

Community volunteer income tax program clinics are coming to Dufferin and Caledon

BY DAVID TILSON

Filing our taxes can be stressful and daunting. There are many outstanding tax professionals to help remove some of that stress from our shoulders by completing the work for us, giving us peace of mind that our filings are in order. However, for some Canadians, accessing these services is beyond their reach. Fortunately, the Canada Revenue Agency's (CRA) Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) clinics operate country-wide to provide free tax preparation services for individuals and families who need help. Here in Dufferin-Caledon, these services are once again coming soon.

Established in 1971, the CVITP is a joint effort between CRA and community organizations with the purpose of providing assistance to individuals and families with modest incomes and simple tax situations prepare their income tax and benefit returns for free. The community organizations who act as hosts for the tax preparation clinics are conducted on a volunteer basis and complete the returns for eligible residents within the respective communities. There are different types of free tax clinics: a) walk in (individuals can arrive at the clinic during the posted hours of operation and the tax return is completed on a first-come, first-served basis); b) by appointment (individuals contact the host organization to schedule an appointment with a volunteer at mutually convenient time); and c) drop-off and pick-up (individuals go to the clinic during the advertised hours and drop off their documents for a volunteer to complete the tax return and the individual later returns to pick up the completed tax return and documents).

In order to be eligible for assistance at a free tax clinic, you must have a modest income and a simple tax situation. Modest income is defined as a one person family with a total family income of less than \$35,000; a two person family with a total family income of less than \$45,000; a three person family with an income of less than \$47,500; a four person family with an income of less than \$50,000; a five person family with an income of less than \$52,500; and a family comprised of more than five people with a total family income of \$52,500 plus \$2,500 for each additional person.

During this tax season, tax preparation clinics will be held in both Dufferin and Caledon. In Dufferin, BDO will be once again hosting its clinic at their location (163 First Street, Orangeville) on Wednesday, March 06, 2019 and Wednesday, March 13, 2019 from 1:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. You may contact their office directly at 519-941-0681 to schedule an appointment. The Orangeville and District Seniors Centre will also be hosting its clinic at their location (26 Bythia Street, Orangeville) each Monday and Wednesday beginning March 04, 2019 and ending April 29, 2019 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. For more information, please contact the Centre directly at 519-941-6012. In Caledon, the Caledon Seniors' Centre will once again be hosting its tax preparation clinic at its location (7 Rotarian Way, Bolton) on Saturday, March 16, 2019 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. An appointment is required and can be scheduled by calling the Centre directly at 905-951-6114.

On behalf of the residents of Dufferin-Caledon, I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to the participating organizations and their exceptional volunteers for hosting the CVITP clinics. Your time and dedication to offering this most important service is greatly appreciated.

If you need some assistance in completing your income tax return this year, be sure to check out one of the CVITP clinics operating in Dufferin-Caledon during this income tax season. The services provided by friendly, knowledgeable volunteers can help you file your taxes on time, which can help you access benefits and credits you may be entitled to receive, and it's free!