

Annual Report 2020



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to something
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Letter from the Chair

How do we even begin to process this past pandemic year?

No two days have been the same and I think it's safe to say that there will not be a return to our past normal. Volunteer Strathcona (VS) celebrates 45 years in our community this year, and we have weathered this tumultuous time well. There are milestones to note and volunteers to thank who went far above and beyond in this past year.

Early in 2020, VS launched an Emergency Support Project in response to Covid-19. The intent: to provide emergency support in Strathcona County, as requested. Grocery shopping, food delivery, friendship calls, dog walking, simple repairs and a multitude of others. The VS/Drive Happiness collaboration was of great benefit. Our community benefited from the efforts of 230 volunteers providing emergency support.

Another spin-off of the Emergency Support Project is Volunteer Strathcona has continued in partnership with Volunteer Alberta (VA) to test an evaluation and impact measurement framework. This allows for an evaluation of the VS project and provides input and feedback to VA. The Covid-19 project is demonstrating a change to volunteerism here in Strathcona County.

VS is excited to partner with Canteen Collaboration for meeting room use and the storage of We Care We Share program equipment (currently on hold - but, one day we will eat cotton candy, again).

In spite of the sometimes overwhelming challenges of day to day in 2020, Volunteer Strathcona delivered strong capacity building workshops and programming to over 170 nonprofit volunteers and employees from over 50 unique organizations.



Photo by Burch Photographics

The switch from in-person to virtual took place quickly and for now, virtual is how programming continues.

Volunteer Connector, the program that joins volunteers with non-profit organizations was well used in 2020, boasting 21,000 views of volunteer postings made by County groups. Greater than 350 applications were completed and 27% of organizations with profiles on Volunteer Connector posted volunteer opportunities.

We are grateful for funders, big and small who continue to support volunteer efforts in Strathcona County. As a Board of Directors, we thank executive director Judy Ferguson and her staff for their commitment to get in and get the job done in 2020.

I believe the landscape of volunteerism has begun another major shift in our society. With a large population of folks who have begun to embrace the world of retirement, there are those seeking meaningful volunteer work. Retirement is often taught to be about "work of the heart" not necessarily the money. Contributing to something greater than ourselves is how we live life, to its fullest.

Bonnie Hoffmann
Board Chair

Volunteer Strathcona. Our Values:



Integrity

» We will do what we say we will do.

Reflectiveness

» We learn from our past as we plan for our future.

Innovation

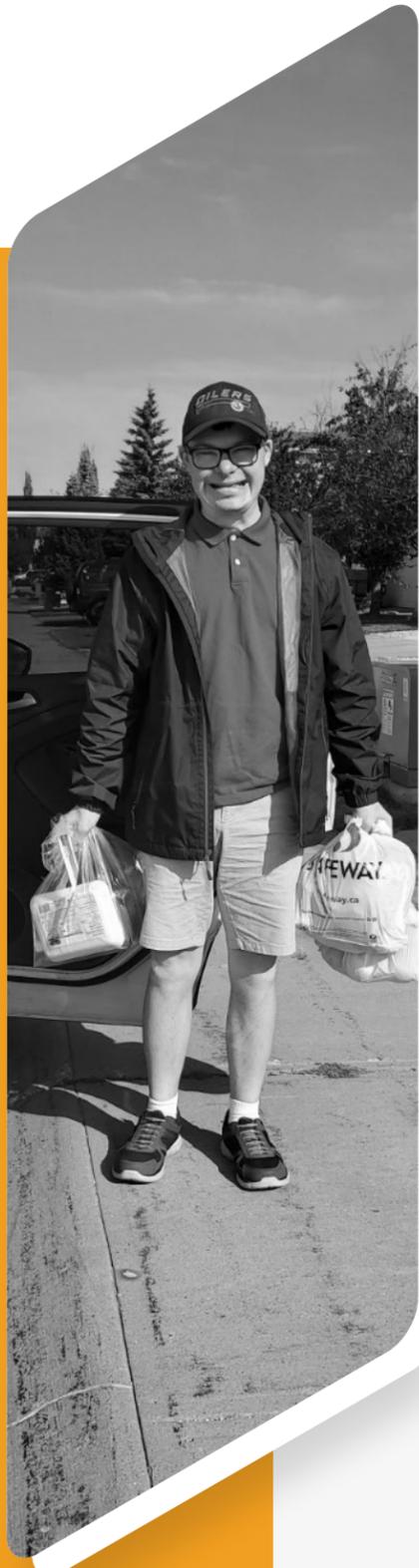
» We are excited about new ideas.

Collaboration

» We will work with others to boost volunteerism in the community.

Service Leadership

» We are stewards of the resources the community has provided to us, and we will use those resources wisely.



Mission & Vision



Our Mission

Strathcona County is a vibrant community strengthened by **volunteers** and an effective **nonprofit sector**.



Our Vision

Volunteer Strathcona connects volunteers with opportunities and enables the development of local organizations to meet social needs in our community.

Building Community

Volunteer Strathcona Centre, a supporting organization in Strathcona County since 1976, has seen many changes in the services we have delivered to the community over the years. The one thing that has remained constant is our ability to be flexible and pivot (a common buzz word for 2020) as required. We have always demonstrated exceptional effort, leadership and initiative to help ensure that Strathcona County is a community that cares and shares. This past year created an opportunity for Volunteer Strathcona to do so once again.

Our VS Team

» Executive Director - Judy Ferguson

» Volunteer Services Manager - Caron Stoltz

» Program Director - Mary McGuire

» Communications Assistant - Corrie Verheijen



VS Annual Report 2020
Projects & Community Engagement

Building Ourselves

In order to ensure that we are fully engaged and able to work effectively within the community, Volunteer Strathcona staff stay up to date on trends and all things 'volunteer.' Some of the workshops that staff selected in 2020 included:

Evaluation Training – Volunteer Alberta provided tools and support, and experience was gained through completion of an actual project evaluation. As Volunteer Strathcona becomes proficient in this area, the knowledge and tools will be shared with community organizations.

Volunteer Recruitment – Volunteer Alberta

Traumatic Event Systems (TES) Model Training by NACTOR

Laying the Foundation for the Next 20 years of Volunteer

Engagement – Volunteer Canada

Managing Employees in Uncertain Times – Charity Village

The Changing Face of Canadian Donors – Charity Village

Psychological First Aid – Strathcona County

Tracking & Developing Ideas Emerging from the Pandemic:

Implications for Strategy - Tamrack

How to Sustain Organizations that Connect our Community –

Volunteer Canada

Anti-Racism and Equity is for Everyone - a Board Leadership

Calgary Conference workshop

COVID-19 Emergency Support Project

Volunteer Strathcona Centre The response from the community was experienced a pivotal year. heartwarming!

Almost immediately following the public state of emergency declaration in March of 2020, and the potential isolation of many seniors, persons with disabilities and others in need, the staff at **Volunteer Strathcona** created and began implementing our **COVID-19 Emergency Support Project**.

The call went out:

Are you in isolation?

Do you require assistance with grocery or prescription delivery?

Would you benefit from a phone call, just to have someone check in on how you are doing?

Do you need help with walking your pet or help with getting minor yard work done? A second call went out - Are you able to volunteer some time to help these folks out?

Through social media, print advertising, and referrals from other groups such as Family and Community Services, within a very short time Volunteer Strathcona was able to recruit several hundred volunteers, folks just wanting to help.

Our volunteers included seniors, retired executives, students, athletes, moms and dads, and many who found themselves temporarily unemployed. Everyone was just looking for a way to help where they could.

Staff for the most part, worked from home from March to December. Changes in program delivery, to allow for the work from home model, proved not to be a deterrent to success.



Building Community Engagement

Community Capacity Building >>



Communicate with Confidence

with Glenda Sheard

Held early in 2020 in-person



Social Media Series

presented by Volunteer Strathcona

Held early in 2020 in-person

As 2020 progressed, Volunteer Strathcona moved to offering a small series of online webinar workshops.

Future of Fundraising

presented by Newman Consulting

Managing Change

presented by Nahirney & Associates

2020 Funders Forum attracted over 40 online attendees from 29 different organizations. Held annually as a networking event, the move to online provided a way for local nonprofits to access important information from funding agencies.



Alberta Volunteer Centre Network



Volunteer Strathcona staff continue to be actively engaged in biweekly Alberta Volunteer Centre Network meetings. These meetings continue to be a useful way for our staff to stay connected with other centres and be a part of sharing best practices in volunteer engagement.

Board Leadership Edmonton Committee



Volunteer Strathcona was actively involved on the Board Leadership Edmonton Committee in 2020. The committee was focused on transitioning the Board Leadership Edmonton conference into an online platform. An online conference is scheduled for the fall of 2021.

Strathcona County Social Framework Leadership Table



Volunteer Strathcona has had an active seat of the SFLT since its inception. The work of this group is having a positive effective on the community, including the establishment of many formal and informal collaborations.

Linking Generations



A partner for several years now, Volunteer Strathcona continues to work with Linking Generations' Grandparent Program. In 2020, through a grant received from the Federal New Horizons Program, Volunteer Strathcona was successful in securing funding which was used to purchase iPads which are on permanent loan to Linking Generations. The iPads were distributed as part of a larger program, to seniors to assist with communication between their seniors and youth partners.

A Safe Place



In the weeks leading up the Christmas, Volunteer Strathcona was able to help secure and schedule volunteers for A Safe Place's Tree of Hope Fundraiser.

Our Volunteers. Connecting our Community.



**600+ COVID-19
Emergency Support
Project**
Clients Served



91 residents had tax returns completed through our free volunteer **tax clinics**



Nominated for the 2020 Government of Alberta Minister's **Senior Service Award**

We use Volunteer Connector as way to connect organizations to volunteers and to link volunteers to opportunities

20,868 total views of Strathcona County nonprofit postings on Volunteer Connector

Volunteer Opportunities

365+

Our workshops and events help build non-profit sector support and capacity.

Attended our in-person and virtual learning events

Community Members

173+

Residents of Strathcona County continue to enjoy the benefits of our SnowBusters Volunteer-driven project. In 2020 we were happy to welcome many youth to the program.

40 SnowBusters Volunteers

Clients Served

66+

Thank You

To our generous funders, sponsors, and partners for their support in 2020, including:



For 26 years, **Strathcona County** has generously provided grant dollars to support volunteerism and non-profits within our community. This ongoing annual support illustrates Strathcona County leadership's commitment and support to the nonprofit and voluntary sector in the community.

We are also pleased to acknowledge a capacity building grant from the **Government of Alberta** through its Enhanced Capacity Advancement Program. These dollars were instrumental in helping Volunteer Strathcona meet our commitment to the local non-profit and voluntary sector.

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