

# VON VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2023 (MARCH – MAY)



Durham  
Hospice  
Services



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*In the Fall of 2018,* I sought out volunteer opportunities with VON Durham Hospice Services. I had by then, lost my mother (2002); my mother-in-law (2010); my father (2015); and eventually my father-in-law (2019). Surely, I felt that I had something to offer other people who are grieving losses similar to mine.

Thus, my journey from Maureen-to Maureen the volunteer-to Maureen the Volunteer Trainer began.

Although I was officially retired, I still felt that I was not done yet! Years before, I had trained as a Social Worker, but once I completed training, I found that “life” got in the way. Instead, my career skills were put to good use outside the Social Work field. Now I could see that volunteering would be a return to my roots. I would be helping individuals work through their grief journey. I haven’t looked back once! This volunteer role has been so rewarding to me as person, and has increased my sense of self-worth.

Earlier this year, the opportunity for the Volunteer Trainer position appeared and I didn’t hesitate to apply. I know that the quality of client care we provide would not be possible without our tremendous volunteers. So, as I now work alongside this brilliant team at VON Durham Hospice Services, I work hard to support our volunteers, so that they can provide the best of themselves to their clients. After all, I am a volunteer too!

**Maureen Chomica**  
Volunteer Trainer



*“Be like a flower.  
Survive the rain,  
but use it  
to grow.”*



@positiveenergy\_plus







HAPPY

New Year  
2023



December 2022  
Holiday Volunteer Education  
&  
Appreciation Dinner!



Cheers!





# Welcome

Please join us in welcoming some new members of the VON Durham Hospice Services team!



**Maureen Chomica**  
Volunteer Trainer



**Stephenie Selvazzo**  
Palliative Care  
Coordinator

## Volunteers

Cathy F.  
Matt K.  
Debbie F.  
Ramona K.



## Spring Ahead!

Don't forget to  
turn your clocks  
FORWARD on  
March 12.



## Update!

Thanks to our group of BINGO volunteers,  
we received a fundraising total of:

**November: \$2, 607.13 !**

**December: \$3, 188.72 !**

**January: \$2, 181.65 !**

Charity gaming funds directly support  
our VON Durham Hospice Services  
programs, as we are a non-profit  
organization.

We are always looking for more  
volunteers to help out at Pickering Delta  
Bingo & Gaming.

If you are interested,  
please contact Tanya:  
[tanya.bahnesli@von.ca](mailto:tanya.bahnesli@von.ca)

**COMING  
SOON**

## Volunteer Connections is back!

We are happy to announce that *Volunteer Connections* will be returning for VON Durham Hospice Services volunteers! Beginning in March, events will be held every 3 months, and IN-PERSON!

We want to see you there!

*Volunteer Connections* aims to:

- Support volunteers with relevant education/resources
- Provide volunteers with a safe space to self-reflect, seek support in their matches, and connect with other volunteers
- Encourage volunteers with tools/practices valuable to their self-care

**Save The Date!**

**Thursday March 23**

**6PM - 8PM**

**VON Durham Hospice Services  
Whitby Office**

*\*Details & Registration coming soon\**





**VON Durham Hospice Services visited the Bowmanville Older Adults Active Living Fair!**



COMING  
SOON

# Volunteer Appreciation Week!

April 16-22

We want to celebrate YOU! Please join us for a variety of scheduled activities including:

*2 virtual education sessions AND*

*1 in-person event at our Whitby office location*

Details coming soon to your email!



## How To Build A Memory Garden

A memory garden can be a meaningful way to remember a loved one you have lost, and a peaceful place where you can go to reflect. Tending to your plants can also be healing, and a self-care activity. Plan one for your backyard, on your balcony, or even indoors – this is a project that the whole family can get involved with!

### Here are some ideas to get you started:

#### *Personalize it!*

- Pick a spot that is meaningful and accessible to you
- Think about sensory experience – colors, scents, sounds, textures
- Pick your loved one's favorite plants, scents, colors, etc. Some flowers have symbolic meanings (ex. forget-me-nots = true love, respect, remembrance; Petunias = hope, healing, well-being)
- Think about gardening throughout the seasons, or using perennials/annuals
- Use painted rocks, tiles, glass gems
- Hang wind chimes, ornaments, beaded strings, bird feeders, garland, ribbons
- Pick a bench or chair to relax on; light an outdoor lantern or add a fountain
- For pets: use dog print stones, a collar, a leash, their favorite toy
- Inscribe a name/saying on a plaque, or on weather-proof wood
- Add any trinkets/items that remind you of your loved one(s) – ex. golf club, teacups, helmet, wheelbarrow, action figurines, gnomes





