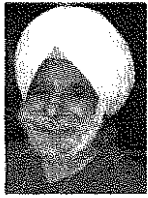


Bridging the Generations

By: **Po-Yi Liu** Youth Eco Intern at Volunteer Grandparents



Kehar Singh Aujla

This year, Volunteer Grandparents is celebrating its 37th birthday. Since 1973, the organization has been creating multi-age bonds among young and old through its grassroots Family Match Program, pairing up older adults (over the age of 50) with families whose children and youth do not have the immediate presence of their own grandparents. The program is not merely about 'visitation'; it is about forming long-lasting and authentic extended family connections among those who are involved.

For more than three decades, Volunteer Grandparents has received many older adult volunteers like Kehar Singh Aujla. Kehar is originally from Western India. He and his wife

immigrated to Canada in 1996 to retire here and reunite with his son. A decade later, Kehar wanted to continue to keep "busy and healthy" through volunteering in his community. In 2007, Kehar saw an advertisement in Burnaby Now about Volunteer Grandparents. He figured he might give that organization a try because he truly missed being around younger children, as they bring him immense joy. He has his own grandchildren, but many of them have already grown into adolescence and adulthood. After applying to Volunteer Grandparents, Kehar has become a full-fledged volunteer grandfather.

Ever since a match started between Kehar and a family, he has been regularly spending time with the family's three children – aged 4, 6, and 8. He enjoys "going with the

flow with them." Together, they draw, paint, play ball, bike, go to the park, and do many other activities. Kehar says that he just allows them to decide what they want to do, and he will happily go along with them. "They like me and I like them," he laughs.

Kehar is one of the many volunteers who make up the strong grassroots foundation for Volunteer Grandparents. To celebrate the many stories of volunteers and families, the organization is working on a book to share their heartfelt experiences, hoping that readers will be inspired to form intergenerational relationships. As one saying goes, "To the world you may be just one person, but to one person, you might just be the world". All of us can be that person, leaving a legacy in someone's life and therefore, the world.