

National Volunteer Week: A Call to Strengthen Volunteer Engagement in Rural P.E.I.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(April 20, 2026) During National Volunteer Week, the Community Sector Network of Prince Edward Island (CSNPEI) is highlighting the essential role volunteers play in the vitality of rural communities.

Across Prince Edward Island, volunteers are making meaningful contributions in diverse settings. This includes individuals like Melisa Brownlow, who supports arts and culture through her work with River Clyde Arts; Shirley Sheeran, who dedicates her time to patient care and community support at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital; and Keara Higgins, who helps preserve local heritage through her involvement with the Garden of the Gulf Museum. Their efforts highlight the wide-reaching impact of volunteerism across sectors, and you can hear more about their volunteer journeys on the Community Sector Network of PEI's social media accounts this week.

Donald DesRoches, a dedicated volunteer and board member, emphasizes the real impact of getting involved: "There's really nothing to lose, because you have that opportunity to contribute and make a difference in society." He also notes that "the people who do the heavy lifting in our society are often volunteers sitting on boards and making the best decisions they can so that services are provided."

Alexia Riche, Executive Director of the Community Sector Network of Prince Edward Island, reinforces the importance of volunteerism across the province: "Volunteers are the backbone of our communities, especially in rural regions. Their commitment ensures that vital programs, services, and cultural spaces continue to thrive. National Volunteer Week is an opportunity to both celebrate their contributions and encourage more Islanders to step forward and get involved."

In many rural organizations, the absence of full-time staff means volunteers take on key responsibilities, from governance to fundraising. This reality underscores an urgent need to recruit more volunteers, especially in rural communities.

CSNPEI is also running a public contest encouraging people across PEI to share their positive volunteer experiences or commit to volunteering by posting a video on social media and tagging @CSNPEI. The contest is open to all PEI residents, with two cash prizes available: \$1,000 for first place and \$500 for second place.

CSNPEI is encouraging Islanders to get involved, even in small ways. This National Volunteer Week, the message is clear: volunteerism is at the heart of Prince Edward Island's future.

For more information on how to get involved with a not-for-profit organization making a difference on PEI please visit <https://csnpei.com/volunteer/>

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About the Community Sector Network of Prince Edward Island

The Community Sector Network of Prince Edward Island (CSNPEI) is a province-wide organization that supports and strengthens the non-profit sector. By fostering collaboration, providing resources, and advocating for community organizations, CSNPEI works to build capacity and ensure a vibrant, resilient sector across Prince Edward Island.

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