

**NATIONAL
VOLUNTEER
WEEK
APRIL 10-16, 2011**

**VOLUNTEERS.
PASSION.
ACTION.
IMPACT.**

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NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK NEWS BULLETIN

Volunteer Grandparent Gains A Second Family

Dayle is a senior living in Metro Vancouver who volunteers – as a grandma.

Her own son and daughter-in-law are unable to have children of their own so she decided to become the Gilchrist family's volunteer grandparent.

"Anybody who will listen knows I've adopted four grandchildren – it changed my life," said Dayle. "It makes you feel younger when you're out with kids and doing the things kids do."

Mary Gilchrist is a single mother raising four children on her own. A native of B.C., she moved to France when her children were young to be with their father. But the relationship between Gilchrist and the children's father didn't last. When they split up, she moved back to Metro Vancouver with her children. She had no family close by.

Five years ago, while reading the local paper, she found an article that insisted it took a village to raise a child.

"That really bugged me. What if you don't have the help of an entire village? What if you're doing it on your own?"

Shortly after reading the article, Gilchrist found an advertisement for Volunteer Grandparents, a non-profit organization in Burnaby, B.C., which pairs seniors with children who don't have a grandparent figure in their lives. She felt the program could help her children develop a meaningful, lasting relationship with another adult.

"There are 12.5 million volunteers in Canada contributing more than two billion hours every year," said Ruth MacKenzie, President & CEO of Volunteer Canada. "The work of volunteers like Dayle is essential to our communities as well as to our social fabric and telling them how their contributions are making a positive impact is one of the best ways to thank them."

Gaining a grandma

When the Gilchrist family was paired with Dayle they began to spend lots of time together: going to movies, the park, attending festivals, and celebrating family birthdays. Over time, their relationship grew stronger, until Dayle was no longer a volunteer – to the Gilchrists, she became grandma.

"There are endless ways to volunteer in your community; we need only be aware of our surroundings and really observe what goes on around us," said Dave Baspaly, Executive Director of Volunteer Burnaby.

"Volunteerism is literally everywhere. Volunteering is a positive chain that goes around making the world a happier and healthier place for everyone."

The Gilchrists don't have an entire village behind them. But with Dayle's involvement, this family has grown and become stronger.

More...

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The Gilchrist children have someone else they can trust, and Mary has someone she can count on and confide in.

“The kids absolutely love (Dayle). She has a really good heart, and she’s genuine, and she just loves the kids. For me, she’s like the mom I never had. She’s part of our family.”

About National Volunteer Week

National Volunteer Week (www.volunteer.ca/nvw) pays tribute to the millions of Canadian volunteers who graciously donate their time and energy. This year’s 68th annual NVW takes place the week of April 10 to 16. It is Canada’s largest celebration of volunteers, volunteerism, and civic participation. The theme of this year’s National Volunteer Week is **Volunteers: Passion. Action. Impact.**

National Volunteer Week was first proclaimed in 1943 as an initiative to draw the public’s attention to the vital contribution of women to the war effort on the home front. In the late 1960s, the focus was revived and broadened to include all community volunteers.

Investors Group has sponsored National Volunteer week for 12 years as part of its commitment to corporate citizenship. The company is a founding member of Volunteer Canada’s Corporate Council on Volunteering.

About Volunteer Canada

Volunteer Canada (www.volunteer.ca) is the national voice for volunteerism in Canada. With more than 30 years of passionate commitment to the cause of volunteering and civic participation, Volunteer Canada inspires Canadians to be engaged from coast to coast to coast. From its office in downtown Ottawa, Volunteer Canada creates and develops programs, national initiatives, vital research, and tools for the non-profit sector. Founded in 1977, Volunteer Canada works collaboratively with volunteer centres, business, and non-profit organizations to support volunteerism and the ultimate agents of social change, Canada’s volunteers.

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Media Note: Please access the National Volunteer Week media kit at <http://www.volunteer.ca/nvw>.

For more information about Volunteer Grandparents, please visit www.volunteergrandparents.ca.

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