

# WECCC believes in harnessing the power of community

By Matt Weingarden  
Staff Reporter

The Windsor-Essex Compassion Care Community movement is an innovative new approach to social and health care and they want to hear from you! The group is actively looking for volunteers across the county.

Their goal? To raise happiness, improve quality of life and reduce inequities for elderly and vulnerable citizens in Windsor-Essex.

"We know service to others and to the community makes each of us happier, healthier and stronger," said Diane Mulcaster, community educator and training facilitator with the organization. "Working together, our impact is greater and our community thrives and prospers."

Mulcaster shares that four ideas that help people live a good quality of life include; doing the things you love to do, being connected with solid support around you, achieving your life aspirations and giving back.

"We are launching a series of community pilots that aim to connect citizens and care partners with neighbours, volunteers, youth, coaches, support and technology to create thriving networks and relationships that last a life-time, where each of us feels cared for and valued," said Mulcaster, who has worked as a nurse for more than 40 years.

Mulcaster says that the majority of her job includes going out into the community and speaking with groups of people.

"We talk about how people can live their best possible life," she said "We look at things like what do you like to do in life and if you are not doing those things, how do we get you doing those things... Because sometimes in life we do the things we have to do other than do what

we love to do."

Also within those group sessions, a discussion about 'connections' with others. Mulcaster points out that loneliness can be as harmful as smoking 15 cigarettes a day (per Julianne Holt-Lunstad). People need to be connected and build on the relationships they have and sometimes build others. It is also important that individuals think about their goals and aspirations and how they can achieve them. Being achievement oriented helps us to feel valued and needed!

Being involved can also help to bring people together with mutual inter-

Mulcaster says that they are actively recruiting volunteers in Lakeshore and around the county.

"We're looking for volunteers who can work with others on an individual basis also volunteers who can be a friendly visitor or provide a friendly phone call," she said, "People willing to communicate with those who are lonely and in need of some support."

So what makes a good volunteer?

"A good volunteer is someone who likes to work with people and make a difference," Mulcaster said.

"They also like to be involved in something bigger than themselves and are passionate about volunteering."

They are looking for people who like to work within groups

and individuals and help to improve people quality of life.

Mulcaster says the entire process can come full circle when individuals who need support realize that they can give back and start to help those in need too.

She adds that there is a training component involved when you make the decision to become a volunteer and the organization always works around the person's availability.

"We want to make sure the volunteer is comfortable in their role, so there are some principals that we would go over with them including personal safety and effective communication and engaging people as well as warning signs if something is amiss," she said. "We provide training and tools for groups, families, organizations and individuals to care for themselves and their loved ones, and to create positive sustainable changes in their communities."

Interested in learning more? Call 519-974-7100 ext. 2420 or visit [www.weccc.ca](http://www.weccc.ca)



WINDSOR ESSEX  
Compassion  
Care Community

ests - whether it be playing cards or learning Tai Chi. Similar interests help to build a friendship circle and provide care and support.

"We're all at risk (for loneliness) at various times in our lives and if we all reached out to at least one individual - what a difference we can make," she added.

Mulcaster says that they regularly visit places across the county to engage people in a program called 'We care...Let's talk.' This allows people to engage in a survey. We are able to identify individuals who may benefit from some support. We then collaborate with these individuals to assist them to plan to live a better quality of life based on what that means for them.

Another proponent of the program is how we as volunteers can give back to the community at large.

Do you have a skill or talent? While many say they don't have a skill or talent, Mulcaster asks "Can you make a phone call? Sometimes that's all that people need...it's the volunteering spirit that you can provide."