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New Horizons for Seniors Program Call for Proposals

The Government of Canada is accepting applications for *Community Participation and Leadership* funding under the New Horizons for Seniors Program.

The Program funds community-based projects that encourage seniors to play an important role in their community by helping those in need; providing leadership; and sharing their knowledge and skills with others.

The deadline for applications is June 12, 2009.
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Volunteering at the Good Samaritan Society has its rewards

By Evelyn Pham

Retirement hasn't stopped Ruby Harte from doing what she enjoys most – socializing with friends and helping others. It's a win-win situation, according to Harte, a six-year veteran volunteer with the Good Samaritan Society.

The social service agency, which has several continuing care facilities in Edmonton and British Columbia, is dedicated to caring for the elderly and frail elderly with Christian hospitality, regardless of race or religious beliefs.

Eddie Kendall, coordinator of volunteer for the Good Samaritan Society at the Dr. Gerald Zetter Care Centre, is hoping to recruit more volunteers like Harte. Volunteers are involved in various programs, said Kendall, citing recreational, pastoral care and friendly visiting as programs especially needing people.

"Volunteers can also take additional training to learn how to feed residents for the Loving Spoonful program," she added.

Harte spends a few hours a week delivering books and helping out at the gift shop.

"I get to visit with these lovely people – I'm a very social person," she said. "It's given me a chance to interact with all the residents, and I get to meet very interesting people."

While the perks may differ for each Good Samaritan Society volunteer, one thing remains the same – the positive feeling of making a difference in the life of someone else.



Photo courtesy of Volunteer Edmonton

A poster promoting volunteerism shows Good Samaritan Society volunteer Ruby Harte pouring tea.

"You really feel that you're doing something important," Harte remarked. "When you think about it, the seniors, their day-to-day activity and all that they have in this place. Why not make it a little better for them?"

And it doesn't take much to make a difference, according to Kendall.

"We have some flexibility for volunteers," she pointed out. "We just ask for at least a commitment of one shift per week."

Prospective volunteers are screened and interviewed to determine if they are the right fit for the organization, based on their skills and interest. Once the application process is complete, volunteers who become involved are treated to a variety of rewards for their donation of time. Coffee and meals are just a

few of the benefits, but most importantly, volunteers are continuously recognized for their contribution. It's all about treating volunteers as a valuable component of the team, said Kendall.

"There's not much negative about the job," Harte said with a slight chuckle. "The staff is great, and there are so many options for you to do a positive good deed."

To become a volunteer for the Good Samaritan Society, call 780-431-3600, visit www.gss.org or email goodsaminfo@gss.org for more information.

Evelyn Pham is Volunteer Edmonton communications coordinator. For more information or suggestions for story ideas call 780-732-6655, email epham@volunteeredmonton.com or see www.volunteeredmonton.com.



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