ANNUAL REPORT
2021-2022
Volunteer Waterloo Region is excited at the opportunities ahead of us. This year, we were named a recipient of funding from Social Venture Partners which comes with expertise and energy for building forward. We have received Trillium funding to build a development strategy. We have been transitioning programs forward out of the pandemic response to strengthen the capacity of our members in a new era of volunteer engagement. In this environment, with this energy, it seems almost counter intuitive to look back at the past year and share what we have accomplished. But, it is through some of the efforts of the past year that we are exploring new options to support volunteerism in the community. Please read the stories on Youth Engagement, Surge Volunteering, and Knowledge Transfer linked to this report to learn more about these three areas of focus for Volunteer Waterloo Region over the past year.

I would like to recognize Nicole Hallman, Mark Hallman and Charitably for their work on our rebrand. This project has invigorated our work and we have received positive feedback from so many quarters. Thank you too to the Audrey and Gerald Moser Trust through the KWCF for their support of a shared volunteering initiative which, as we move into the new year, will be a unique program to support volunteers and community organizations in our Region.

Thank you to our core funders, the United Way, the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, the Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo, for their ongoing support of volunteerism in our Region. Thank you to the Board of Volunteer Waterloo Region for your continued support and encouragement for change and growth. And to the staff team, Dianne, Daniela, Joshua and Cameron for your willingness to constantly try new things with a constant eye on how best support our members and our community.
2021/2022 was another busy year! We officially launched our new brand, Volunteer Waterloo Region (VWR), on Giving Tuesday in November 2021. We’re excited about our new name as it truly reflects who we are, and brings new energy to the work we do.

VWR continued to play a key role in the Region’s Pandemic Response throughout the year, screening volunteers for emergency situations, including local vaccination clinics. With the state of emergency behind us, we look forward to the important role VWR will continue to play in promoting and supporting volunteerism in our community.

VWR was thrilled to be selected as a recipient of the Social Venture Partners (SVP) Waterloo Region Grant in January 2022. As a SVP investee, VWR will receive funding as well as SVP capacity-building support for several projects working alongside VWR staff and board. A few projects are underway, including enhancing our strategic plan, and sharing our story in a meaningful way.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to the VWR staff and volunteers for their hard work and dedication throughout the year. In particular, thank-you to Jane for her leadership in the Region’s Pandemic Response, as well as her continued advocacy for volunteerism, and passion for sharing her expertise with community partners.

The audit has concluded, and the financial statements fairly present the financial performance and financial position of The Volunteer Action Centre Waterloo Region (the “Organization”), during the year and as at year-end, respectively. We ended the year in a stable financial position considering COVID-19 and high inflation, thanks to Jane’s exceptional fiscal management.

The organization continued to do an outstanding job delivering on all commitments to our partners across various projects. We are very excited for next year as we continue to look for ways to diversify our funding and provide value to the community. 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.
POST PANDEMIC REFLECTIONS

Surge Volunteering

Even with the service disruptions of COVID-19, the spirit of volunteering has remained strong within the region. How volunteers are engaging has changed significantly. Surge Volunteering is a growing and more spontaneous trend in volunteering. It tends to be powered by the public interest driven by traditional and social media coverage. Large numbers of volunteers reach out to offer support and assistance, but for short bursts of time. In the last two years, the interest in surge volunteering has been encouraged by major issues spanning from the COVID response, refugees from nations at war, and, closer to home, forest fires and flooding. Volunteer Waterloo Region has worked with the surges by providing a buffer for our members trying to engage with volunteers, while addressing program redesign and client needs. This was done by providing information, connections and mentorship to grass roots movements, and by working collaboratively with community partners.

Knowledge Transfer

Volunteer Waterloo Region has a mandate to provide professional development and knowledge resources for the sector. The work we did with Volunteer Canada and IRCC in 2018 to develop a volunteer management handbook for grassroots groups supporting refugees, is once again providing support in our region. With our members in Waterloo Region Association of Volunteer Administrators (WRAVA) and other connections, we have helped to develop content for a Micro-Credential course through UW Renison University College. Our youth leadership has also helped collaborate with Volunteer Canada on important resources in Truth and Reconciliation.

Youth: Deep Dive

Youth engagement is a key approach in building a stronger community. Our Deep Dive Program is a youth-led experience that connects youth with community. Through a hybrid program of community navigation and engagement, over 50 youth have learned the difference they can make by getting involved. Experts and individuals with lived or living experience have shared their stories and engaged the youth in dialogue on issues including: Environmental Responsibility, Racial Equity, Mental Health, and better understanding the 2S1GBTQ+ community. Through this program, the youth volunteers have earned 600+ Community Involvement Hours by using their voices, participating and engaging with their community.
Our Board

President: Heather Rennie
Vice-President: David Marsh
Treasurer: Rachel Wagner
Secretary: Bryton Keyes
Past Chair: Mary McGuinness
Board Member: Laurie Crocker
Board Member: Nicole Hallman
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
Communications and Youth: Daniela Montoya
Communications Specialist: Cameron Tai

Our network grows stronger thanks to our many partners across Waterloo Region.

FUNDERS & PARTNERS