



VOLUNTEERING SERIES

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OF
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Definition, Impact, Importance

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN RETIREMENT

Would you be surprised to learn that you volunteered at some point in your life, even if you have never set foot in a community group or given your time to a cause?

In fact, it is highly probable that you have done so in various ways, because there is not just one way to volunteer.



Changing Perceptions of Volunteer Work

Volunteer work is first and foremost an altruistic contribution to the community. It hinges on three basic principles: freedom to choose; no monetary compensation; exchange. There are two types of volunteer work: formal and informal. If you have ever helped a neighbour shovel their sidewalk, congratulations! You have already engaged in informal volunteer work. It is the act of offering your time spontaneously and in a spirit of solidarity.

On the other hand, formal volunteer work takes place mainly in non-profit organizations, but the same characteristics and motivations apply. You are free to choose the type of volunteer work that suits you, the time you can dedicate to it, and how you want to engage. In return, you gain a sense of personal satisfaction and a feeling of being useful. It is a mutually beneficial act of exchange.



Free to Choose

You freely decide to engage in volunteering by having control over the amount of time to invest and the ways in which you contribute..



No Monetary Compensation

Volunteer work excludes any expectation of financial or material payment. When compensation is offered, it usually involves paid work rather than volunteer work.



Exchanges

Volunteer work benefits yourself, community organizations and people in the communities you support by generating beneficial exchanges among all parties.



DIFFERENT FORMS OF VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

- Volunteering alone or in a group
- Volunteering for a single event or activity
- Volunteering regularly on a weekly basis, according to the time you wish to devote to it
- Volunteering at home
- Volunteering remotely
- Volunteering within an organization

Motivations and Benefits

It is natural to ask yourself why you should put effort into volunteering. In fact, there are many reasons to engage in volunteer work. Ultimately, you must think about your personal motivations and the time you are willing to dedicate to volunteering. Keep in mind that there are no bad reasons for choosing to get involved.



First Steps: Where and How to Begin

Would you like to get involved but don't know how? Why not ask around? You might be surprised to learn that one or several people you know already do some kind of volunteer work and can give you precious information that can help you get started.

You can also contact organizations that act as intermediaries between people wanting to get involved and community or non-profit organizations looking for volunteers. For example, the [Volunteer Bureau of Montreal](#) lists volunteering offers through which you can find activities that correspond with your interests. You can also get advice to help you find the perfect match!



VOLUNTEER WORK CAN PROVIDE MANY PERSONAL BENEFITS

- Feeling useful and satisfied
- Giving meaning to your life or actions
- Having fun!
- Feeling less stressed
- Learning and trying new things
- Meeting new people and countering loneliness
- Participating in positive changes in your community
- Developing mentoring and skills-transfer relationships

This project for active retirement is part of a larger project, the Plan d'impact collectif – Réseau Résilience Aîné.es Montréal (RRAM) that aims to foster resilience, inclusion and social participation of seniors in Montréal.



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