



# Volunteering promotes good mental health for volunteers and clients

By Margaret Goulding

**B**aking. Gardening. Swimming. Playing basketball and hosting special events. Sound like an agenda for a fun weekend? It's actually a list of just some of the activities that volunteers do as part of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's (CAMH) Corporate Volunteer Program.

The CAMH Corporate Volunteer Program links closely with corporations to create partnerships to build and sustain healthy communities. This unique collaboration provides an opportunity for employees to make a difference in their community and their own lives by volunteering their time to participate in activities with CAMH clients. On average, CAMH hosts 753 volunteers per quarter, who together contributed 171,101 hours last year.

CAMH's client-centred phi-



**Oxford Properties Group employees volunteered to prepare and host a strawberry social for clients from a number of programs at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's Queen Street site.**

losophy of care recognizes that each client has individual social, physical, emotional, spiritual and psychological needs. The volunteer programs are designed to address these needs and promote a healthy environment for

our clients and volunteers to thrive in.

The corporate volunteer program encourages employees coming from various workplaces to use their skills and talents in rewarding ways. It enhances

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alleviating stress and anxiety, building self-esteem and reinforcing personal relationships. Getting involved and volunteering promotes good mental health.

A volunteer from PCL Construction, returning from an outing with clients, reported that "A few of the clients from the picnic were on the same streetcar as me and I overheard them say 'it was a great day, something that we'll never forget,' and that made my day!"

### **Where do the volunteers come from?**

Just as people with mental health and addictions issues come from every walk of life, so corporate volunteers come to CAMH from a wide variety of industries including construction, architecture, energy, finance, marketing, insurance, communications, property management, hospitality, and governmental agencies.

"I'd like to thank you for the

most amazing day yesterday!

We had so much fun and it was absolutely phenomenal to see such an enlightening group of people. What a breath of fresh air!" said an enthusiastic corporate volunteer from St. Joseph's Communications.

The CAMH Corporate Volunteer Program offers a variety of hands-on volunteer opportunities across a wide range of CAMH programs. Jim Davey, the program's coordinator, works hard to find activities that meet the needs of the hospital's programs as well as those of the volunteers. "We try to find activities that match the values of the organization providing the volunteers," says Jim.

To get involved with the CAMH Corporate Volunteer Program contact Jim Davey at 416 535-8501, ext. 6238 or [Jim\\_Davey@camh.net](mailto:Jim_Davey@camh.net).

*Margaret Goulding is the External Communications Coordinator at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.*