

The Rewards of Volunteering By: Shawna Peddar, Volunteer Coordinator

***“The happiest people I know are those who lose themselves in the service of others.”
– Gordon B. Hinckley***

I read this quote recently that made me think of the volunteers that work in our organization. Now, I'm not sure of the people that Mr. Hinckley was referring to, but the reason this made me think of our volunteers is because they truly are some of the happiest people I know. They come into the office with smiles on their faces and always have kind, encouraging words to say. The mood in the office changes when our volunteers are around.

Whether it's something you do once a year or on a more regular basis, volunteering has many benefits. Science shows that we can get as much out of volunteering as the people we are giving our time to. Serving others and giving to them through volunteering and in other ways reduces depression, anxiety and increased personal wellbeing and happiness. One researcher describes these attributes as a 'helpers high'.¹ Furthermore, volunteering is a way to improve your social life, which is also strongly associated with happiness and life satisfaction.²

One of the things I have learned about volunteering is the sense of belonging it can inspire. In his creation of the Hierarchy of Needs, Maslow placed the need for emotional wellbeing after safety needs. Meaning that the need to belong and be loved is of high importance. Spending time volunteering creates bonds with fellow volunteers, organizations hosting volunteers, and the beneficiaries. The social bonds created during volunteering contribute directly to feelings of belonging and happiness.³

The Alzheimer Society has a variety of volunteer positions that may just suit your interests and improve your happiness. Roles include:

- Special Events Administration
- Client Support Group facilitation
- Leadership on a committee or board
- Administrative or Reception support



Find an application here:

<http://www.alzheimer.ca/en/chapters-on/pklnh/Get-involved/Volunteer/Register>

Call or email Shawna at 1-800-561-2588, shawna@alzheimerjourney.ca

1. Post, S.F., & Niemark, J. (2007). Why good things happen to good people: How to live a longer, healthier, happier life by the simple act of giving. New York: Broadway Books.

2. Luks, A. (1988, October). Helper's high: Volunteering makes people feel good, physically and emotionally. And like "runner's calm," it's probably good for your health. Psychology Today, 22 (10), 34-42.

3. Horoszowki, M. (2014, February 12). Volunteering Makes You Happier – Here's Why. Retrieved from <http://blog.movingworlds.org/volunteering-makes-you-happier/>