

Saturday, April 11, 2009

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**Feature Story: Looking Beyond the Photo**

Volunteers come in all shapes and sizes, but no matter who they are or what they do, the contributions that they make are priceless. Risa, the woman featured in this photo, is a great example of how invaluable volunteering just a few hours a week can be.

Risa began her volunteer experience in 1998 at REENA, an organization that works to integrate people with disabilities into mainstream society. She began volunteering after having to take time off work due to an injury. She chose to volunteer at REENA because it was close to home and she saw it as a great learning opportunity as she had very little exposure to the disabled population in the past.



When Risa began volunteering at REENA, she went in for a few hours one afternoon a week and assisted with various activities at REENA's Battle Centre, a day facility in Thornhill, Ontario that assists adults with disabilities.

The day the photo was taken represented a turning point for Risa. It was a sunny afternoon when Risa and her coworkers at the facility decided to take the clients outside to enjoy the weather. Risa decided to sit with one of the clients, Vic, the man in the picture, and read him a story. As Risa began reading, she was amazed to see the excitement and the joy that the colours on the book's pages brought him. Her experience with Vic represented Risa's spark. From that day on she began bringing books of her own to REENA and began to read to larger and larger crowds of clients. Today Risa is referred to as the "book lady", and the clients and staff that work at REENA look forward to having her in to listen to her read.

It is volunteers like Risa that demonstrate how even the simplest gestures, such as reading a few stories once a week, can have a great impact in lives of others.

Send us your volunteer's story just like Risa from REENA! : <http://www.nvw-sab.ca/en/connect-share> or send to: [outreach@volunteer.ca](mailto:outreach@volunteer.ca)

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from compassion to action.

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[www.volunteer.ca/nvw](http://www.volunteer.ca/nvw)



les bénévoles:  
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## National Volunteer Week: What Are You Planning?

Organizations are gearing up to celebrate National Volunteer Week! With the dates fast approaching, plans are coming together and those who are involved are preparing themselves for varying events.

Since its inception in 1936, the Arthritis Society has been in support of its volunteers. Each year the society has stood firm in its Philosophy of Volunteer Involvement, and this year is no different. For 2009 National Volunteer Week 2009, the Arthritis Society hopes to emphasize its mission to connect, develop, recognize and communicate with its volunteers with this year's planned festivities.

Included in the organization's provincial newsletter is a special section for volunteers with an acknowledgement of National Volunteer Week. The newsletter also profiles the volunteers involved and includes a 'thank you' message for their involvement. In addition to this message, an e-mail will be distributed amongst all volunteers with another 'thank you' and an announcement of this year's recipients for The Arthritis Society Ontario Volunteer Award. Those who have made a special or unique contribution will be contacted personally by the Executive Director, Jo-Anne Sobie, to thank them for their efforts. The Arthritis Society will also have a banner on their website that will highlight the week's events. The celebrations will take place in regionally held events so as to promote the recognition of the volunteers within their own communities.

In the months leading up to this year's celebration, the Arthritis Society has been busy circulating media release templates to its regional staff in order to help profile the contributions of its volunteers as well as National Volunteer Week itself.

With National Volunteer Week only weeks away, organizations are busy putting together last minute details. This year is sure to be another success in bringing attention to the importance of volunteering and paying a much deserved thanks to everyone who has contributed their time and effort.

### Message from Jo-Anne Sobie, Executive Director, The Arthritis Society, Ontario Division

"Our over 7,000 wonderful volunteers come from all walks of life and are of all ages and stages, but they all have one thing in common: they make a profound difference in every aspect of our mission and our work, and ultimately are helping to improve the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of people suffering from the pain and disability of arthritis. They help us deliver programs, provide help and support through our Info Line, organize community events and help raise much-needed funds for arthritis research. Our volunteers truly are the driving force of The Arthritis Society and we are proud to be able to recognize their contributions during National Volunteer Week and throughout the year."

National Volunteer Week

Semaine de l'action bénévole

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## Feature Marketplace Item: Daisy Seeds



The Shasta daisy is a perennial flower that keeps growing in size, can be separated, replanted and still continues to flourish. For this reason, the Shasta daisy is the national flower of volunteering.

If you are still hesitating about gift ideas for your volunteers (or your friends, or mothers!), why not purchase our package of plant seeds with the gloriosa daisy - grow a green garden, green your community, and show your support for Canada's volunteers!

To purchase the seeds of daisy, visit: <http://volunteer.ca/en/category/catalog/national-volunteer-week> or order by fax: 613-231-6725