



POWERING

LOCAL IMPACT

2025-2026 Annual Report



Volunteer
Toronto

A Message from Volunteer Toronto

T'karonto is a city of extraordinary contrasts. It is a place of opportunity and inequality, of constant reinvention, of remarkable cultural richness, and of communities that continue to show up for one another in ways both visible and unseen.



Joanne McKiernan
Executive Director



Sushma Narisetty
Board Chair

Five years ago, Volunteer Toronto set out to meet this city in one of its defining moments. But what began as an urgent response to crisis became something much larger: an opportunity to **rethink how volunteerism strengthens communities, how civic participation can be more inclusive, and what a modern volunteer centre should be.**

Our previous strategic plan challenged us to foster the engagement capacity of the organizations that rely on volunteers, and elevate the conversation with decision-makers. This marks the last year reporting on our 2021-2025 Strategic Plan and progress under these two pillars:



**Foster
Volunteerism**



**Elevate
Volunteerism**

Along the way, we've learned that volunteerism is far more complex than simply connecting people with opportunities. We've seen that not everyone is welcomed into participation equally. We saw that **volunteers are essential to the strength of our non-profit sector, yet too often the systems supporting them are overlooked.** We also saw that in a city where hundreds of thousands of people report having no one to turn to in times of need, volunteerism is not simply about service. It is about connection, belonging, and the social fabric that holds communities together.

This year, we celebrated the success of Civic Spark, uplifting 35 volunteer-led neighbourhood projects that are bringing people together across Toronto. With the generous partnership of Toronto Foundation and the support of our donors, we continued to power local **grassroots ideas that strengthen belonging.** We also expanded volunteer management training, equipping organizations across Toronto and the wider region to build stronger volunteer experiences as a formal participation pathway.

This year also marked the runway for change. We saw hundreds of thousands of increased pageviews on our redeveloped website, reaffirming our digital relevancy, and strong responses to our updated non-profit subscriptions program. We've deployed new types of consultations for organizations and we are leaning into our thought leadership role more formally—all to continue advocating for a stronger, more inclusive volunteer ecosystem.

This past year has been one of reflection, as much as action.

As we look ahead with the launch of our [2026-2029 Strategic Plan](#), we do so with confidence in the people who make this work possible: our volunteers, non-profit partners, funders, community leaders, public sector collaborators, and supporters. Thank you for challenging us, partnering with us, and believing that volunteer centres are essential civic infrastructure. **Together, we will continue to ignite connection across Toronto and beyond.**

Discover Our New Strategic Plan

Land Acknowledgement

Volunteer Toronto has the privilege to build community and work in T'karonto on the traditional lands of the Chippewa, the Wendat, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy of Six Nations, and more recently, the Territory of Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit, part of the Anishinaabe Nation. **We recognize that saviourism and colonization continue to influence how Torontonians perceive and participate in volunteerism in our society.**

In acknowledging this, we strive to build communities of empathy in the spirit of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Covenant, a pre-colonial agreement that encourages everyone to only take what they need, leaving enough for each other and our future generations.

At Volunteer Toronto, we are committed to evolving our services and welcome feedback from Indigenous individuals, organizers, Friendship Centres and other collectives on fostering decolonized and anti-oppressive volunteerism as a form of community building.

**T'karonto is a Mohawk word meaning:
"where there are trees standing in the water"**



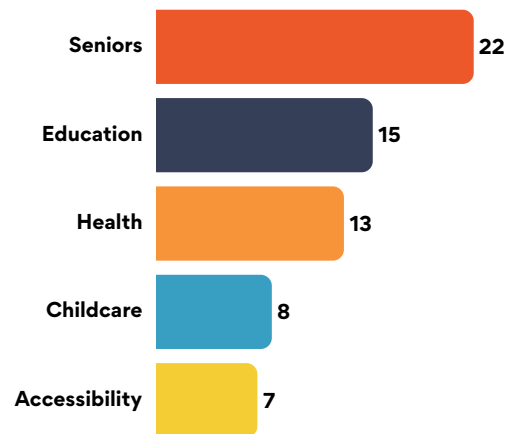


BUILDING NON-PROFIT CAPACITY AND COMMUNITY

Helping Non-Profits of All Sizes and Sectors Recruit Volunteers

Every day, our search portal enables volunteer recruitment for hundreds of charities and other non-profit organizations across the city. On average, each volunteer posting garners **2,898 views**. The chart below reveals which non-profit sub-sectors, out of over 50, used our recruitment services most in 2025-2026.

% of Postings per Sub-Sector



Strengthening Toronto's Volunteer Engagement Community

We continue to foster meaningful connections between Toronto's volunteer engagement professionals. In 2025-2026, we did this by launching **Subscriber Community News (SCN)**, an exclusive monthly newsletter. We also provided volunteer managers with the opportunity to connect face-to-face by continuing our **Subscriber Circle** series. Small groups brainstormed solutions to common challenges, benefitting from each other's experience, expertise and perspectives.

698 subscribers, including **493** grassroots groups

295 people read the first edition of **SCN**

411 Subscriber Circle participants since 2021



Danielle Benton, Volunteer Coordinator at North York Community House, was the subject of our "Volunteer Engagement Spotlight" feature in the first ever edition of SCN. Here's just a small piece of the wisdom she shared with her fellow volunteer managers:

"Everyone whose interests, passions and availability align with our organization's goals and needs is welcome and appreciated. I like to think about it as 'a yes, until there's reason it might be a no'."

Driving Volunteer Program Change

The field of volunteer management continues to evolve, as do Volunteer Toronto's professional development offerings. In 2025-2026, we engaged leaders of volunteers in the following ways:

Webinars & Workshops

Volunteer Toronto's full subscription package includes monthly **live webinars**. This past fiscal year, 280 people took part, including in new sessions on managing event volunteers and navigating unionized environments. Our **in-person workshops**, especially those covering inclusive volunteer screening and volunteer handbook development, were likewise popular. We brought back **Volunteer Management Foundations**, a comprehensive two-day, in-person course, **recommended by 100%** of participants! And, for organizations across Canada in need of tailored guidance, we facilitated **customized sessions**, reaching 822 learners.

"Loved it! I've learned so much. Prior to this training, the work seemed daunting. Sammy's guidance has motivated me and I'm excited to focus on this work going forward."

— Anonymous Training Participant

Board Training

Seven non-profits, including the OCAD Student Union, York Region, and ABC Life Literacy Canada, took part in **live training sessions**, while 47 members of the public opted for the flexibility of our online **Becoming a Board Member** and **Board Governance** courses.

CVA Study Groups

Throughout 2025-2026, two new cohorts of aspiring Certified Volunteer Administrators (CVA) geared up for the CVA exam with our live study sessions, practice tests and exclusive resources.

Free Resources

We developed **11 new resources** this past fiscal year, including blog posts, interactive tools and one-pagers.

The most commonly viewed topics were:

- [Employment Law](#)
- [Police Checks](#)
- [Application Forms](#)



1,190

learners across
52 live training
sessions



61%

of volunteer managers
made program updates
within four months



3,377

views of our free online
volunteer engagement
resources



Enabling Ontario's Older Adult Centres

In fall 2025, the Older Adults Centres' Association of Ontario (OACAO) engaged Volunteer Toronto to deliver a series of customized presentations for their members. OACAO's membership is made up of more than **275 centres** that shape the lives of over **200,000 older adults** and engage thousands of volunteers across Ontario every year.

Influencing Change Through Three Workshops



Involving Older
Adults in the
Continuum of
Civic Engagement



Volunteerism
& Volunteer
Engagement
Strategy Trends



Everything to
Know About
Volunteers &
Police Checks

Ongoing Work

We were thrilled to continue our work with OACAO in the form of a *Virtual Volunteer Management Foundations* series, which ran from May to June, 2026. Over the course of four two-hour sessions, aided by a customized take-home resource, participants covered the entire volunteer management cycle, from planning to feedback.

"Volunteer Toronto offered thoughtful, relevant, and accessible training that helped our members strengthen their volunteer programs, respond to emerging trends, and build confidence in key areas of volunteer management. We especially appreciated the way they tailored content to our members' experiences, incorporated practical examples, and created space for reflection, discussion, and problem-solving."

– Sue Hesjedahl, Executive Director, OACAO

OACAO

The Voice of Older Adult Centres
La voix des centres pour aînés

Supporting Aspiring Volunteers

For over 50 years, Volunteer Toronto has been a hub for Torontonians who want to volunteer. Each year, thousands of people attend our events or reach out to us for assistance online. We also proactively meet hundreds of people where they're at—in their communities.

Information Sessions

Not only do we regularly host information sessions geared towards newcomers, seniors, youth and jobseekers online and at public libraries across the city, we also deliver many on-demand presentations at social service agencies.

"I wanted to thank you for yesterday's session. All the valuable information, resources and first-hand recommendations are crucial for our clients and community members to understand volunteer opportunities and navigate the system in a better way."

— Anonymous Non-Profit Leader

Volunteer Advisors

Every week, dozens of people reach out to our Volunteer Advisors by phone, email or video call and leave prepared to secure a volunteer role.

"The Advisor was extremely helpful and walked me through all the processes of volunteering. Big thanks to her!"

— Anonymous Advisor Client

Community Outreach

Staff and volunteers regularly represent Volunteer Toronto at festivals and fairs across the city—letting folks in on how we can help them become volunteers!



2,376

people supported
by our Volunteer
Advisor program



1,078

people attended
across 68 info
sessions



1,209

people connected
with our team at 15
community events

Celebrating Toronto's Volunteers

This past April, Volunteer Toronto was thrilled to join Volunteer Canada, volunteer centres, non-profits, and all levels of government in celebrating both **National Volunteer Week** and International Volunteer Year. 2026's theme was **Igniting Volunteerism**. Check out the headlines we ignited in honour of Toronto's passionate, caring, innovative, and dedicated volunteers.

Mayor Cheers on Toronto's Volunteers



"This National Volunteer Week, our neighbours need us. Toronto's non-profits rely on volunteers to do the work that makes this a city that cares, and where everyone belongs."

Toronto Shines Blue and Orange for Volunteers

For many years running, we're proud to have initiated the blue and orange lighting of the **CN Tower** and **TORONTO** sign, colours that have come to symbolize the power of Toronto's volunteers to build community and create change.



Local Groups Thank Volunteers with Pizza Parties

With the help of our long-standing partner, Panago Pizza, we enabled six of our non-profit subscribers to throw their volunteers a pizza party, completely free of charge! Plus, all Volunteer Toronto subscriber organizations received 10% off pizza ordered for volunteer recognition events.

PANAGO PIZZA





Sparking Civic Engagement

Volunteer Toronto's **Civic Spark** program awards **\$1,000 microgrants to 35 volunteer groups** across the city, each planning initiatives that address the growing challenge of social isolation by encouraging civic participation and fostering community belonging.

Stewarding Supporters

After successfully co-delivering connection-building microgrants in partnership with Toronto Foundation, we knew the program had to continue. Throughout 2026, Volunteer Toronto worked to steward the new supporters we needed to initiate another round of Civic Spark Microgrants. We delivered presentations to partners and hosted an event called "Inside the Initiative: A Brief on Reducing Social Isolation through Microgrants," successfully generating excitement and support for the 2026 round.

Thank you to our organizational partners. Your financial, pro-bono and in-kind contributions have made this program possible.



We would also like to thank the individual donors who generously contributed to fund Civic Spark projects: Kanta Wadwan, Diane Spivak, Patricia Fleming, Kathy Killinger, Lindsay Wolfson, Lisa Douglas, Kate Schatzky, Horace Wright, Nathan Geda, Tony Nguyen, Martin Casazza, Vernis Cheung, and Polina Kosareva.

Inspiring Volunteer Leaders

In fall 2025, we published our first-ever zine, a vehicle for sharing the heartfelt stories of community connection made possible by Civic Spark project leaders, as well as new data, courtesy of **TD Bank – Mindpower**, on the value and impact of volunteer-led initiatives.

[Read the Zine!](#)



Launching the 2026 Round

In Winter 2026, we opened another round and received over **150 eligible applications** for Civic Spark funding. A committee of previous recipients, non-profit leaders and community partners selected 35 project proposals.

With the support of **Volunteer Canada** and **Panago Pizza**, we then held an in-person event, which allowed the micrograntees to learn about each other's projects and hear from our experts, setting them up for success.

[Meet the Micrograntees](#)





IGNITING CONNECTIONS ONLINE

Our Website

The redesign of volunteertoronto.ca **boosted page views by 17% and role searches by 40%** in 2025-2026. Our team continues to overhaul or optimize webpages to provide users with up-to-date information and a better overall experience.

Our Newsletters

This past year, Volunteer Toronto rethought its e-communications strategy, with a view to building community. We debuted **Subscriber Community News (SCN)**, a brand-new monthly newsletter, exclusive to non-profit subscribers. SCN highlights the work of volunteer managers in our network, as well as insights pulled from our own data. Our [Sector Space](#) and [Volunteer Times](#) newsletters have also been revamped and now share inspirational volunteer stories and need-to-know information with non-profit professionals and the public, respectively, on a seasonal basis.

Our Social Channels

In spring 2026, Volunteer Toronto streamlined and rebranded its social media presence, focusing on the channels which align best with our audiences and values. We continue to see growth on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, with **new follower growth of 1,500** in 2025-2026.



755K

Searches for Roles



2.4M

VolunteerToronto.ca
Page Views



623K+

Social Media
Views



18,452

Newsletter
Subscribers



WISDOM THROUGH GENERATIONS

In 2025, Volunteer Toronto and Volunteer Canada collaborated on four storytelling videos featuring older-adult volunteers. The series, *Wisdom Through Generations*, **captured the reflections of volunteers who have given back to their communities in diverse ways throughout their lives.** Click on the thumbnails below to watch each inspirational video and hear their wisdom.



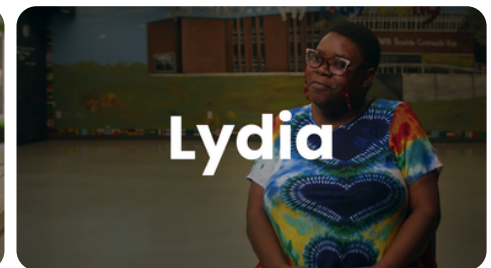
Randy



Darrell



Nada



Lydia



I'm losing my voice 'cause of my chronic condition. But every time I come to this program, I manage to heal it. So, in a way, I'm healing and volunteering right now.

– Nada



We aren't taught as young people to be proud of our Indigenous ancestors or our queer trailblazers. Then we start to have community and learn our past, and that empowers us to forge a better future.

– Randy



Would your organization like to embark on a similar project? Check out our comprehensive guide to video storytelling featuring volunteers.

[Download the Guide](#)





MEET OUR VOLUNTEERS

Throughout 2025-2026, **71 dedicated volunteers gave 3,939 hours** of their time to Volunteer Toronto. They gave back on a regular basis as Board Members, Volunteer Advisors, Ambassadors, Social Media Copywriters, Digital Receptionists and Community Outreach Volunteers. Just as important were our short-term volunteers, such as those who collected data and contributed to special projects. Read on to learn about the experiences of just two of those exceptional volunteers.



Harvinder Kaur

“Volunteering is a two-way experience for me, where I not only help others, but gain knowledge, connections, confidence and a strong understanding of our community.”

Since first encountering Volunteer Toronto at a community fair, Harvinder has served as a Volunteer Advisor, where she applies her Computer Science degree to helping folks navigate our search portal over the phone, via Zoom and by email. She also regularly reviews and follows up on postings which may be incomplete or problematic as part of our Posting Support Team. Now experienced, she has even assisted with recruitment and onboarding, earning the following praise from a new Volunteer Advisor: **“she was extremely kind, allowed me to roleplay, and gave me solid advice.”**

Conscientious by nature, Harvinder has also provided technical support at workshops, assisted at community events, and helped review Civic Spark microgrant applications.



Chioma Wopara

“I joined Volunteer Toronto because I wanted to build confidence in public speaking. As an Advisor, I helped a lot of people, learned from my mistakes, and improved tremendously.”

Chioma joined Volunteer Toronto as part of a pilot program run in collaboration with Dress for Success Toronto (DFST), connecting newcomer women to resume-building volunteer roles.

The Volunteer Advisor role proved to be a perfect fit for Chioma. During her regular Friday shift, **she assisted folks with their volunteer role search, aided by her warm, positive spirit and determination to provide the best possible information and guidance.**

We're grateful that Chioma decided to stay on as a volunteer even after the DFST program had ended. Moreover, we're thrilled that she has since found paid employment, making the most of the customer service skills she honed as a Volunteer Advisor.

Our Staff

Joanne McKiernan

Executive Director

Kassandra James

Director, Programs & Organizational Systems

Tatiana Letang*

Manager, Marketing & Communications

Samah AbdelAziz, CVA

Coordinator, Programs

Aiesha Ahmad*

Officer, Community Outreach

Cara Eaton

Senior Director, Strategy & Growth

Sammy Feilchenfeld, CVA

Senior Manager, Learning

Niranjala Mariathias

Manager, Operations

Olivia Sonnenberg

Specialist, Communications & Engagement

Shahreen Rahman*

Specialist, Data Communications

Our Board of Directors

Sushma Narisetty

Chair

Jenny Okonkwo

Treasurer

Aseem Bhatnagar

Director

Vernis Cheung

Director

Tony Nguyen

Director

Horace Wright

Director

Helen Moroz

Vice Chair

Joanne McKiernan

Secretary

Martin Cassaza

Director

Polina Kosareva

Director

Kanta Wadhwan

Director

*Employed for part of the 2025–2026 fiscal year.

2025–2026 Financial Snapshot

The year closed with a stable financial position, with revenues and expenses closely aligned. This stability provides a solid foundation for the organization's next phase of strategic work.

Our core funders—**Ontario Health**, the **City of Toronto**, and **United Way Greater Toronto**—continued to provide essential, steady support.

Thank You to Our Funders



35% Ontario Health

27% City of Toronto

23% United Way of Greater Toronto

9% Training & Subscriptions

6% Special Projects

TOTAL: \$942,269



45% Core Expenses & Marketing

20% Engaging Organizations

17% Community Engagement

6% Engaging Youth

6% Special Projects

6% Engaging Leaders

TOTAL: \$936,205

Looking Forward, Igniting Connection

Volunteer Toronto's Board of Directors is thrilled to share our new three-year strategic plan, designed to continue evolving a modern volunteer centre that can defy the odds in a sector under strain—one that is agile, regionally engaged, and provincially minded.

Our aim is not to do more for the sake of growth, but to concentrate our efforts where they can ignite the greatest impact. Guided by this approach, Volunteer Toronto will focus on three new strategic priorities:



Reach & Influence



Decent Volunteerism



Connected Communities

"At a time when communities are navigating growing challenges and opportunities, Volunteer Toronto is choosing to lead with focus, ambition, and purpose. **This strategy charts a path to deepen our impact, strengthen the volunteer ecosystem, and build the partnerships and capacity needed to help communities thrive for years to come.**"

— Sushma Narisetty, Chair, Board of Directors



[Read Our New Plan](#)

Our Mission

Volunteer Toronto increases the positive impact that volunteering has on the City of Toronto through innovative initiatives that inspire, inform, and connect volunteers and the organizations that need them.

Our Vision

We envision a Toronto that is caring, inclusive, and engaged, where volunteering is an important avenue through which everyone has the opportunity to participate and contribute meaningfully.

volunteertoronto.ca

CRA# 119287092 RR 0001

info@volunteertoronto.ca
416-961-6888

Mailing Address

2110-439 University Ave.
Toronto, ON. M5G 1Y8



Volunteer
toronto

