

# ANNUAL VOLUNTEER REPORT 2018/19

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A year of impact



Victoria  
Lifeline



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

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**"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."**

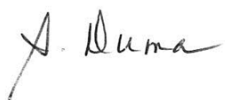
WINSTON CHURCHILL

I believe strongly in those words, and have witnessed first-hand the impact volunteering and giving of oneself can have on individuals, families and the whole community. The volunteers at Victoria Lifeline are a very special group of people. They donate their valuable time and energy to help us carry out our mission of safe and independent living for all Manitobans. Volunteers are the heart of Victoria Lifeline and we are so grateful for their contributions to this organization and the clients we serve.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every volunteer who has walked through the doors of Victoria Lifeline. Over the last 30 years we have received countless thank you cards letting us know how wonderful the Lifeline volunteers have been. From daughters and sons, friends and neighbours, we have heard their words of gratitude - the volunteer was "patient, kind, thoughtful, understanding, good humoured, sensitive to their needs, went the extra mile...", the list is endless and amazing.

To our volunteers - your commitment is truly inspiring. The impact numbers in this report are remarkable. We, the staff at Victoria Lifeline and the Victoria General Hospital Foundation, are honoured to work with such an incredible group of people.

Sincerely,



Sandra Duma  
Executive Director  
Victoria Lifeline



**VICTORIA LIFELINE**  
Celebrating 30 years

# THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteering contributes to both mental and physical well-being for people of all ages. Research has shown that volunteering helps lower stress levels, reduces the risk of depression, high blood pressure and even increases life satisfaction.\* Researchers theorize that volunteering gives people a sense of purpose, which in turn creates a positive self-image. In other words, volunteering is good for you!

Victoria Lifeline volunteers consistently report that helping others is one of main reasons they donate their valuable time to our organization...

**"You can't even imagine the personal satisfaction I get knowing when I leave the home, that client is safe and protected. It makes me feel so much better inside."**

Murray, Home Service Volunteer

## OUR MANDATE

Victoria Lifeline is supported by a caring network of dedicated volunteers who contribute almost 5,000 hours a year to this organization. Volunteers have been part of Lifeline since the very beginning and for over thirty years their unwavering commitment has helped over 40,000 people lead safe and independent lives. As a community service of the Victoria General Hospital Foundation, Lifeline volunteers have also been instrumental in advancing healthcare at the hospital and through innovative community initiatives.

## OUR VOLUNTEER PHILOSOPHY

We believe that volunteering is a mutually beneficial act that supports personal development, increases the capacity of our organization and builds our community. We aim to build a strategic, innovative and collaborative program that is integrated into all areas of the organization.

\*<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/media-spotlight/201307/can-volunteering-help-you-live-longer>





# THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Volunteers are recruited and screened by the Home Services Manager at Victoria Lifeline. Depending on their position, they are then trained and supported by the appropriate supervising staff member. Thirty-nine volunteers actively participated in our Volunteer Program in 2018/19.

Of the 39 dedicated volunteers, 28 worked as Home Service Representatives (HSRs) and 11 worked as Office & Inventory Support volunteers. For a detailed job description for each of these positions, please visit the **Volunteer page** on our website.

## Home Service Representatives (HSRs)

The role of Home Service Representative provides a very unique volunteer opportunity. HSRs install and service the latest technology in Lifeline equipment for clients across Winnipeg and the role is both rewarding and engaging. There is a camaraderie amongst the HSRs as they share a very special purpose; helping some of the most vulnerable people in society live safely at home with dignity and confidence.

HSRs visit thousands of homes each year and are welcomed into the living rooms of people from different backgrounds, ages and abilities. Some Lifeline clients are facing new or worsening health conditions and may also be experiencing social isolation and loneliness. When the HSR arrives at the client's home wearing a Lifeline ID badge, it is so much more than a service call. It is a friendly face, a warm smile and a visit from someone who is patient, understanding and willing to listen.



## WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE SAYING:

"I just want to put a smile on someone's face, that's what keeps me coming back."

**Eugene, HSR**

"I really enjoyed the experience and I know the skills I learned will be beneficial to me. Thank you so much for making me feel like a part of your team."

**Ethan, Career & Community Experience Program**

"I've met so many wonderful people and heard so many stories. The lives some of these clients have led, the things they've accomplished, it's incredible."

**Pat, HSR**

"I am volunteering with VL because I love the feeling of helping others, especially older, vulnerable people."

**HSR Survey, 2017**



While volunteers bring their knowledge, skills and experience to the organization, Victoria Lifeline provides them with a meaningful opportunity to support and connect with individuals and their families. Lifeline also provides comprehensive training on the latest technology in Personal Emergency Response System (PERS) equipment, like the GPS enabled GoSafe mobile button and state-of-the-art wireless communicators. The Home Services Manager hosts quarterly HSR meetings to communicate operational updates and provide HSRs with an opportunity to share stories and ideas with their fellow volunteers.

Through the peer support program, veteran HSRs mentor incoming volunteers and share their experience and stories of impact. Whether they are helping a discharged patient return to the comfort of their own home or supporting a young client with MS to live on her own with confidence, Lifeline volunteers make an incredible and lasting impact on the people they serve.

### Office & Inventory Support

The Volunteer Office Support role expanded in 2018/19 to help our organization meet its strategic 'green' target of going paperless with the scanning project. A new Inventory Support position was also created to clean equipment in-house in an effort to reduce the cost of outsourcing.

Moving to electronic files from paper has also enabled easy staff access to information, more secure files and increased efficiency. As an added bonus, we will no longer have to send boxes of paper files to a storage facility. With over 5,600 clients, we are 3/4 of the way through the scanning project, thanks to our dedicated office support volunteers.



Premier's Volunteer Service Award

## 2018 Premier Volunteer Service Award

Victoria Lifeline volunteers were honoured with the prestigious Premier's Service Award at the 35th Annual Volunteer Manitoba Awards in April of 2018.

This award is in recognition of the tireless work our volunteers do on behalf of Lifeline clients and this organization. It is so richly deserved and we congratulate the volunteers and Home Services Manager Melissa Sitter for her excellent stewardship of the Volunteer Program.

**Congratulations to all our Volunteers!**





Office Support volunteers are also responsible for compiling new client Welcome Packages and handout bundles for community and healthcare. They also make all the post-installation follow-up phone calls (see right-side column) and even take care of any filing needs to be done. Due to the fact that there are so many volunteer opportunities with Victoria Lifeline, some have even transitioned from one role into another. Former HSRs have joined Inventory Support and now help clean the equipment in-house. Once they have 'retired' from one role, they are welcomed to join another. It is wonderful for our staff to see a familiar face in a new role.

### Career & Community Placement Work Site

As a work placement site for the Fort Richmond Collegiate Career & Community Experiences Program, we welcomed three students to the volunteer team in 2018/19. They also helped advance the scanning project and each of them dedicated approximately 40 hours of time to our organization. Victoria Lifeline provided them with valuable work experience and an opportunity to explore possible career paths.

***"The practical experience and the professional contact the student received at your establishment are superior to anything gained from a textbook."*** Career Development Teacher, Fort Richmond Collegiate

Victoria Lifeline would also like to give a special acknowledgement to Anne Blair (pictured below) who reached her 15 year long service milestone in 2019. She is truly part of our Lifeline family and we are so lucky to work with her.



### POST-INSTALLATION TELEPHONE SURVEYS:

Office Support Volunteers complete post-installation follow up surveys, which help our organization achieve a strategic target of excellence in customer service. The volunteers even take the time to record notes from their conversations. Here are some of the comments:

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Service is, "absolutely splendid, exactly what we needed". Volunteer "could not have been more informative and courteous".

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96-year-old sub tells me service is "excellent" and thanked me profusely for checking up on her. Sweet lady!

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Sub is happy with the service and would rate us at 11, even if 10 is the best.

# 3,249

## **TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS HELPED**

Home Service Reps completed over 3,000 appointments installing & servicing Lifeline.

# 4,959

## **TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS**

HSRs and Office support volunteer combined for almost 5,000 hours of service.

# 60,911

## **TOTAL KILOMETERS TRAVELLED**

HSRs drove over 60,000 km to help clients in need, which is like travelling around the world 1.5 times!

# 2,000

## **CLIENT PACKAGES PREPARED**

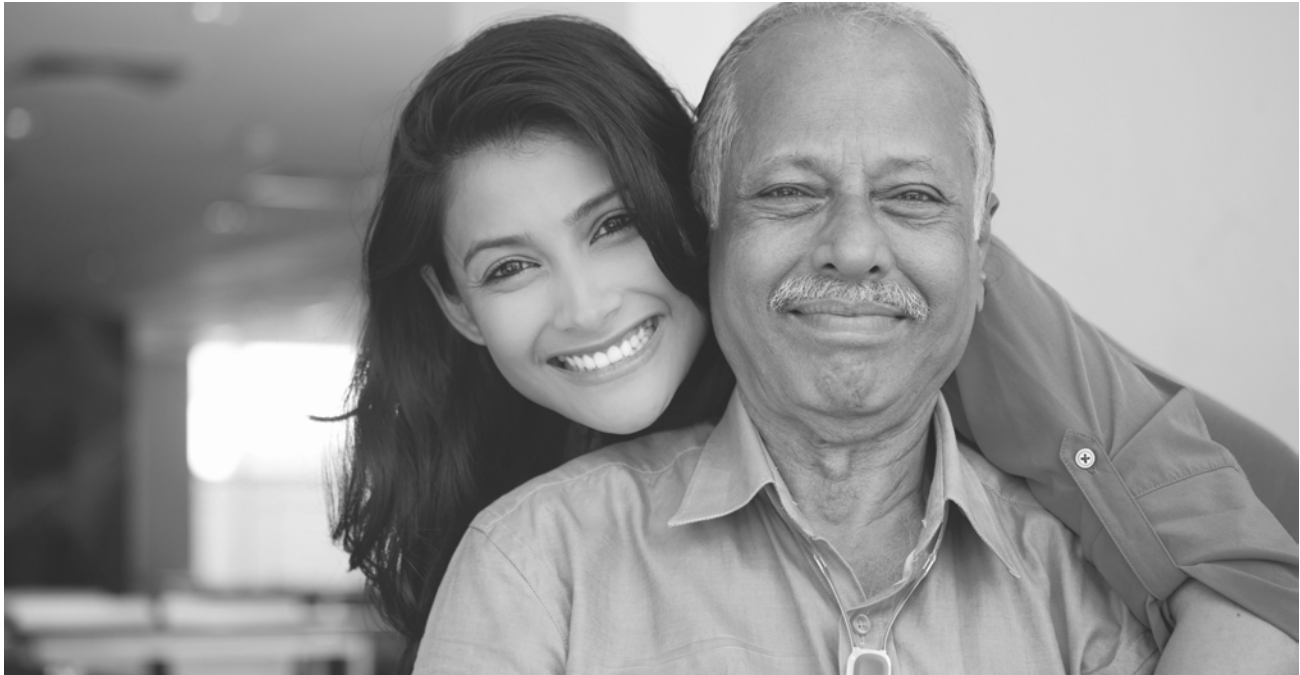
Office support volunteers put together WELCOME packages for every new client.

## THE YEAR IN NUMBERS





## THE YEAR IN STORIES



There are so many stories to tell, and so many lives that have been changed by our volunteers. They are stories of impact - of one person making an incredible difference in the life of another.

### Brian's Story:

HSR Brian arrived at his service call one day to change a personal help button. He rang the doorbell and it took the client a considerable amount of time to open the door. When she finally did, Brian followed her into the home and sat down to explain why he was there. He immediately noticed that the client was very sad, and she openly expressed feelings of hopelessness.

Brian saw a bible sitting on the coffee table beside him and he kindly offered to read her a passage. As he sat with her, slowly reading the passage she had requested, her demeanour began to change. **"It's like a spark went off inside of her and she just lit up."** So Brian stayed with her for awhile, reading out loud until

the hopelessness started to fade a little. Brian will never forget that client and it is quite likely that she will never forget Brian either.

### Murray's Story:

As a retired RCMP officer, Murray spent 34 years keeping the community safe and he now spends his days helping people feel safe and secure in their own homes. Murray said he meets so many older adults who are living alone and the sad truth is that some of them are very lonely.

Murray has seen the social isolation first hand, so he tries to make a positive impact while he's there. "After I've spent some time installing Lifeline and I'm ready to leave, some clients have even asked me, 'can I have a hug?' They are so happy and pleasant – the gratification I receive after I'm done setting everything up, it's what drives me to keep coming back."





## THE YEAR IN IMPACT



### Volunteer/Staff Events & Long Service Milestones:

Victoria Lifeline hosted two formal recognition events in 2018/19. The Holiday party with the Victoria General Hospital Foundation and the Annual Summer BBQ, held at the beautiful Miracle Garden. These events provide an opportunity for staff and volunteers to socialize together while recognizing the incredible contributions of the volunteers.

Congratulations to the following volunteers on their service milestones:

#### **1 Year:**

Susan  
Greta  
Pat C.  
Margaret  
Gilbert

#### **5 Year:**

John

#### **15 year:**

Anne

### Until Next Year...

So much has changed at Victoria Lifeline since we first opened our doors over 30 years ago. In 2018, we celebrated that milestone anniversary and the volunteers were by our side at the celebration event hosted by the Lieutenant Governor.

It was wonderful to stand shoulder to shoulder with a group of people who have been instrumental in the success of this organization.

As a group they have embraced change and helped Victoria Lifeline become the leading medical service in Manitoba. Every one of those kilometers traveled and every hour donated has a story of impact behind it. Victoria Lifeline looks forward to another year of collaboration with our hardworking, dedicated volunteer team.