



# 2015-16 ANNUAL REPORT

**1,100** high school students volunteered more than **6,300** hours during "Change the World"

**34** EPYC volunteers delivered a youth leadership program to high school students

**159** community organizations representing arts & culture, healthcare, social services & many others participated in the **Volunteer Action Centre** programs and services

**83%** of Waterloo Wellington Learning Alliance training participants implement a concept or tool within 6 months of learning

We have successfully driven traffic to our website through fairs, social media engagement, and community events:

**232** individuals representing **76** organizations received professional development through the Waterloo Wellington Learning Alliance

Attended **47** volunteer promotion events at schools, community programs, newcomer groups with a total of **2,687** attendees

**46,173** unique visitors

**96,000** sessions on our website

**20,716** accessed member organizations' websites through links from our website

**27,046** initiated correspondence with member organizations

**2,659** individuals and businesses subscribed to the 'Updates from the Volunteer Action Centre' newsletter and regularly receive current community information

**42** VAC volunteers shared a variety of skill sets and more than **2,200** valuable hours

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2015/16 was another busy year for the Volunteer Action Centre (VAC) board members. We continued to assess the status of all nine sections of our Community Impact Plan, working with the VAC staff to tweak, enhance, and move projects forward. We have deemed that for the future, we need to complete a more in-depth assessment of VAC - looking at the mission, vision, and values again to really make sure that we're sustainable and have succession plans in place for both board and staff.

This year, we've moved offices to the 5th floor of the same building, enabling VAC to better serve the needs of the Kitchener-Waterloo community. We've welcomed and relied on volunteers (students completing internships and summer students) to facilitate the effectiveness of our small staff team. Both myself and our Vice Chair, Desmond Courtney, participated in Capacity Canada's Bootcamp and have committed the board to creating a great succession plan for the board as well as staff.

Board members continue to participate in community programming and bring awareness of VAC to those they interact with, strengthening the value of volunteerism in the KW area.

My second and final year as Board Chair has continued to be a great learning experience and this is in part due to the wonderful directors that are part of our board. I want to thank all board members for their hard work and for their assistance in making this year such a great one. We welcomed Kristin, Andrea, Rob and Kevin who were all new this year. We're sad to see Sarah Exel and Jill Brush leave the board but know that we have a great relationship with them and wish them well as they go on to make their impact in other volunteer initiatives in the region.

I would also be remiss if I didn't thank the VAC staff - they're small in numbers but mighty in the amount of work they accomplish and in the connections they facilitate.

Alison Boyd  
Chair of the Board of Directors



# TREASURER'S REPORT

The Volunteer Action Centre (the "Organization") continued to deliver on the various special projects that were ongoing at the end of fiscal 2015. The funds provided to execute these projects resulted in a positive contribution to the Organization's financial results in fiscal 2016. A number of these projects reached the end of their term in fiscal 2016, resulting in a significant decrease in cash in order to fulfill our obligations under the partnerships and to accomplish the goals that we set out to achieve. We had a lot to celebrate in the current year. We successfully delivered on our commitments to our partners on the various special projects. We completed an office move to accommodate the constantly evolving needs of the Organization and its members. We also launched our new redesigned website, which is core to the services that we provide to our members. The website was funded through funds internally restricted by the Board of Directors for this purpose. In the upcoming year, we will continue to focus on cash management so that we can appropriately deliver on our core services, in line with our mission 'to build and develop community capacity for volunteerism'.

Dennis Coelho  
Treasurer

**Audited financial statements for the year ending March 31, 2016 are available by contacting the Volunteer Action Centre.**

# A YEAR IN REVIEW

When exploring the mission of the Volunteer Action Centre board and staff members, with the guidance of our member organizations and other community members, we talked in detail about our region's capacity for volunteerism. As we work to achieve our mission, every aspect of our work relates back to RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, and RECOGNITION of volunteers.

We know that **recruiting** volunteers for the many organizations, programs, and services in our area is a huge contribution that we are making and one that adds value for the community. Over the years we have leveraged technology to facilitate more connections. In 2015, 96,000 sessions on our website translated to more than 27,000 emails to our members and nearly 21,000 visits to their websites. VAC staff attended 47 promotions events to speak about the importance of volunteering. In addition VAC staff and volunteers met with 199 individuals to provide one-on-one guidance on how to find positions. Our focus is to provide as many conduits as possible to facilitate growth in engagement.

**Retention** is more complex. This is about helping member organizations to create a welcoming and professional environment for volunteers; one where the volunteer will want to return to share their skills over and over. It is also about providing a voice for the volunteer manager and the volunteer in places where decisions being made will impact their contributions.

We offer professional development opportunities for community organizations to provide information on current trends and the newest tools and resources to assist them with their work. Through the Waterloo Wellington Learning Alliance, we offer three streams of learning — volunteer management, organizational development, and board governance. Of those attending, 83% reported that they implemented tools or concepts learned within 6 months of attending training.

Peer-to-peer learning opportunities have been a long time staple of our professional development offerings. The Executive Directors Network and the Volunteer Managers Network have provided a venue for skilled professionals to discuss issues and learn from the expertise in the room. This year, the Waterloo Wellington Learning Alliance through sponsorship from the United Way of Cambridge and North Dumfries, added a consortium led by Scott Smith of High Performance Solutions and Consortium. 15 executive directors and senior managers are learning together and are working on organizational projects with guidance, peer support, and applying a continuous learning approach.

Retaining volunteers sometimes requires volunteer managers to accomplish their work in new ways or try an approach that is new to them and their organization. This year, Volunteer Action Centre staff provided support to hundreds of member staff and volunteer leaders to talk through issues — like screening practices and policies, and board-staff relationships — by providing a neutral perspective. This continues to be a valued and an active service for our membership.

Finally, retention has a great deal to do with external relationships. These relationships help the Volunteer Action Centre keep current on trends and issues facing our community and our sector. We would like to acknowledge our partners in the Corporate Community Involvement Council, BlackBerry, KPMG, PwC, Economical Insurance, and the University of Waterloo that have provided a venue to discuss how CSR, both volunteering and philanthropy, can provide better impact in our region.



**Recognition** is a vital component of retention of our volunteers. It is important to recognize the breadth of volunteering, which we do through media campaigns, a National Volunteer Week resource package, and through many speaking engagements throughout the year. It is also essential to be able to be specific in recognizing the depth of the impact volunteers are contributing to our region. The Volunteer Impact Awards continue to provide a means to share the stories and the impact of a few inspirational volunteers each year.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** This year we were fortunate to participate in a tangible way in the Syrian Refugee Resettlement process. We saw first hand the engagement of the people of Waterloo Region as they generously offered their skills and their time as they conducted fundraising events. They also found ways to donate items such as food, clothing, hygiene, and household goods. It is heartwarming to witness what you believe of your neighbours and community members.

We were also able to be a part of the creation and launch of a Volunteer Centre on campus at the University of Waterloo. Congratulations to the FEDs for hearing the need on campus and working to make a difference.

Jane Hennig  
Executive Director

**THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE WORK OF THE VOLUNTEER ACTION CENTRE DURING THE 2015-16 PROGRAM YEAR!**

**VOLUNTEER ACTION CENTRE**  
 500-151 Frederick Street  
 Kitchener, ON N2H 2M2  
 P 519-742-8610 F 519-742-0559  
[www.volunteerkw.ca](http://www.volunteerkw.ca)

# Supporters

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 Government of Ontario (MCIIT)  
 Ontario Trillium Foundation  
 Region of Waterloo  
 United Way of KW & Area

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