

# VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION SHOWCASE

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## HOW ARE OUR LOCAL SERVICE CLUBS DOING TODAY?

I recently met with four service clubs of Lillooet to learn about their history, their legacy to the community and their successes and challenges. It was a very interesting journey of discovery. Did you know that the Legion has been operating in Lillooet for 90 years, the Lions for 63 years and the Elks for 57 years? They started up before I was even born and have been supporting our community all that time. The Rotary Club of Lillooet established here in May 2018 and is the new kid on the block but they have big dreams too.

Each of these organizations have a few things in common - they are part of larger national organizations, they all commit to helping our community be a better place to live and grow, and they donate large amounts of money to other local organizations. Amazing.

What is it that inspires the people who belong to these clubs to volunteer? The answers to that question when I asked were similar - "I want to give back to my community", "I want to make a difference", "I want to be part of a cause I believe in".

The other awesome thing about these clubs is that they really take the 'think globally, act locally' mantra and make it real in Lillooet. From the Lions helping kids with vision needs overseas and in Lillooet, by the Legion caring for Veterans and their families,

with the Elks assisting victims in emergencies overseas and in Lillooet, and the Rotary Exchange program promoting world peace in a real on-the-ground way, these clubs have created a culture of caring that is far reaching and is making a difference in the lives of many people here and around the world.

I know a lot more about these service clubs now. I learned they build long-lasting friendships while working together, and gain new skills while having fun at the same time. But I also learned that over the last several years these service clubs have had some challenges - the biggest one being attracting new, younger members. A lot of the strong women and men who have volunteered their time, skills and money over the last 35 years or more, are getting tired. They need some help. During economic downturns families, youth and adults had to leave Lillooet, and did not come back. That leaves less people to carry the load.

When you were a kid did you stand along Main Street watching the May Day Parade go by and run for candy ... or maybe you were in the parade? Did you and your children catch a big fish and win a prize during the Lions Fishing Derby, or get scared at the Lions Halloween Bash? Have you enjoyed a night with friends at the Legion? Or did you meet new people and taste new foods at the Rotary Flavours of Africa luncheon recently? If so, maybe you might like to help a club for just a few hours per month and check out how it works for you?

## Volunteer CONNECT news

### COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Over the last several months Lillooet Volunteer CONNECT has been busy meeting with various groups and individuals to assist in networking and developing partnerships to increase capacity and prevent duplication of effort. We are calling these "Community Conversations". It is a great way to get to the core of what works and what does not, and helps in planning for the future.



One of these Community Conversations has led to a partnership with Lillooet Secondary School, Chillaxin, ImagineU, Rotary Club and Lillooet Volunteer CONNECT. Together with youth we will explore the opportunity of starting a Youth Interact Club. This is a service club for young people that provides a mix of leadership training, fun activities and volunteering in the community, as well as trips out-of-town! Youth Interact could help support youth in meeting their grad requirement of 30 hours of volunteer service in a way that is relevant to their needs, where they can meet other youth in other communities, and where they lead and choose their own activities and find ways to become involved in the community.

### COLLABORATION ... PARTNERSHIPS



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Nov 2019