Student Volunteer Connections of Guelph: Partnerships Fostering the Capacity of University of Guelph Students through Volunteerism.

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As Canada’s only incorporated student volunteer centre, Student Volunteer Connections (SVC) works to ignite, educate, & foster University of Guelph students through the world of volunteerism.

SVC strives to promote social action for the purpose of building skills, passions, and most of all, community. It’s student staff team proudly enable their peers, from all walks of life, to volunteer by giving them access to involvement opportunities, resources, in-person and online programming, and a network of nearly 300 community-benefit organizations at the University and in the Guelph-Wellinglon county.

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**HELLO**  
**your peer-to-peer volunteer outlet is**

**SVC**  
**student volunteer connections**

**you can do so much, and we can help.**

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**what we do**

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**Social Media for Social Good (SM4SG)**

Promoting online social tools creating offline social action. With various easy reading guides and resources, students are able to “micro-volunteer”, an act of voluntary participation in small day-to-day situations occupying brief amounts of time. The aim of SM4SG is for people to ease into the world of volunteerism and discover how powerful their actions are can be.

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**HELP**

HELP is a network involving social action initiatives that provide community exploration through volunteerism. In small teams, we participate in various volunteer-based projects year round in the Guelph-Wellingdon County.

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**In res**

Programming created with the Residence Community in mind. We’re bridging the gap between University Residence and the Greater Guelph Community through education and awareness kits, workshops, group volunteering resources, and Rez In Action, an open social action team.

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**Dosomuch**

a one-day student conference sparking and fostering social action through innovation, participation, and collaboration to better build community both near and far. With seminars, resources, and experiences, delegates build applicable skills, passions, and networks for now and later down the road.

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**One2One**

referrals

Using our network of nearly 300 community benefit organizations and a formula built over 40 years, we match you with volunteer placements that are highly compatible to your lifestyle and needs. We have gathered every piece of basic info you need from each organization to make the transition into volunteering easy as a click or an email.

networks, resources, outreach.

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**HELP**

social action now

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**Interact**

is not your typical volunteer fair. Bi-annually, Interact showcase the excitement of volunteerism in an interactive zone featuring volunteer-based organizations offering meaningful placements for students. Students discover volunteer roles that encourage self-development while making a positive impact in the local community.

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**how we do it: case study**

**Partnership Experience in Delivering a Successful Volunteer Programme with Focus on the Individual Over the Mass.**

Student Volunteer Connections has been actively fostering the potentials of University of Guelph students through volunteerism for over 40 years. After many successes and failures, SVC has become successful in creating stronger, more engaged, student citizens by focusing on the individual over the mass. With many attempts of implementing large group-based volunteering (50 - 60 students), SVC has begun working with community-benefit organizations in the Guelph-Wellingdon County to bring about smaller, more intimate, group-based volunteer opportunities led by SVC through its ‘HELP Guelph’ program.

Help: Guelph is a network involving social action initiatives that provide community exploration through volunteerism. Every month of the Fall and Winter Semesters at the University of Guelph, SVC implements bi-weekly opportunities to volunteer in a low-commitment one-time group placement. In the 2010-2011 school term, SVC has focused on partnerships with the Donkey Sanctuary of Canada and Wellington County’s Green Legacy Tree Nursery. At the beginning of the Fall semester, the staff-team formed a strong relationship with both organizations through a formal introduction and a commitment of volunteering at the organization for a minimum of once a month for eight months.

With focusing and aiming for smaller groups of students, the experience and mindset has helped to create a greater sense of community and appreciation. Relative to last year’s volunteer trips focusing on the mass, the participants are generally happier, have built a stronger connection to the community organization, and many participate multiple times. Help: Guelph’s main goal is to introduce various opportunities in the community through a comfortable group setting in small doses. It is SVC’s intent that these small exposures of the community will lead into new placements at a community-benefiit organization that is best suited to the students’ interests and passions.

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**the Donkey Sanctuary of Canada**

one-liner: Since 1992, The Donkey Sanctuary of Canada (DSC) has been a refuge for donkeys, mules and hinneys from across North America, who have been neglected or abused, or who can no longer be cared for by their owners.

Working together to promote the group-volunteering, unique yet cost effective marketing strategies were implemented. For instance, SVC arranged for the DSC to bring two donkeys to campus for a resource display during Orientation Week in September 2010. Despite bad weather, the resource display attracted a wide range of students who had not considered volunteering or becoming involved in the community.

Since then, we have implemented six 10-person volunteer trips to the DSC, all meeting high levels of success. As of January, 2011, SVC is now witnessing waiting lists for future volunteer trips to the Donkey Sanctuary by simply sending a listserve email.

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**Green Legacy Tree Nursery**

one-liner: As a Wellington County Service, the Green Legacy Tree Nursery has successfully planted 1 million + trees in urban/rural areas of Wellington County as of 2006. This year, 155,000 seedlings and 7,500 saplings will be planted to create a more sustainable environment.

Similarly, SVC began the same process with the Green Legacy Tree Nursery in September 2010. Normally in years prior, SVC would sub-berize travel for 50-person volunteer trip at Green Legacy by renting a bus. Even with strong promotional campaigns throughout campus, the events were very under-attended and a negative ‘empty’ atmosphere caused by dissatisfaction of the turnout would occur throughout the placement. This year however, focusing on a group of 10-15 students and implementing more trips has proven successful. Since September 2010, SVC has successfully attracted 10-15 students to volunteer in a group setting six separate times at Green Legacy.