

From Queen's Park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? Introduction of the Helping Volunteers Give Back Act

As your Member of Provincial Parliament, I am often invited to attend events happening throughout Dufferin-Caledon. Inevitably, I am impressed with the commitment and creativity of the thousands of volunteers who make these events possible. From delivering meals for Meals on Wheels, being a 'big' with Big Brothers and Sisters, or volunteer drivers for HomeJames; these organizations simply would not exist without volunteers. Volunteers are the real heroes, making our communities unique. Another interesting fact about volunteers is in 2007, almost half of all Canadians volunteered. Of these volunteers, 40 per cent were involved with two or more organizations.

Without volunteers in our schools, hospitals and community groups, our communities would suffer. I encourage everyone who is able to volunteer with an organization that they support. In doing so, our community will be a better place.

There are many benefits to volunteering. Activities undertaken by volunteers reduce costs of organizations, which allow them to increase programs within our communities. In addition, volunteering helps build stronger communities and stronger families. It fosters a greater relationship between people and society. Volunteers also benefit from the feeling they get from helping others. There are also career benefits from volunteering. Recent graduates or the unemployed have the opportunity to meet people and gain valuable work experience through volunteering. Youth may discover a hidden career path by volunteering.

In many cases, volunteers have to pay out of pocket for a criminal record check or the organization has to fund raise to underwrite the cost of the criminal record check. This is where my private member's bill, Bill 79 the Helping Volunteers Give Back Act, 2015, will help volunteers. If passed, Bill 79 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 to the volunteer or organization. This will enable individuals to volunteer with multiple organizations without feeling the unnecessary financial burden. This cost saving initiative would encourage more volunteers to donate their time to more causes. We need to promote volunteerism, and Bill 79 will do just that.

I would like to hear your thoughts on Bill 79 the Helping Volunteers Give Back Act and would appreciate your support. If you are interested in reading the bill or have any questions, please visit www.sylviajonesmpp.ca

