

For Information

DATE: April 28, 2010

REPORT TITLE: **VOLUNTEER MISSISSAUGA, BRAMPTON, CALEDON**

FROM: Janet Menard, Commissioner of Human Services

OBJECTIVE

This report provides an update on Volunteer Mississauga, Brampton, Caledon (VMBC) an initiative involving the Region of Peel, United Way of Peel, the City of Mississauga, the City of Brampton and the Town of Caledon. The Executive Director of VMBC, Carine Strong, will be delegating to the General Committee on May 27, 2010 to speak of its success and to thank Council for their continued support.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Volunteer MBC launched in September, 2008 as a joint project of the United Way, the three municipalities and the Region of Peel.
- Currently 80 member agencies across Peel have joined Volunteer MBC.
- To support its work Volunteer MBC has launched a website and database which receive 3000 unique visitors each month.

DISCUSSION**1. Background**

The closure in May 2006, of the Volunteer Centre of Peel created a significant service gap in Peel and resulted in community organizations having increasingly difficulty in recruiting and retaining volunteers. Consultation with the area municipalities, stakeholders and many community agencies confirm this challenge was widespread.

On November 16, 2007, Council received a joint report from the Commissioners of Human Services and Health Services (HS-A1-1) and a delegation by John Heuther that detailed the findings of a comprehensive review and gap analysis commissioned by United Way of Peel. In addition, next steps and support required by the Region of Peel and local municipalities was recommended. Subsequent to the financial support of the Region of Peel, the Cities of Mississauga and Brampton and the Town of Caledon, John Heuther, working through the United Way, was able to assist the community in establishing VMBC and supporting the organization in meeting its early goals and projections. This success was a direct result of Council's support and the co-operative approach of all four municipal partners. Volunteer MBC continues to grow and evolve and in doing so has fortified communities and revived supports to volunteers.

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The availability of volunteers, literally thousands of whom have complemented Regional service delivery, is a tremendous asset which helps contain costs and enhance community effectiveness. Accordingly, the substantial pay-off from investing in volunteer support has long been recognized.

2. Development of Volunteer Mississauga, Brampton, Caledon

Since opening its doors in September 2008, Volunteer MBC has provided centralized and co-coordinated access to information about all volunteer opportunities across all sectors of the community. Its goals are to promote volunteerism, connect volunteers with rewarding opportunities, strengthen capacity by helping organizations better recruit, manage and retain volunteers and to be the voice of volunteerism in the Region. It currently provides a community connection to 80 member agencies. Volunteer MBC is a clear example of communities and residents benefiting when all four local governments work together cooperatively.

Volunteers are people from all walks and all ages in life. New residents to Peel find that volunteering gives them the chance to gain Canadian work experience, practice language skills and integrate into a new community. Students who volunteer discover their talents, gain self-confidence and complete secondary school curriculum requirements. Older adults know that experience counts and volunteering allows them to use valuable skills, mentor others and create and maintain relationships.

In April of 2009, Volunteer MBC participated in the Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge which engaged 700 youth from 43 high schools. Together, they contributed 1800 hours during National Volunteer Week in April 2009.

With support from the four municipal governments in Peel, it has been able to:

- develop its website which provides resources, training and access for agencies and volunteers
- launch its database which provides one stop access to volunteer opportunities at over 80 organizations
- educate the public on volunteerism in Peel
- deliver workshops to more than 400 attendees from a cross section of the not-for-profit sector to help strengthen volunteer management

Volunteer MBC is currently targeting youth, newcomers, seniors, employee groups and families.

Through the strengthening partnership between our organizations, it has been able to build on its first year and a half of success and envision future endeavours. One of its future goals is to locate in a multi-service centre that provides one-door access to community based services.

Volunteer MBC also wants to help grow the strength in fledgling grass roots organizations that have the commitment and vision to make our communities better but lack the funding, profile and numbers to grow.

The Region of Peel supports the development and growth of Volunteer MBC through \$100,000 annual funding.

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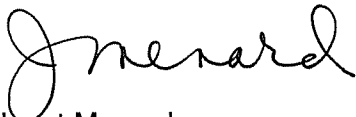
3. The Human Services Plan and Volunteer MBC

The Region's ongoing support of Volunteer MBC will help to achieve the objectives of the Human Services Plan. Specifically, linking these small groups as agency members with Volunteer MBC will empower them to reach the next level in their community development. It will provide them with increased community exposure, growth in the number of volunteers, and capacity to develop the strategy and planning it takes for success. Volunteer MBC will also support them to take the next steps to participate in addressing their community's issues and needs.

The Human Services Plan of the Region of Peel specifically addresses this connection. An objective in the plan is to strengthen individual, family and neighbourhood capacity and resilience. By supporting the linkage between community agencies and volunteers, an opportunity for ownership and resolution is heightened while costs are minimized. In short, volunteers help to build vibrant and resilient communities.

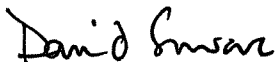
CONCLUSION

The combined and collaborative investment in Volunteer MBC by the Region and Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon is an excellent example of government working together on strategies that engage the community and make the most of the community's assets. On numerous fronts the pay-offs of our support of Volunteer MBC are evident.



Janet Menard
Commissioner of Human Services

Approved for Submission:



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