

National Volunteer Week

April 16 – 22, 2023

During National Volunteer Week, April 16 – 22, 2023, we celebrate our volunteers – the time, talent, and energy they share to strengthen the fabric of our community! At CIF we not only depend on our dedicated volunteer Peer Review Committees, we also fund a variety of programs across Saskatchewan that rely on the hard work of volunteers.

Located in North Central Regina, the White Pony Lodge runs a volunteer patrol throughout the area offering a helping hand to those in need. Volunteers come from all over the City of Regina. Nicki Clarke, with White Pony Lodge writes, **“Patrols reach marginalized members of North Central Regina, often neighbours living with addiction. We always make an effort to engage with all the people we meet and have conversations with everyone from long-term residents to children out for play to unhoused peoples trying to find spaces.”**

Volunteers are essential to the mission of White Pony Lodge, to help create a safe and connected community. One heartening story shared by Clarke tells about how the volunteers are viewed as a positive and safe group in the community. **“During a routine patrol a group of children ran over to us yelling and acting afraid. They told us about a van that had been following them and driving aggressively toward them. Our group split up so we could escort the children home and make sure they arrived safely. During closing circle our patrollers were proud that the children came to us for help, we were deemed a safe group by the children and parents of our community.”**

The Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre’s Community Income Tax Volunteer Program (CVITP) is a free Income Tax service for folks in Saskatoon and is completed by a team of around 20 dedicated volunteers; most of them are retired and return each year; they are the backbone of this service. CVITP has been running in Saskatoon for over 30 years, and in 2022, more than 2,700 tax files were completed, resulting in over \$10 million going back into the hands of clients!

“Tax filing often seems to be a great burden for many clients, and yet the volunteers take on the task with grace and kindness, making a difference to others,” Laurie O’Connor, Executive Director of the Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre shares. **“The other day one of the volunteers said that he really enjoys the conversations he has with people, learning about their lives, and just meeting them where they are at. He finds this work very rewarding, and brings him back year after year as one of our long term, dedicated volunteers.”**

“Volunteers give so much of themselves and make a huge difference in the lives of people we serve, which in turn impacts our whole community in a positive way.”

- Laurie O’Connor, Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre

White Pony Lodge can only exist with our dedicated volunteers. A collective and heartfelt thanks is a small but mighty way to demonstrate our sincere gratitude to all volunteers, present and past. They have all contributed to the common good of North Central.

- Nicki Clarke, White Pony Lodge

