

VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

As we step into the New Year, we want to send a heartfelt thank you to each of you. Your time, energy, and kindness make a real difference every single day, and we are so grateful for all that you do. We look forward to another year of connection, impact, and shared moments, and we're excited to continue this journey together. Happy New Year from all of us at The Good Companions.

A NOTE OF THANKS

As we begin the new year, I want to take a moment to sincerely thank you. Being part of this community continues to be a privilege, and I'm constantly inspired by the care, generosity, and commitment you bring to The Good Companions.

Every shift you take, every smile you share, and every moment you give helps create a welcoming and supportive space for our members. Thank you for the impact you make and for the kindness you bring to this work.

I'm truly grateful to be working alongside you.

With appreciation,
Stephane



EARLY ACCESS PASS

One of the perks of volunteering at The Good Companions is access to our Early Access Pass. Since launching it in September, many volunteers have already taken advantage of early notice and priority registration for programs and events, and it's been great to see how much it's being enjoyed.

It's a small way for us to say thank you and to show our appreciation for the important role volunteers play in creating the diverse and welcoming community we're so proud of.

Thank
you

WHEN COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER: SANTA FOR SENIORS 2025

Santa for Seniors was back this past December, and while it was busy in the best possible way, it was also deeply rewarding from start to finish.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our sponsors, volunteers, and community partners, we were able to assemble and deliver gift bags to isolated and struggling seniors across the Ottawa region. Each bag was filled with care, kindness, and a heartfelt reminder that someone in the community was thinking of them during the holiday season.

We want to extend a sincere thank you to Giant Tiger for their continued generosity and support. Their contribution played a major role in making Santa for Seniors possible, and we are especially grateful to the Giant Tiger team members who went out into the community to personally deliver gift bags to seniors. That extra step truly embodied the spirit of the season.

WHEN COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER: SANTA FOR SENIORS 2025

A very special thank you also goes to Brian Robertson, one of our own long-time members and volunteers. Brian's generous donation helped ensure that even more seniors could be reached this year. His ongoing commitment to giving back is a wonderful reflection of what Santa for Seniors is all about.

We would also like to warmly thank the students from Riverview School, from Kindergarten to Grade 6, who created beautiful holiday cards that were included in the gift bags. These handmade messages brought extra joy and connection to seniors receiving them. A special thank you to Miss Leblanc from the Kindergarten class for organizing this school-wide collaboration and helping make this heartfelt addition possible.

A big thank you as well to the Sunday Afternoon Charity Knitting Group with the Ottawa Valley Quilting Guild for the beautiful handmade placemats included in the gift bags. These thoughtful creations added warmth and a personal touch that seniors truly appreciated.

WHEN COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER: SANTA FOR SENIORS 2025

We are also grateful to BentallGreenOak for their generous donation of jars of honey harvested from their rooftop hives right here in Ottawa. This sweet, local gift was a meaningful and memorable addition to the bags.

This year, The Good Companions also reached out to Highjinx Ottawa, a Centretown-based social enterprise supporting the community since 2011. As part of this collaboration, we helped support their initiatives, including stocking their furniture bank with lightly used or new household items donated by our members and community partners across Ottawa. We are continuing this collection through January and are accepting items such as bed linens, towels, small kitchen appliances, microwaves, pots, pans, utensils, mixing bowls, household linens, and kitchenware.

Thank you to everyone who has already donated so generously. There is still time to contribute, and items can be dropped off in the collection bin at reception. Every donation helps make a real difference.

WHEN COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER: SANTA FOR SENIORS 2025

We would also like to thank the Health Canada team for generously volunteering their time to help assemble gift bags, along with the many other volunteers who helped sort, pack, and deliver gifts throughout December. Your energy, care, and teamwork made all the difference.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you to The Good Companions staff, who stepped in wherever needed to help coordinate, organize, and support the program behind the scenes. Santa for Seniors is truly a collective effort, and it shows. December was full of hustle, heart, and holiday cheer.

Seeing the smiles, hearing the gratitude, and knowing that 250 seniors felt remembered and supported made every moment worthwhile. Thank you to everyone who contributed their time, donations, and kindness. This is what it looks like when a community helps, and we are proud to be part of it.

REMINDERS AND UPDATES

Happy New Year!

As we head into 2026 together, I want to take a moment to share a quick reminder/update about how volunteer support is structured at The Good Companions.

Once onboarding is complete, volunteers are connected to the department they will be supporting and are assigned a designated staff contact within that department. This person becomes your primary point of contact moving forward.

Your department contact is who you should connect with for day-to-day matters such as scheduling, department-specific training, role expectations, volunteer hours, questions, challenges, or ideas related to your volunteer role. They are best positioned to provide guidance and support because they work closely with the program or service you are involved in.

This approach helps keep communication clear, ensures volunteers feel supported, and allows programs to run smoothly. I remain available for broader questions related to volunteering at The Good Companions, recognition, or general volunteer matters.

Thank you for all you do, we're excited to continue working together in the year ahead.

Stephane

REMINDERS AND UPDATES

Volunteer Recognition Update

We have a small update to share about this year's Volunteer Recognition celebration.

While Volunteer Appreciation Week still takes place April 19–25, we'll be moving our larger Volunteer Recognition event to June.

Moving the main celebration to June allows us to gather when the weather is warmer, schedules are more flexible, and we can create a more relaxed and joyful experience for everyone.

That said, April won't be going unnoticed. During Volunteer Appreciation Week, we'll be sharing some fun surprises and moments of thanks throughout the Centre as a way to say how much we appreciate you.

Whether in April or June, our gratitude doesn't change. Your time, care, and generosity mean so much to our community, and we can't wait to celebrate you.

Stephane

CHEERS TO YOU! ROB DUNLOP

Rob Dunlop has been a valued and familiar part of The Good Companions community since 2012. After retiring in 2007, Robert felt drawn back to community life and began volunteering as a pianist for the Adult Day Programme, drawing on his background as a former church musician. What started at the piano quickly grew into a meaningful and lasting connection with our Centre and the people who make it special.

Over the years, Rob has supported a wide range of activities across the Centre. From Chapel services and birthday sing-alongs to dining room set-ups, crafts, reception greeting, Nordic Pole Walking, Rainbow Coffee Club, and even stepping into the role of Santa Claus during the holidays, Rob has shared his time and talents in many ways. His generosity, versatility, and willingness to help wherever needed make him a true asset to our volunteer community.



CHEERS TO YOU! **ROB DUNLOP** (continued)

For Rob, volunteering is about connection, belonging, and the quiet joy that comes from showing up for others. It's about shared moments, familiar faces, and the simple but powerful impact of bringing a smile to someone's day, especially through music.

He often shares that volunteering at The Good Companions gives as much to him as he gives in return. The friendships, conversations, and sense of purpose he's found here have become an important part of his life.

It's clear that Rob doesn't just volunteer at The Good Companions, he belongs here, and that sense of belonging is felt by everyone lucky enough to share space with him.

Thank you for all you do Rob!
Cheers to you!



**Thank
You**



CHEERS TO YOU! MC VEREAULT

MC joined The Good Companions as a volunteer after being introduced to the Centre by a friend last year, and she knew right away it was a place she wanted to be. Newly retired, she was looking for a meaningful way to stay connected, learn, and give back, and The Good Companions quickly felt like the perfect fit.

For MC, volunteering is rooted in a genuine love of people and community. She describes the Centre as a big extended family and sees her role as a Greeter as being the happy, welcoming face that members, staff, and volunteers see when they walk through the doors. Whether answering questions, offering reassurance, or simply sharing a smile, MC hopes to help people feel welcome and supported, even on days when things feel a little heavy. She also proudly considers herself Sam's "little helper," always ready to lend a hand.

CHEERS TO YOU! MC VEREAULT



What MC enjoys most about volunteering is the strong sense of community and mutual respect that fills the Centre. She values that everyone, members, staff, and volunteers alike, contributes to making The Good Companions a place where people feel comfortable, accepted, and valued for who they are.

What MC enjoys most about volunteering is the strong sense of community and mutual respect at the Centre. She loves that members, staff, and volunteers all play a role in creating a space where people feel welcomed, accepted, and valued.

Even in a short time, MC says every Thursday brings moments that stand out, from shared laughter to people truly taking the time to listen to one another. It's those everyday interactions that make The Good Companions feel so special.

For anyone considering volunteering, MC says simply, come in and join us. It's a fabulous experience.

Thank you, MC, for the warmth and kindness you bring to The Good Companions.

A ROUND OF APPLAUSE...

(FROM OUR MEMBERS AND
CLIENTS)

"They always
make me feel
welcome."

"I look forward to
seeing them every
week."

"They really
care, you can
tell."

"They make this place
feel like home."

"They go out of
their way to help."

"I don't know what
we'd do without
them."

"They make my day
better just by being
here."

"They bring such
good energy."



GOOD COMPANIONS, GREAT PEOPLE!



Thank
you

GOOD COMPANIONS, GREAT PEOPLE!



Thank
you

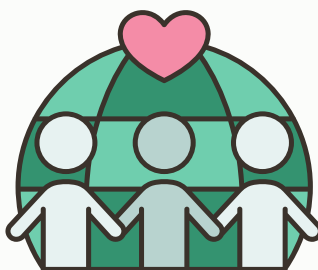
GOOD COMPANIONS, GREAT PEOPLE!



*Thank
you*

Our Culture, Our Community

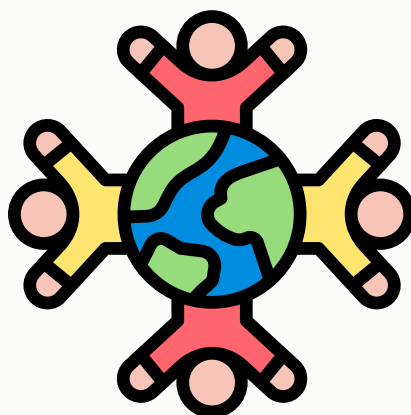
At The Good Companions, we are committed to fostering a safe, caring, and inclusive environment where staff, volunteers, members, and visitors feel valued and respected. We believe the way we work together is as important as the work we do, which is why we embrace open communication, accountability, and collaboration. With positivity, curiosity, and a spirit of cooperation, we empower one another to be authentic, support each other's growth, and create a connected community where everyone can thrive.



Our Culture, Our Community

(continued)

What This Means for Our Volunteers;
As a volunteer, you play a key role in bringing this culture to life every day. The way you greet someone, offer support, communicate with others, and show care directly shapes how members and fellow volunteers experience The Good Companions.

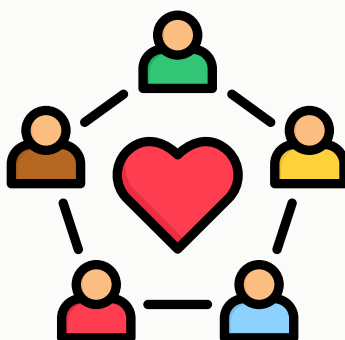


Our Culture, Our Community

(continued)

Open communication and collaboration help us work smoothly together. Accountability builds trust. Positivity and curiosity create an environment where people feel welcome, safe, and encouraged to be themselves. These values guide how we interact with one another and ensure our Centre remains a place of belonging and connection.

Your presence and actions help turn these words into lived experiences. Thank you for helping create a community where everyone feels valued, respected, and supported.



Small Things That Make a Big Difference

Volunteers are at the heart of The Good Companions, and often it's the small, everyday actions that have the biggest impact on our community. Whether you're welcoming members, supporting programs, or helping behind the scenes, how you show up matters.

A friendly greeting can completely change someone's day. Taking a moment to smile, say hello, and acknowledge someone as they arrive helps create the warm and welcoming atmosphere we're known for. Just as important is listening. Many members come to The Good Companions for connection, and being present, patient, and attentive can mean more than any task on a checklist.

Small Things That Make a Big Difference

(continued)

Clear communication also plays a key role in keeping things running smoothly. If you're unsure about something, asking questions and checking in with staff helps everyone stay aligned and supported. Flexibility is equally important, as things don't always go exactly as planned. Staying calm and adaptable helps create a sense of ease for both members and fellow volunteers.

Inclusivity and respect are woven into everything we do. Being mindful of language, differences, and individual needs helps ensure everyone feels valued and safe. Small acts of kindness, patience, and understanding contribute to a culture where people feel comfortable being themselves.


Small Things That Make a Big Difference

(continued)

Above all, remember that your presence matters. The time, care, and energy you bring help turn The Good Companions into a place of belonging and connection. Thank you for the many small things you do every day that make a big difference.



HELP WANTED!

 **Front Desk Superstars – Be the friendly face that greets everyone at reception!**

 **Special Events Sidekicks – Help us pull off unforgettable events!**

 **Choir Director – Lead our talented group.**

 **Choir Library Assistants – Keep the music flowing and organized.**


 **Repeat Performance Sales Crew – Mondays and Fridays, help run our fabulous thrift boutique!**


 **Volunteer Drivers – Hit the road and make a real difference.**

 **Adult Day Program Helpers – Support participants and spread smiles!**

HELP WANTED!

 **Spanish-Speaking Volunteer – Tuesdays, bring some language flair to the Adult Day Program!**

 **Front Door Greeters – Be the first “hello” our guests receive.**

 **Friendly Callers – Ring up a client just to brighten their day!**

 **Handy Helpers & Tech Wizards – Tackle light fixes and tech help.**

 **Mandarin/Cantonese Callers – Help connect with our Chinese community members.**

Librarian- Help organize and oversee our Library.

HELP WANTED!

⑧ Billiards Instructor – Bring your pool skills to the table this Fall.

🎂 Birthday Caller – Make someone's special day even brighter.

👉 Ready to jump in? Let's chat!

Email me at sgauthier@thegoodcompanions.ca or call 613-236-0428 ext. 2230. I'd love to match you with a role that fits your talents and brings you joy.

And hey — if you know someone who'd make an amazing volunteer, spread the word and send them my way! The more hands and hearts we have, the bigger the impact we can make together. ☀️



THANK
you

From the staff of The Good Companions!