



volunteer
action centre
Investing in local volunteerism

35 years

Annual Report
2018-2019

Board of Directors Report

2018/2019 was another exciting year for our organization. Change seems to be the only constant; and with change, comes new opportunities and challenges that I'm proud to say we have successfully navigated and continued to grow through. Since our expansion last year, we've taken on new opportunities to build and strengthen relationships with the new communities we now serve. This year, our name was legally changed to Volunteer Action Centre Waterloo Region to reflect our scope as a truly regional centre.

To navigate the rapid change while remaining strategic, we dedicated a portion of the fall and winter months to review our strategic plan, revisit our mission and vision statements, and ensure our values are still aligned with our new organizational direction. Our new vision is of a Waterloo Region that is invested in Volunteerism. Our refreshed mission is to provide regional leadership and expertise on volunteerism to increase participation, quality and diversity of volunteer experiences. We are confident that our new strategic plan will continue to drive us forward and position us as a community leader. I would like to thank all Board members for their unwavering dedication and their constructive and critical thinking that continues to push our organization forward.

On behalf of the entire Board, I would also like to extend sincere thanks to the staff and volunteers for all of their extremely hard work this past year under Jane's leadership. This team never ceases to amaze us by the caliber of their work to strengthen our communities across the Waterloo Region. Serving on this Board for the past two years as Board Chair, has been one of the most meaningful experiences and a true privilege for me. The work we've done and continue to do fills me with pride and optimism for the future of volunteerism in our region

Mary McGuinness, Chair



Treasurer's Report

The Volunteer Action Centre Waterloo Region (the "Organization") continued to deliver on the various special projects that were ongoing at the end of fiscal 2018. During the year, we faced a fair amount of uncertainty about what funding we would receive for the year, and on an ongoing basis, due to the changes in our organization's mandate (expansion into Cambridge, increased responsibilities for Corporate Volunteering, and winding down of our Change The World funding from the Government of Ontario). However, we were able to deliver on our commitments to our partners on the various projects in the year.

The audit has wrapped up and the financial statements fairly present the financial position of the Organization during the year and as at year end. We ended the year in a stable position, thanks to Jane's fiscal management and additional funds received during our transition this year.

Looking forward to the next year, our new strategic plan will help us direct the usage of our financial resources as the funding environment continues to evolve and we face new challenges in the year ahead, including a potential move out of our current office space. We will ensure that cash management remains top of mind so that we can continue to build a Waterloo Region that is invested in volunteerism.

Ann de Sequeira, Treasurer



Executive Director's Report

As the Volunteer Action Centre Waterloo Region celebrates 35 years of service to our region, we are more and more aware that Canada is built on an infrastructure that relies on volunteers to deliver the many programs and services we demand are available to all. As the general understanding of volunteering evolves, community organizations are doing what they can to adapt and create meaningful attractive volunteer roles for a new audience. This is not easy at a time when the demand for community services is growing exponentially and funding to support programs is tenuous.

This year our Centre provided services to more than 200 community organizations. These organizations include all sub-sectors from arts and culture to healthcare, social services to recreation and sport, grassroots organizations to hospitals. Each of these organizations contributes a membership fee to our work, but we also rely on the generosity of funders to help us deliver our services. While a few member organizations have unique service areas, some in each of the regional municipalities and townships, most provide programs and services to the entire region.

Volunteer Action Centre staff continue to connect with potential volunteers on as many fronts as possible to assist our members with recruiting. Speaking engagements, volunteer fair participation and other in person connections are important to recruiting. Our partnerships with traditional media, including the Waterloo Region Record, Rogers Radio Group, and Star Metroland Media, continue to grow. Our social media presence has been growing and targeted digital marketing is being tested to try to attract more attention to volunteering. From our website alone, **13,076** volunteer applications were driven, and **70,641** website and emails connections were generated.

Through our ongoing local, provincial, and national partnerships, the Volunteer Action Centre is providing leadership in innovation in volunteerism. Tools and resources, we developed for use in our community are now being used for provincial and national data hubs on volunteering. We continue to work with various partners to explore new approaches to community engagement, i.e. youth, newcomer, and boomer engagement, and we support collaborative approaches to community issues through the Immigration Partnership, Wellbeing Waterloo Region and national resource development projects with Volunteer Canada. We are proud that our community is at the forefront in citizen engagement.

Jane Hennig, Executive Director



Youth Engagement

This past year, Lily Viggiano passed the youth engagement torch to Sydney Atwood who oversaw the youth programming at VAC, including the weekly **Volunteer Action Team (VAT)** youth group and annual leadership event—**EPYC2019: Transforming Spaces**. VAT had **18** participants who volunteered weekly for VAC or out in the community for local organizations such as Homer Watson House & Gallery, Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, Days for Girls, Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, Immigration Partnership WR, and more. A big thank you goes out to **Kate Short** and **Iris Wen** for their invaluable support as Program Assistants with **VAT!**

EPYC2019: Transforming Spaces was a two-part event for high school students held in Kitchener-Waterloo and Cambridge for the fourth year, to encourage, inspire, and create opportunities for volunteerism, leadership, collaboration, and community building among local youth.

In summary this year, EPYC served and engaged:

- **42** teen contributors—**364** volunteer hours
- **18** post-secondary & young professionals—**190** volunteer hours

Through classroom presentations, social media, info booths and target marketing, VAC is helping hundreds of high school students find community involvement hours while supporting them in understanding the importance of getting involved and inspiring them to become community leaders. Farewell and thanks to Lily for her outstanding contribution to the development of our youth programs.



Newcomer Engagement

The Volunteer Action Centre has developed online, highly interactive, and fun resources to provide learners with tangible steps to build more meaningful connections with diverse volunteers, staff or clients. Although we may have the best intentions, when working or volunteering in diverse settings, we tend to be on *cultural cruise control*. Most of us don't realize that our automatic responses tend to be guided by unconscious culture-bound scripts, based on which, we interpret and evaluate the behaviors of cultural strangers. This is fertile soil for misunderstanding. **Mindfulness** turns off cultural cruise control and creates space among feelings, thoughts, and automatic reactions. VAC's resources provide learners with tangible steps to communicate more mindfully. The resources are entitled:

1. **Cross-cultural Connections (interactive online modules for individuals)**
2. **Building Bridges Through Authentic Interactions (interactive online modules for staff and managers)**
3. **Building Bridges Through Authentic Interactions (ancillary)**

The content for these resources was developed by Intercultural Consultant, **Ingrid Brand**, EdD. We would like to take this opportunity to wholeheartedly thank **Blake Rice** and **Cayley Maltby** for their creative vision and wonderful graphic design contribution to both sets of these online modules. We are also immensely grateful to **McKeela Watson** for her creative vision and graphic design of the ancillary.

Community Engagement

Education & Training

Professional development is one of the core service streams offered by our centre to volunteer managers, organizations and boards. Providing access to Specialized Training through Volunteer Toronto, Volunteer Canada or local expertise is a priority we continue.

VAC staff facilitate monthly network meetings for **Volunteer Managers and Executive Directors** – to have formal and informal discussions on current experiences and issues of interest among peers in these roles. Thanks to United Way WR and the Region of Waterloo in Cambridge for giving us meeting space. The **Waterloo-Wellington Learning Alliance** has been a partnership with neighbouring volunteering centres in Guelph, Cambridge and KW for the past 8 years. Together we provide **workshops** in the Region of Waterloo and Wellington County on topics of board governance, organizational wellness and volunteer engagement.

VAC and WWLA provide professional development at affordable rates with thanks to support from our memberships and participant contributions that assist us with maintaining the quality and continuity of our programs.

In 2018-19 we hosted **11** sessions for about **284** participants in four different municipalities:

- Trends, Challenges and Opportunities in Not-For-Profit Governance (Part 1 & 2) (Guelph)
- Building Bridges through Authentic Interactions (Kitchener & Guelph)
- Leading the Way, Not Managing the Day (Kitchener)
- Board Basics: Roles and Responsibilities (Kitchener)
- Specialized Volunteer Management Training:
 - SPORTS & ASSOCIATIONS (Kitchener)
 - FESTIVALS & FAIRS (Fergus)
- Organizational Culture (Cambridge)
- The Economics of Volunteering is Shifting (Kitchener)
- Understanding & Engaging 21st Century Volunteers (Cambridge)



Members Make the Difference

Last year VAC became the central hub for volunteer recruitment and resources in Waterloo Region in conjunction with the newly configured United Way Waterloo Region Communities. Welcoming several new Cambridge organizations to our service we also reduced the need for some regional organizations to use two recruitment organizations. Growing pains are subsiding as we learn more about our new members.

We also welcome new sports and grassroots cultural groups who are excited to gain increased exposure thanks to our ever-expanding popularity. With Membership to VAC you gain a world of connections to collective knowledge and local expertise as well as exposure to all our media and social media promotions. We thank all our long time, ongoing and new members who are the beacons of thoughtful community engagement of valuable local talent who help make the difference in our communities.

Thanks to all our members, students and volunteers this past year—we couldn't do it without you!

Thank you to our Supporters

2018-2019

FUNDERS

City of Cambridge
City of Kitchener
City of Waterloo
Employment Ontario
Government of Ontario (MCI)
Region of Waterloo
United Way Waterloo Region
Communities

PARTNERS

Immigration Partnership—Region
Ontario Volunteer Centre
Network (OVCN)
People and Information
Network (PIN)
United Way Waterloo Region
Communities
University of Waterloo —
Volunteer Centre
VolunteerAttract
Volunteer Canada
WLU — Experiential Learning &
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SPONSORS

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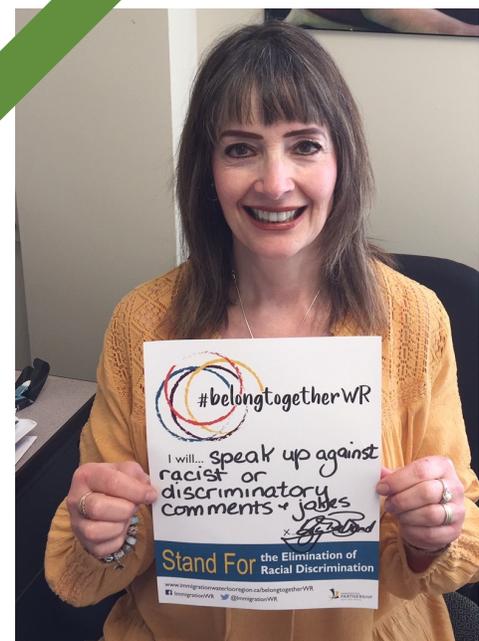
Libro Credit Union
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Waterloo Region Museums
Waterloo Region Record

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Jane Hennig
Dianne Boston-Nyp
Sydney Atwood
Lily Viggiano
Ingrid Brand
Blake Rice



Thank you to our Supporters

2018-2019

VOLUNTEERS / PLACEMENTS *

Alexandra Brown*
Amarainder Chuhan
Andres Martinez
Andrii Denysenko
Anika Williams-Hewitt
Annie Kim
Becky Pavan
Cayley Maltby
Chelsea Roe
Chloe Kruis
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Samantha Staresincic
Silvia Serpas
Sukhi Chuhan

Tia Dupont*
Urvashi Sharma*
Wenjun Yue

VOLUNTEER ACTION TEAM—YOUTH

Anamul Haque
Andrés Cantor
Areesa Imran
Duc Minh Phung
Hannah Bridgman
Ingrid Park
Joshua Taylor-Detlor
Karin Asad
Leanne Kim
Liam Chamberlain
Lisa Li
Mamtaz Begum
Muhammed Sungur
Sahin
Paula Moreno
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