

Do Your Brain a Favour – Volunteer! By: Betty Batten, Volunteer Coordinator

The most basic internet search results in numerous references to the many benefits of volunteering, but did you know that ***volunteering is good for your brain health*** as well?

With an impressive history of research directed at both eradicating dementia and improving the lives of those affected by it, the Alzheimer Society of Canada voices strong support for the cognitive benefits of volunteering. ***“Volunteering not only engages your mind and body, but it can actually help you age well and reduce the risk of age-related diseases such as dementia and Alzheimer’s disease.”***

Volunteer Canada’s ***“Volunteering and Older Adults Report”***, refers to “ a growing body of research indicating that regular leisure and work-related activity that is cognitively, physically, and socially stimulating, is actually good for overall brain health”. Since volunteering provides stimulation in all of these areas, it is an ideal way to keep your brain sharp, active and healthy.

One such research project linking volunteer and healthy aging is BRAVO (**Baycrest Research About Volunteering among Older Adults**). Entering its final year, this study at Toronto’s Baycrest Health Sciences Centre examines how volunteer work improves brain health and psychological and physical functioning of people over the age of 55.

<http://research.baycrest.org>

Howard Fillit, MD, a geriatrician, neuroscientist and leading expert in Alzheimer’s disease explains that **cognitive aging begins at age 20. We now recognize that Alzheimer’s disease begins in mid-life.** From this come two significant conclusions:

“The choices we make today will impact our minds for the rest of our lives.”

“The sooner you start volunteering, the greater the benefits you’ll reap later on in life.

If volunteering is not yet a regular part of your lifestyle, perhaps these references to reliable research have challenged you to reconsider. Why not schedule an information interview to explore volunteer opportunities at your local Alzheimer Society. Contact Betty @ 705-748-5131 or 1-800-561-2588, email betty@alzheimerjourney.ca

Existing Opportunities:

Marketing Coach
Administrative Support
Data Entry Specialist
Community Liaisons
Information Researchers
Walking Buddies
Sponsorship Solicitors
Volunteer Client Caller

Revenue Processing Team
Event Planners/Implementers
Committee Chairs/Members
Project Coordinators
Friendly Visitors
Photographers
Resource Assemblers
Promotions Team