



SCENE

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It's National Volunteer Week ...

Here are two people who have made a difference in their own way

From April 19-25, National Volunteer Week will salute those individuals who selflessly give of their time and talents to making a difference in their community or their world, whether it be helping out with a youth group or a seniors' residence, raise money for a worthwhile charitable cause, serve food at a homeless shelter or build schools for children in a Third World country.

In fact, according to Statscan, over 12 million Canadians give their time every year as a volunteer (for a total of two billion hours) and donate an equivalent of over \$17 trillion worth of manpower, not to mention raising money for over 161,000 charities, foundations and community

groups in Canada.

Those figures are not lost on Eramelinda Boquer, a veteran local broadcaster and publicist



Stuart Nulman
Grapevine
The Times

who has volunteered her time for such organizations as Dreams Take Flight, the Shield of Athena, Sun Youth and the Freedom from Poverty Foundation. For nearly three years, she

has been on a quest to have the government on both federal and provincial levels recognize and promote the value of volunteerism and volunteering to a new plateau.

Her goal is threefold: to increase the tax credit for charitable donations; to recognize and quantify the time given by an organization or a volunteer to a charitable organization as a tax credit; and provide incentives for all schools to include volunteer work in their respective curricula.

Through a constant e-mailing and letter writing campaign over the past three years to the office of the prime minister, provincial premiers, political party leaders, federal MPs, provincial MNAs and MLAs, cabinet ministers and government officials, Ms. Boquer's mission to recognize, reward and promote more volunteerism in Canada has met up with a great deal of positive responses.

NDP Leader Jack Layton, who is a major supporter of volunteerism,

responded with a great deal of support; federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty has recently acknowledged that he received her proposal; Premier Jean Charest, provincial Minister of Employment



Lachine resident Brian Seltmann

ment and Social Solidarity Sam Hamad, Parti Quebecois (PQ) Leader Pauline Marois and PQ MNA Monique Richard have all voiced their support and promised to study and consider her proposal; and most recently, Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall has received it and forwarded it to his ministers of finance and for tourism, parks, culture and sports for their consideration.

about Ms. Boquer's volunteerism recognition, reward and promotion proposal, log on to www.productionsboquer.com and click on to the "Advocacy" link.

Lachine resident Brian Seltmann has also found a way to give back to the community ... through his passion for cycling.

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By: *Stuart Nulman*



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