



Personal Reflections  
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## Personal Reflections: The Joy of Giving

by Michael P. Nixon, Executive Director, Community Development Halton

What a magical season it is that we enter into as the calendar winds down into a new year. It's a time when the celebration of life, personal interaction, and 'giving' seem more alive than at any other time of the year.

Or maybe it's just me ... my love of the lights and candles, the trees and the baking, the sharing of stories past and promises of goodwill and healing ... the kid in me thoroughly revels in the special nature of the weeks ahead.

And one aspect of this beautiful season which seems to be ever so noticeable and sincerely appreciated is the 'giving' of time and heart which so many of us share with each other. The want ... no, the heartfelt desire to support and help others around us – and in many cases, those whom we may not even know. Some do it through gifts, others through the gift of personal time, but the underlying commonality is our sharing of ourselves with each other.

I am most fortunate to see this 'personal giving' at work daily within the efforts of Community Development Halton (CDH). Through our Volunteer Halton initiatives – the placement of good people with large hearts into activities throughout Halton, its workshops, training sessions, and community interaction – and the work of our Age-Friendly Initiatives – helping to reduce loneliness and isolation for so many of our older adults – this want to give of ourselves to help others is beautifully overwhelming. By way of example, the stories and letters of sincere gratitude from individuals so



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personally touched by gifts, letters, crafts, and much more, from those unknown to them through our [Connections Among Generations](#) program is so emotionally uplifting!

But this giving of ourselves does not stop here. The CDH Board of Directors is no different than any other community group supported and driven by the passion of volunteer Board members who wish for nothing other than to see the organization thrive and strengthen the fabric of our communities. Yes, it's the staff of this and other organizations who ensure the professional and dedicated delivery of much needed programming, but again it's the heart of our incredible volunteers who ensure that our community is strong and vibrant. Generally, I like to keep my comments as general as possible when speaking of our steadfast and loyal friends, but there is one individual I am proud to acknowledge as formidable in the dedication she has provided CDH over the years. Jan Mowbray has served on the Board of this organization for so many years, most recently as Chair, leading CDH through some very difficult years. Jan has recently moved from Chair to "Past-Chair" of the Board – her amazing spirit and drive will not soon be forgotten. I suspect somehow that this positive spirit is so very common amongst our volunteer community!



Jan Mowbray, Past-Chair of the Board

So as my family and I wrap presents which we hope to find under ours and other's trees in the weeks to come, I remind myself that 'giving' is not just about what rests within the package. Giving is much more – not only during this special time of the year, but throughout. We touch the hearts of others known to us – and perhaps much more meaningfully to those we don't even know personally – through the gift of ourselves. The thought and the time we each put into making a special gesture offered to another means so much more than we can ever imagine!

I wish you all the blessings of the season ahead. May we all be blessed with happy, healthy, and joyous weeks ahead as we interact with each other!

Warmest Regards,

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