

Four generations of volunteering



THE SCOOP

MABLE HASTINGS

Former President and now Vice President of the Missisquoi North Volunteer Centre (CABMN), Brenda Clark has been a volunteer with the non-profit organization for close to 34 years now. Volunteering has become a family tradition for Brenda with parents who volunteered in everything from the United Church, the CABMN, the local elementary school, the Athletic Association, the Ski-Doo club and her dad was a volunteer fireman as well as her mom being active in the women's guild of the Church; all while running a business.

Brenda recalls that being involved in the Church meant that there was always something to do; church suppers, rummage sales, auctions, Sunday school activities, cleaning up the building...

"When your parents are so involved you automatically find yourself in the middle of it all," explained Brenda.

Brenda's parents, Rupert and Gilda Clark once owned the local grocery store in Mansonville, then known as Clark's Store, now the Richelieu owned by Jacques Ducharme. In fact, Ducharme worked for the couple as a young boy and teen.

"Growing up in the family grocery store gave me the opportunity to lend a helping hand either delivering groceries to a senior or helping a customer," Brenda said.

Volunteering for (and organizing) events was always just a normal course of action in the Clark household.

"It was never a question of "will we," Brenda said. "It was rather only a matter of where and how much time we had to devote to something," she continued.

As an adult Brenda got married and eventually moved to the city where she started a family.

She moved back to her hometown of Mansonville in 1989. Her parents were involved at the CABMN that was

then known as the Citizen Advocacy/Mountain Valley Outreach Mission. She got involved in the organization's Youth Programs because her children took part from a young age.

"My children grew up in a similar environment to my own. They were so fortunate to have Mable heading up the Youth Programs and they instantly became involved. They and their partners who had the same philosophy and viewpoint about volunteering and bettering the community in which we live continue to give of their time," said Brenda proudly.

Brenda's grandchildren are now volunteering through the youth programs. Her two granddaughters are well aware that through involvement and helping others they are acquiring important life skills that will follow them throughout their lives. Brenda expects that her little grandson, Connor will pick up where his cousins leave off and the cycle will continue.

"I cannot tell you how proud I am of my children, their partners and grandchildren as well as my spouse who is a firefighter/first responder with the municipality and volunteers with the Partage/Share food bank and more," she states. "Watching the circle of helping others continue to roll through my family reminds me of my parents and how proud they too would be of instilling this in all of us."

Brenda stresses that anyone with the desire to help or to volunteer should just do it! The sincere effort to help someone can only make a community stronger leaving it better than you found it through the sharing of your time and talents is an amazing feeling.

"It doesn't matter if you prefer to spend your time cultivating something athletic, something theatrical, something musical..." she explains. "The point is to do something positive without putting something else down. It isn't necessary - there is room for all good faith at the same time."

Brenda Clark like her parents before her and her children and grandchildren who follow, has made a wonderful contribution and impact in Potton. From Brenda's time on the CABMN Parent Youth Support Committee in the early years to the time she has given on the CABMN Board of Directors, as well as the other branches of her giving tree has helped the CABMN and community to continue on a positive and productive path.




COURTESY

Photo circa 2014. Left to right...front row: Brenda's parents, the late Gilda Heath Clark holding great granddaughter, Kate Eldridge and the late Rupert Clark holding great granddaughter, Alexis Eldridge, middle row: Brenda Clark holding Marty, the family dog, Julia Eldridge, Patricia Lachance wife of Jeremy Eldridge posing next to her. Back row, Brenda's partner, Rejean Neron and next to him, Julia's partner, Shannon Derby (both of these men are members of Pottton's Fire fighters and First Responders. The ten family members pictured here were and are all CABMN and community volunteers.

"I am just one of the many dynamic and devoted volunteers who make up the inspiring volunteer bank of over 300 persons registered at the CABMN serving Potton and surrounding


areas," said Brenda. "The MRC Memphremagog west has long been rich in people power and collectively, we all make our communities better and that is what I feel volunteering is all about."



From
The Knowlton Literary Association

Thank you

... to all the volunteers
that keep our community safe!





- Claude Charron**
President
- Guillaume Lirette-Gélinas**
Councillor
Fairview District
- Jennifer Garfat**
Councillor
Uplands District

Thank You

Thank you to our firefighters, first responders, health care personnel, volunteers, police and essential workers for keeping our community safe during the Covid-19 crisis and throughout the year.



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