

## Neighbourhood & Volunteer Services Newsletter

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### 1.0 NEIGHBOUR WEEK

Celebrate Neighbour Week this June 21-27

Neighbour Week is about celebrating the everyday connections that make our communities feel more like home. Join us in your own front yard, hallway, park or community space. This week-long celebration is an opportunity to spark joy, get inspired, initiate activities in your neighbourhood and be part of a larger movement.

We encourage you to share your experiences across the municipality using **#HalifaxNeighbourWeek**. To register your event and an opportunity to win a gift card to support your event, visit our website at <https://www.halifax.ca/about-halifax/volunteering/neighbour-week>

## 2.0 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### HRM Community Grants Program

The 2026 Community Grants Program is accepting applications now until **March 31, 2026**. The program provides annual cash grants to registered non-profit organizations and charities located throughout the Halifax region. There are two types of grants: a project grant of up to \$5,000 **OR** a capital grant of up to \$25,000.

Applicants should review the program guidebook prior to submitting an application. First time applicants are encouraged to contact staff prior to submitting an application. The 2026 program materials can be found below:

- [2026 fillable application forms](#) - Please ensure you save changes to your application forms before sending your application via email.
- [2026 program guidebook](#)

## 3.0 LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The community development team offers a range of training workshops designed to support community leaders, volunteers and grassroots organizations. Whether you're looking to develop new skills, strengthen your board or enhance your community programs, our team is here to help. We offer a selection of workshops that are available to residents on a regular basis. These FREE workshops are offered regularly across the municipality and are suitable for learners of all levels. This fall, workshops being offered are:

Check out [our training catalogue](#) and register for upcoming workshops at [halifax.ca/myREC](http://halifax.ca/myREC). To request a training session, either from the workshop catalogue or a customized one, please fill out our [training request form](#).

## 4.0 COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRAM

Many community gardens in the Halifax region are operated by residents on land owned by the municipal government. These are small-scale sites operated by non-profit societies for one or more of the following purposes:

- growing produce for:
- personal consumption
- donating to local food causes
- generating revenue to reinvest in the community garden
- production of a floral or landscape display

- demonstration gardening or other related instructional programming

Community gardens can include vegetables, fruit, herbs, flowers, native and/or ornamental plants established and operated within existing municipal regulations, by-laws and assessments. For more information about the program you can review the [Community Garden Program Handbook](#) and the [application form](#) or contact [More Vail](#), Urban Agriculture Specialist.

## 5.0 VOLUNTEER CONFERENCE

The 25th Volunteer Conference was held in Dartmouth this past November. The conference provided an opportunity for the 154 volunteers who attended to participate in training, networking and learning that help them become more effective in their work. There was an opportunity to network with local Councillors, workshop facilitators, an address by the Mayor and a motivational keynote by Hope Swinimer of Hope for Wildlife.

Planning is beginning for next year's conference. Anyone interesting in joining the planning committee is invited to contact Rachelle Turple-Christmas at [Rachelle.Turple-Christmas@halifax.ca](mailto:Rachelle.Turple-Christmas@halifax.ca).

## 6.0 VOLUNTEERISM: THE VALUE IN EMBRACING THE *WHY*

*Written By Rachelle M. Turple-Christmas*

Our 2025 Volunteer Conference Keynote Speaker Hope Swinimer of 'Hope For Wildlife' inspired the value in becoming intimately familiar with the different reasons people choose to volunteer and the importance of understanding their *why*. This is insightful for a few crucial reasons, the most obvious being to attract, motivate and *retain* volunteers.

Beyond this, knowing the *why* is integral to effective recruitment in support of attracting the *right* people. When the reason for their volunteering aligns with their overall experience, it is likely that volunteer retention will be a much easier task. Matching experience to tasks, roles and aligning folks with the duties and responsibilities that they feel most equipped to handle can be a great way to keep folks empowered and impassioned. This simple consideration can be a useful tool in maximizing volunteer contribution.

In ideal scenarios, volunteers gain many personal, professional and skill building benefits. They can leverage opportunities to build connections and expand their social and professional networks. These benefits can lead to improved mental health, wellbeing and

their overall quality of life. Consider this, when our volunteers are satisfied with what they are doing, there is mutual benefit which is impactful for everyone.

Ultimately, understanding *why* folks volunteer is a great way for organizations to honor their motivation. When we are positioned to utilize our sense of purpose, we are best able to step up to leadership, collaborate in our shared values and most important, strengthen our communities!

## ***Things To Think About When Understanding The WHY:***

### **Commitment Level**

- **Episodic/Event-Based:** Short-term, specific events like fundraisers, sports events, or disaster relief.
- **Regular/Ongoing:** Consistent weekly or monthly involvement, like weekly tutoring or hospital shifts.
- **Virtual/Online:** Volunteering from home, using digital skills for tasks like data entry or social media.

### **Involvement**

- **General/Hands-On:** Direct service like serving meals or cleaning.
- **Skill-Based:** Using professional skills (design, legal, IT, marketing) for specific projects.
- **Project-Based:** Focusing on a defined project with a clear goal, like building a house.
- **Advocacy or Cause Specific:** Animal welfare, signing petitions, spreading awareness.

### **Structure**

- **Formal:** Structured, supervised roles within organizations (Non-Profit Boards, Mobilization Teams)
- **Informal:** Unstructured, local, often self-organized (neighborhood watch, informal litter pickup)

### **Prescribed**

- Volunteer work is useful in helping folks to feel grounded, productive and connected.
- Social, mental, and physical health benefits for the individual, while contributing to community well-being.

## 7.0 VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Applications are now open for volunteer positions on municipal boards, committees and commissions. Visit [halifax.ca/serve](https://halifax.ca/serve) to see the full list of available volunteer positions. Applications close on Nov. 30.

Volunteer opportunities in your community:

You can search the following external websites for local volunteer opportunities.

[VolunteerNS](#)

[211](#)

[Volunteer Halifax](#)

## 8.0 CONTACT US

Community Developers increase volunteer impact by developing community strengths, supporting resident-led initiatives, and encouraging everyone to get involved. Whether you're a community leader, volunteer, or organization, the Community Developer Team is here to support you every step of the way. Join our network, stay informed about upcoming training opportunities and engage with us to help build a stronger, more connected community.

Subscribe to our [email list](#) to get the latest updates. If you are looking to unsubscribe, click [here](#).

### The Community Developer Team:

[Darren Hirtle](#) - Dartmouth, Eastern Passage to Eastern Shore

[Rachelle M. Turple-Christmas](#) - Westphal, Cole Harbour, Lake Loon/Cherry Brook, Preston(s), Eastern Shore

[Kate Moon](#) - Halifax Peninsula

[Adam Huffman](#) - Bedford, Sackville, Fall River, and Musquodoboit Valley

[Jasmine Du](#) - Mainland North, South, & Western Communities