



FROM THE CEO, DREW DYSON

Live Life to the Fullest: The Power of Volunteerism

*“If you aren’t making a difference
in someone else’s life,” Ella said,
“then you aren’t really
living life to the fullest.”*

I first met Ella when she was a ninety-one-year-old volunteer in the community I served for many years. A career educator, “Miss Ella” began volunteering upon her retirement at the age of sixty-six. She was well known across the county for her commitment to education, providing grants and scholarships to local college students through her foundation. In addition, she was an active Sunday school teacher, a frequent reader in the local schools, a volunteer at the community food bank, and much more.

At her one hundredth birthday celebration hosted by our church, she was joined by family, friends, and over 200 people from the community including school personnel, local, county, and state politicians, and many others. Seated in front of the gathered crowd, Miss Ella challenged everyone to give back to the community. “The best gift you can give me, besides chocolate,” she said smiling, “is to start volunteering and making a difference.” She had arranged for over fifteen community organizations to be present that day and, in honor of Miss Ella, over one hundred and twenty-five people signed up to volunteer for a minimum of ten hours!



A few years ago, Senior Corps (a national service program for active adults over sixty years old) conducted research on the health benefits for older adults who volunteered in their program for one year. In their study, they found:

- 46% of participants reported significant health improvement throughout the year
- 67% of participants reported decreased social isolation and improved social connections
- Among volunteers who started their service reporting multiple symptoms of depression, over 70% reported significant improvement

Similarly, Nicole Anderson, a senior scientist with the Rotman Research Institute and associate professor at the University of Toronto, concluded years of study indicating “volunteering boosts mental and physical health for older adults. Seniors who volunteer feel happier and less depressed, function better mentally, and experience more social support and satisfaction with their lives.”

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PSRC has an incredible group of volunteers who give generously of their time to support others. I think of all the volunteers that make both of our buildings run smoothly by offering front desk support. I think of our incredible Tech Lab volunteers who are offering in-person and virtual assistance to hundreds of clients. I am amazed by the number of volunteers who give generously of their time and wisdom to make our Evergreen Forum run effectively — teaching, facilitating, assisting with technology, and much more.

This year, we have also resumed our GrandPals program and expanded our HomeFriends. And, of course, there are board members, advisory council members, fundraising volunteers, committee volunteers, and far more. PSRC truly is fueled by volunteers! I am frankly grateful for all who give so freely of their time to help us carry out our mission to help older adults thrive! If you are interested in volunteering within PSRC, contact Sharon Hurley, our volunteer & vaccine navigator coordinator.

My vision for the future of our work is to expand our reach by mobilizing a senior corps of volunteers who are ready and willing to serve throughout the community. You will hear more about that in the year ahead. For now, I want to challenge you to find a way to give back to your community through volunteerism. In the words of Miss Ella, if you want to truly live life to the fullest, it's time to start investing your time in the lives of others. Thank you for making a difference!

All the Best,
Drew A. Dyson, PhD
Chief Executive Officer