



# Volunteer

WATERLOO REGION

# Annual Report

## 2022-2023

## David Marsh: President VWR Board of Directors

VWR continued to move forward in 2022/2023 and played a key role in promoting and supporting volunteerism in Waterloo Region. As we emerged from an active state of emergency, VWR spent time understanding, adapting and responding to volunteer and NFP needs in a post-pandemic world. The trends in volunteering have accelerated in the past two years and as a result VWR has plans to increase engagement, facilitate change and assist not-for-profits in managing volunteers.

Our work with Social Venture Partners (SVP) Waterloo Region continued this year (which included both funding and support) on key projects, including a refined strategic plan, a concise and compelling means of sharing our story, a formal means of prioritizing projects and adoption of best practices in grant applications.

The entire Board extends sincere thanks and appreciation to the volunteers and staff of VWR for the focus, energy and dedication they bring to the work at VWR. Jane, in particular, has continued to demonstrate leadership in advocating for volunteerism in the Region and beyond. She actively shares her knowledge and expertise with sundry community partners. This year marks Jane's 20th with VWR as Executive Director and volunteerism in Waterloo Region is unquestionably healthier and more vibrant because of her contributions.



## Jenn Hill: Treasurer VWR Board of Directors

The audit has concluded, and the financial statements fairly present the financial performance and financial position of Volunteer Waterloo Region, during the year and as at year-end, respectively. Fiscal 2023 ended the year in a small surplus which is excellent to see considering the fallout of COVID-19 on volunteerism within the region. The success of this year is attributed to Jane's dedication and hard work to our cause, and we thank her tremendously for all her hard work.



The organization continued to do an outstanding job delivering on all commitments to our partners across various projects. This year we worked with SVP to take a deep dive into our strategy and have a path forward that we are excited about! Furthermore, we examined different revenue streams to continue diversifying our funding and will continue looking for ways to diversify in fiscal 2024. 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.

## Building Community

Jane Hennig, Executive Director

2022–23 was the beginning of a transition, maybe even a transformation, of the charitable/nonprofit sector. We are experiencing, alongside our members, the many new volunteer managers that have joined the profession post-pandemic. We are seeing the rise of grassroots organizations that rely on volunteers, but are only learning where to start as they build their volunteer programs from scratch. Stats Canada reports on declining volunteerism in Canada are being observed by our staff team and experienced by our members. If we are to maintain and grow this valued human resource, it will require us to try new methods of engagement. Change is not easy and even less so in an environment where the demand for services grows daily. This past year we began some intentional exploration of change for volunteering in Waterloo Region.

We have conversations with members on the subject of shared volunteering. With support from the Region of Waterloo, we are testing additions to our online system that will help to facilitate securely sharing volunteers and with their permission, volunteer information. We have tested some consulting streams to explore a possible new service direction for our members. We set parameters for this exploration – to build or strengthen organizational capacity in areas that impact volunteer engagement. We tested different formats from full research projects to tailored webinars. We have just received funding to build a unique

approach to engaging the business community through volunteering. This exploration and piloting for change will continue in the coming year as we test change opportunities and try to make changes that will be more easily implemented with our membership.

Two major projects this past year helped us to conduct a deep dive into the VWR of the future. The Ontario Trillium Foundation funded an Organizational Sustainability Strategy that resulted in a three-year plan to engage broader segments of community in meeting the needs of our membership. Social Venture Partnership has been an awesome resource to help with our internal processes that will support and expand this period of change for our organization and our community. We appreciate these important investments at a significant juncture in our sector.

In an environment where funding is precarious at best, we are grateful to the United Way Waterloo Region Communities, Region of Waterloo and the cities of Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge for their ongoing support of volunteerism and their commitment to engaging the public in all aspects of community.

As Executive Director, I am grateful for our impressive staff and board team. Together we continue to deliver on the successful services our members rely on and explore new, and sometimes unconventional, approaches to strengthen volunteerism in our region.

## Delivering on Community

### D.R.I.V.E.

Thanks to the Cambridge and North Dumfries Community Foundation, an initiative called **Developing Rewarding Interpersonal Volunteer Experiences (DRIVE)** was born.

Community displays were coordinated in September and October at four Idea Exchange locations in Cambridge to directly connect to these communities. Over 100 contacts were made with individuals looking for opportunities and resources available for them to get involved with volunteering in and around Cambridge.

Dianne Boston-Nyp, Community Engagement lead, visited each of these locations and invited a couple of our members from Cambridge who appreciated the in person outreach in their vicinity.

This type of outreach service is provided daily from our office but this focus on Cambridge was appreciated as it provided a personal approach for connecting to various new communities across Waterloo Region.



### Member Engagement

Many of our members were eager to access the opportunity to do live radio interviews with our community partner 98.5 CKWR. Every week on Tuesday and Thursday morning at 9:15 a.m., members are able to go on air to promote volunteer positions and speak about their work in the community with the morning DJ. Staff members also engage on behalf of our members regularly. VWR values our relationship with CKWR, Canada's First Community Radio Station.



This year our youth team also participated in Changemaker Labs, a program of GreenHouse, United College, University of Waterloo, led by former VWR



employee Lily Viggiano. Teams of amazing youth tackled ways to address various issues faced by youth in our community. Our youth team conceptualized a new youth-friendly app for us, coming in first place for their possible solution for youth engagement and volunteering. This program will continue to provide our members new ways to engage youth in our work. The results are lasting relationships with some of the finest young people you can meet!

## Engaging Community: Youth

### Board Games and Mingle



Within our community, we noticed that the youth we were connecting with had a lot of troubles in terms of stress and anxiety particularly among the volunteer hours requirements. On top of this,

social interaction had changed during COVID-19, and there was a need to get youth more accustomed to in-person interactions again. Using a drop-in and mingle style, the youth were able to practice these skills, reduce social isolation and participate in an activity in a low stress and low commitment environment. We also saw that there was a similar need in the senior population. Hosting this at the Rockway Centre across the street from our office, where they host regular programming directed towards older adults, we were able to spend time with these two audiences simultaneously. With that, "Board Games and Mingle" was born.

Through the program we promoted volunteerism by allowing participants to earn community involvement hours while they also learned about other opportunities in their community. The program was able to meet its goals effectively by reducing both social anxiety and isolation in youth participants, while bringing vibrancy to the older adult community at the Rockway Centre.

### Invitation to Belonging

Invitation to Belonging is a youth-led program that provides a safe and meaningful space for newcomer youth and parents to learn more about community engagement, and resources available in our community. This program is inspired by our youth leaders noticing how difficult it is for newcomers to get connected to their communities, and to find opportunities to get involved. Through this 8 week program held on Saturday mornings at the Downtown Community Centre, participants were provided a safe space to share experiences and time to connect youth and their parents to a community without feeling the need to conform. Program content included:

- Embracing your own culture & self-discovery.
- Guest speakers and mentors from community partners that offer a variety of services.
- Discussions and challenges to engage parents and youth, and provide an intergenerational approach to issues they may be facing in our community.

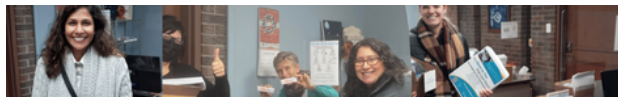


# Appreciating Community

## Our Community Cares

This year, for the UN International Day of the Volunteer on December 4th, we launched an inaugural campaign of appreciation for local volunteers, **Our Community Cares!** We created this campaign with support from many donors who contributed tokens of appreciation. We distributed letters of gratitude from our mayors along with these tokens of thanks, to *over 1000 local volunteers* at over 40 local organizations!

Volunteer managers were overjoyed with the opportunity to show their volunteers just how much their contributions mean! We have made the decision to repeat this annually as a great way for our community to highlight the impact of volunteer, and to reach even more volunteers around Waterloo Region every December. Donation of items are always welcome!



**Our Community**  
*Cares*



## Storytelling – NVW 2023

For National Volunteer Week this year, our staff managed an ambitious project to highlight skills, talents and unique personalities of volunteers from around Waterloo Region. Along with the stories that can be found on our [website](#), staff also produced a [video](#) with clips from 23 volunteers from 12 of our local organizations. You may see some familiar faces, as well as learn a bit more about the organizations where they give their time and dedication.

A special thanks to both Cameron Tai for editing, and to Amandeep Kaur, our placement student from Conestoga College, for assisting in filming, story writing and interviewing.





# Volunteer

## WATERLOO REGION

## Where **Volunteering** and **Community** Meet

**Thank you to all returning members of Volunteer Waterloo Region  
We would also like to welcome the new members that joined this year:**

Cambridge Thrift Store  
Children's Mental Health Ontario  
Compass Community Services  
Cystic Fibrosis Canada

GreenHouse, United College  
LAUNCH Waterloo  
MADD Waterloo Region  
Martin Luther University College

Ontario Cerebral Palsy Sports Association  
Pet Helpers of Ontario  
Red Raccoon Bike Rescue  
Robin in the Hood Medieval Festival

The Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery  
The Ripple Effect Education (TREE)  
Third Age Learning Kitchener-Waterloo  
Trinity Community Table  
Youth in Food Systems

## Our Board

President: **David Marsh**  
Vice-President: **Nicole Hallman**  
Treasurer: **Rachel Wagner**  
Secretary: **Bryton Keyes**  
Past Chair: **Heather Rennie**

Board Member: **Laurie Crocker**  
Board Member: **Mary McGuinness**  
Board Member: **Kyle Young**  
Board Member: **Srikanth Desikachar**  
Board Member: **Jenn Hill**  
Board Member: **Kathy Irwin**



## Our Staff Team

Executive Director: **Jane Hennig**  
Community Engagement: **Dianne Boston-Nyp**  
Youth Engagement: **Daniela Montoya**  
Communications Specialist: **Cameron Tai**

**Thank you to our Funders and Partners  
who aid us in continuing to make an  
impact throughout Waterloo Region**

## FUNDERS & PARTNERS

