 hours of community service in time for graduation. At this time of year, organizations are already planning for their spring and summer programs.?

Volunteer Dufferin also showcases a variety of volunteer opportunities such as environmental work with a conservation agency and support drivers for isolated seniors. The 2023 International Plowing Match is set to be held in Dufferin this year, with upcoming volunteering positions.

For those apprehensive about venturing into volunteering and what they have to offer, Roman shared the three W's ? wisdom, wealth and work.

?The beauty of wisdom, wealth and work is that each of us likely has one, two or even all three of these gifts to give, but the absence of one or another shouldn't deter use from volunteering,? said Roman. ?We all have something to offer.?

To learn more about Volunteer Dufferin or to look at volunteering opportunities, visit www.volunteerdufferin.ca.