

Thursday, May 7, 2009

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## Statements of Member of Parliament about National Volunteer Week

### Mrs. Ève-Mary Thאי Thi Lac (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):



Mr. Speaker, on the occasion of National Volunteer Week, April 19 through 25, I would like to draw attention to the exceptional contributions of the women and men volunteers who are committed to helping their communities. They embody the "passion for action" the Fédération des centres d'action bénévole du Québec has chosen for its slogan.

There are many different ways of getting involved, of course. Some act locally, addressing such issues as poverty, health, rural development and the promotion of human rights. Others choose to address international issues. It is also reassuring to know that we can count on thousands of committed volunteers during our election campaigns.

I would like to pay tribute to these thousands of devoted volunteers who not only play an essential role in preserving our democracy, but also focus their efforts on improving the lot of their neighbours in these difficult times.

\* \* \*

### Mr. Tony Martin (Sault Ste. Marie, NDP):



Mr. Speaker, every day in my riding, hundreds of men, women and young people volunteer, bettering the lives of others and the communities in which they live.

This being National Volunteer Week, I salute them: farmers doing business plans for an abattoir; 450 people signing up for the Scotties national curling championship; Rotary Club and Sault College volunteers baking cookies for Easter Seals; neighbours building school playgrounds; hospice, soup kitchen, minor sports, and church volunteers; and the list goes on and on.

Volunteer Canada notes that volunteering is crucial in a time of economic crisis. I wonder how many realize that our federal elections bring together the largest experience of volunteering in the country. I salute those volunteers from all parties that nurture our democracy.

volunteers.  
from compassion to action.

APRIL 19-25, 2009

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



les bénévoles:  
de la compassion à l'action.

DU 19 AU 25 AVRIL 2009

[www.benevoles.ca/sab](http://www.benevoles.ca/sab)



Volunteers help build our social fabric. They create a vital sense of belonging to a society where neighbours care about each other and work for the common good.

I thank our volunteers. Let us invest in the voluntary sector.

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**Mr. Tim Uppal (Edmonton—Sherwood Park, CPC):**



Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to honour one of my constituents, Mr. Walter Tomaszewski, a volunteer firefighter with the Fort Saskatchewan Fire Department for the last 62 years. Mr. Tomaszewski started in April 1947.

Walter was a soldier from 1942 to 1945, fighting for Canada and the Allies in World War II. While stationed overseas, Walter met Alice, his future wife of 62 years. Walter and Alice have raised seven children, all in Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta.

After the war, he attended Alberta College, where he became a bookkeeper.

Walter no longer responds to emergency calls, but he does attend every Tuesday evening practice and is the department's historian.

I want to take this moment to recognize Mr. Tomaszewski's contribution to the community of Fort Saskatchewan and to his country. It is people like Walter who make me proud to be a Canadian.

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**Hon. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.):**



Mr. Speaker, today kicks off National Volunteer Week in Canada. This week gives us occasion to both recognize the work done by volunteers and to get involved in charitable work ourselves.

It is estimated that in Canada, some 12 million volunteers give their time to 161,000 charitable organizations, which generate \$112 billion a year for our economy.

Volunteers are selfless in their actions, noble in their intentions, and they enrich the lives of people who they will never meet.

I would like to thank everyone at Volunteer Canada, which helps coordinate volunteers across the country.

## Our National Volunteer Week campaign volunteers

Here are the stories of Volunteer Canada's own volunteers who dedicated their time and efforts to organize National Volunteer Week.

### Ritchelle Rala – Writer

"I began my involvement with Volunteer Canada in January of this year. With the hope of using the skills I acquired in school and also gaining new ones, my choice to participate in the 2009 National Volunteer Week as a writer proved to be successful.

As a recent graduate from the University of Ottawa, I was struggling to find someone who would give me my first big break. After a few unsuccessful attempts, I turned my attention to volunteering. As a volunteer for this year's event, I have gained a much needed boost to my credentials. I have been able to showcase my capabilities while receiving the advice and feedback needed to grow even further.

I will leave this experience with a sense of gratitude and appreciation towards Volunteer Canada for allowing me to hone my craft. I also want to thank them for exposing me to the many stories of the people who contribute selflessly both their time and talents to making their communities flourish. And this, I believe, was one of the best lessons learned.

I have enjoyed my time with Volunteer Canada and I hope to continue on the path of volunteerism."

### Gabrielle Bonneville -Writer

"Looking for the right volunteer position can be as difficult of a task as finding the right job. You seek primarily to put your skills to good use and to be of assistance to people who need you. In short, you seek to help. But to volunteer is also to belong, to be part of a greater cause. These days, one is easily lost in the rush of life and the deadline of financial and professional success. To stop the clock and work benevolently is a form of accomplishment few truly understand. This is why, in my pursuit to find this form of success, I decided to volunteer at Volunteer Canada.

I am a graduate student from the University of Ottawa in communication. I minored in Spanish and speak my native French and English. I was fortunate to use these language skills to travel great lengths of the world. During my travels, I found myself questioning my immanent pride of being Canadian.. I came to understand that 'We' as Canadians are recognized all over the world as being genuinely good people. We are multicultural; we lend a hand to whoever, despite race, sex or religious views; we are sought out for advice or for a simple ear to listen.



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Volunteer Canada goes beyond lending a hand or an ear. This organization seeks to promote the greater cause of volunteering to an entire country. This multiplying effect reaches an enormous amount of people, thus gaining a larger amount of volunteers to perform benevolent acts all over the country

During my time at Volunteer Canada, I wrote numerous assignments that promoted volunteerism, especially national volunteer week: the one week that resonates loudest. I was pleased to help with the final heart-felt thank you letter to all volunteers who aided with the National Volunteer Week. I was also blessed with the acquaintance of supportive individuals who gave me a sense of belonging and friendship.

Now it is time to say thank you not only to the volunteers but to everyone who create the building blocks of Volunteer Canada. Merci."

#### **Tomomi Okubo - Campaign Coordinator**

"When I started working with Volunteer Canada, I had been in Canada for only five months. I participated in a workshop organized by Volunteer Ottawa and learned that many who volunteer in Canada are newcomers. They volunteer because it helps them to integrate Canadian society more smoothly. I also felt that volunteering would be the best and most stimulating way to start my career and integrate my new environment. In my native country, I worked as a public affairs officer and thus, I was hoping to continue to use the skills and experience I had acquired in this capacity. At that moment, Volunteer Canada was looking for a Campaign Coordinator for the National Volunteer Week, so I applied for the job. The good news: I got it!

Since I began working with Volunteer Canada, I have begun to understand how active and important volunteers are in Canada. This is truly admirable. I also appreciate the fact that citizens show their gratitude for the work volunteers do during commemorative events such as the National Volunteer Week.

At Volunteer Canada, I was involved in numerous projects and this experience has helped me to develop the confidence I needed to take the next steps forward for my career in this country. For me, and for many others, volunteering creates a win-win situation in which both the volunteers and society at large benefit. I very much appreciated the opportunities offered to me and also found it very rewarding to be able to dedicate time and efforts to a good cause."