

Helping people find a rewarding opportunity

Special to the Examiner

Volunteer Edmonton doesn't fit the role of a typical volunteer centre.

As a program of The Support Network, Volunteer Edmonton exists to promote the value of volunteerism, advocate for good standards of practice for volunteer involvement and collaborate with others in support of volunteerism.

Simply put, one of the things Volunteer Edmonton does is help people find meaningful volunteer opportunities, but with one exception.

Volunteer Edmonton is not a volunteer centre in the traditional sense, where a prospective volunteer goes to a building and is matched with a volunteer opportunity.

Times are changing and volunteer centres across the country are changing, too.

While Volunteer Edmonton doesn't do direct volunteer matching, the program provides the general public with ways to find volunteer opportunities and help them narrow down their search through the information and referrals posted on their website.

As an online volunteer

Volunteer Edmonton

information resource, Volunteer Edmonton provides much of the same kind of information as a traditional volunteer centre on their website, but without the matching aspect.

"We're not looking to re-invent the wheel. There are so many amazing resources and organizations in the city. We also believe that folks want to give back. People just need some help to point them in the right direction, and Volunteer

Edmonton can do that," says

Nancy McCalder, director of The Support Network.

Along with tips and resources on where to find opportunities, Volunteer Edmonton's website offers information on how to find opportunities best suited to their skills and interests.

An entire page is dedicated to what kinds of questions to ask before volunteering with an organization in order to ensure that there are solid volunteer management practices in place.

"There are standards and expectations that volunteers

should know about. We want everyone to have an amazing experience. Going into it with their eyes wide open, with lots of questions, will help ensure that happens," says McCalder.

The website also serves the non-profit and voluntary sector with the research and volunteer management resources posted.

Volunteer managers can access tips on best practices and information on workshops and training.

To find out how you can start volunteering or to find out more about what Volunteer Edmonton can do for you, visit their website at volunteeredmonton.com. Click on the I Want to Volunteer link.

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