

National Volunteer Week 2021



- THE VALUE OF ONE, THE POWER OF MANY-



Wellness Calls

The role of reception has changed to meet the needs of our clients, as contact with them is only through the phones and not in-person as the Active Living Centre is closed to the public. Even though you cannot tell with volunteers wearing masks, their friendly faces and voices and contribution show their devotion to our mission by supporting our clients (and potential clients) and all other stakeholders with excellent customer service. These volunteers have been able to safely continue their role and follow COVID-19 safety protocols. They assist staff in making telephone reassurance calls to clients who need a friendly chat during these challenging times. They continue to ensure clients' inquiries are answered or passed on to staff to help with their need, such as registering for a Zoom program so that seniors stay connected.

At the Day Program, there was a need during the pandemic to call day program clients over the phone as all in-person programs were also suspended. We had a volunteer who was able to safely make weekly wellness calls at our Sheppard site to the day program clients and documented these updates in our database.

This is what the volunteer had to say about NYSC and volunteering at the Centre: *"Volunteer work has always played an important role in my adult life and when I retired in December 2019, I volunteered with North York Seniors Centre. Starting in January, I assisted with the Social Club, which was a group of between eight to a dozen people who met on Mondays at the Hendon location for good conversation, games, exercise and lunch. I enjoyed this so much that I volunteered for the Adult Day Program at the Sheppard West location. I went for my orientation on March 10 but both the Adult Day Program and the Social Club closed down the next week due to COVID."*

I advised the Human Resources Coordinator that I was interested in making wellness calls to isolated seniors. No assignment was available at that time; however, in late May a volunteer position was created at the Sheppard West location to call participants in the Adult Day Program to see how they are doing. I started on June 4 and go to the office three mornings weekly to call clients or their family members. I had a roster of 25 clients who receive one or more calls weekly as requested. It has been a pleasure getting to know these people as they adapt to the changes in their lives due to COVID, often with help from others. I am often asked when the Adult Day Program is going to reopen as it played such an important role in the lives of these clients and their caregivers and they really miss it.

North York Seniors Centre provides a great service to its volunteers and members and I really appreciate the opportunity I have been given to volunteer there with staff, members and clients."

Per the ADA Team, *"Sandra Millington was a backbone to the ADA team. She was a perfectionist at her job. We couldn't have asked for a better volunteer to help us out. She was more like a friend than a volunteer to our clients and they looked forward to her calls."*

Thank you to all of the volunteers who made a difference for the seniors they talked to over the phone during the pandemic – to ask how they were doing and to show that we care.

You can see that it is the value of one to make these meaningful phone calls with clients, and the power of many to ensure we continue to socially connect with our clients that is so vital during these trying times.

