This page was exported from - Caledon Citizen
Export date: Fri Mar 29 13:06:30 2024 / +0000 GMT

From Queen's Park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? Help recognize our volunteers



This year will have many unique and special events to mark the 150th anniversaries of Canada's and Ontario's founding.
An essential part of celebrating our country and province I hope will be to recognize the many volunteers who have played an important role in our communities.
As your Member of Provincial Parliament, I meet hundreds of people across Dufferin-Caledon who are volunteering their time to causes they believe in and actively support. It is no exaggeration to say that without volunteers, our schools, hospitals, sports teams, seasonal celebrations and our sense of community, not to mention the support we provide each other would not be possible.
Volunteers are essential to organizations like the Dufferin County Museum and Archives, and Peel Art Gallery, Museum and Archives, Caledon's Home James, Meals on Wheels, and the Dufferin and Peel Federations of Agriculture. Volunteers are also essential to annual events like the Orangeville Blues and Jazz Festival, the Shelburne Heritage Music Festival, Caledon Day and the many Fall Fairs across Dufferin-Caledon. Numerous local service clubs like the Lions Club, Rotary, Optimists and Kinsmen hold community events and festivals throughout Dufferin-Caledon that are all organized by and run by volunteers. It is safe to say that volunteerism in our community makes a huge impact to our quality of life in Dufferin-Caledon.
Acknowledging the vital role volunteers play is important. Receiving accolades is not why individuals volunteer, but it is important for the community to thank individuals who give up time with their families or work to give back to our community. Another opportunity is through the Volunteer Service Award (VSA) program. The VSA is offered by the Ontario government to recognize volunteers for their committed and dedicated service. An organization can nominate up to nine volunteers, with a maximum of six adults. The nominee must be a resident and volunteer in Ontario and an active member in an organization that has existed for at least five years. The deadline for nominations is Jan. 25th. The awards are presented at ceremonies across Ontario from March to June, and recipients are given a stylized trillium service pin and a personalized certificate to acknowledge their years of service. The VSA is a wonderful way for organizations to recognize their volunteers with no fee.
I think we can all appreciate that individuals who volunteer do not do it for the awards, but we all know how important volunteerism is in our community and we need to proactively recognize the hard work and sacrifices people have made for each other. In my role as MPP I have been attempting to help volunteers through legislation. That is why I introduced my Private Member's Bill the Helping Volunteers Give Back Act. In many cases, volunteers have to pay out of pocket for a criminal record check or the organization has to fundraise to underwrite the cost of the criminal record check. The Helping Volunteers Give Back Act, would allow volunteers to pay for a criminal record check once per year, yet access this record to distribute to multiple organizations at no additional cost.
In this special 150th anniversary year nationally and provincially we have a lot to celebrate. I would encourage you to becoming a volunteer in our community by finding a place where you can make a difference.
If you'd like to learn about other provincial awards including the VSA visit: www.ontario.ca/honoursandawards or contact my office at 519-941-7751, sylvia.jonesco@pc.ola.org or visit my website at www.sylviajonesmpp.ca