

APRIL 2022

WOODGREEN VOLUNTEER SERVICES NEWSLETTER



Volunteer Mentors Support Newcomer Arabic-Speaking Women Entrepreneurs

Recently, WoodGreen bilingual (Arabic and English) speaking volunteers, with entrepreneurship and professional backgrounds, supported Arabic-speaking newcomer women through the WoodGreen Newcomer Women Entrepreneurship Program (NWEPP). The program provides newcomer women with knowledge and resources to help them to define their business ideas, develop business plans, and possibly launch their own small businesses.

Each volunteer was connected with one of the fifteen NWEPP participants to provide mentorship and support, answer questions, and help participants to expand their networks. The volunteers dedicate four hours to their mentees, whether through online meetings, phone calls, sharing resources, or advocating on the mentee's behalf. This mentorship experience gives the mentees the confidence and motivation to continue learning, keep networking, and empower themselves.

OUR VOLUNTEERS JANUARY-MARCH 2022

CLIENTS

12781

Since January 1, 2022 WoodGreen volunteers served 12781 clients in different programs

VOLUNTEERS

153

153 new volunteers joined WoodGreen and devoted their time to serve the community in the past three months

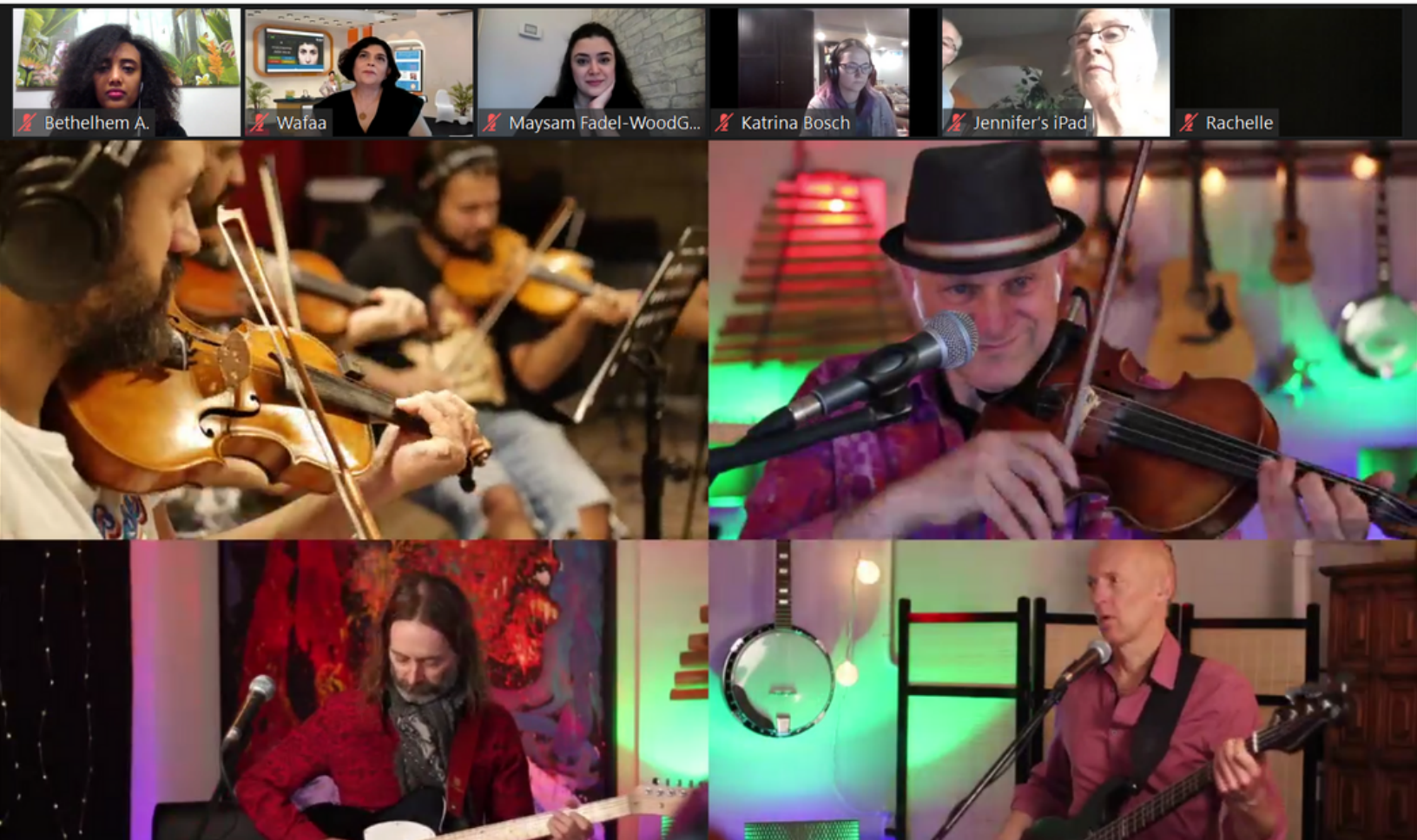
HOURS

2979

Starting from January until end of March 2022, our volunteers devoted a combined 2979 hours to serve the community.

Volunteer and Student Services held annual volunteer recognition event

Last month, WoodGreen's Volunteer and Student Services held two annual volunteer recognition events to recognize the incredible efforts of the organization's volunteers. The first event was a live concert held on Wednesday, March 9 at 6:00 p.m. with the JUNO-nominated band Sultans of String. The band performed beautiful diverse music from all around the world.



The second recognition event was held on Wednesday, March 23 at 3:30 p.m. The event was opened by the Volunteer and Students Services Manager Maysam Fadel followed by a speech by WoodGreen Community Services' President and CEO Anne Babcock. In her speech, Babcock highlighted that in 2021 alone, volunteers dedicated over 10,000 hours to support program and community needs across the organization, including efforts to address mental health, housing precarity and homelessness, food insecurity, and wellness for seniors, newcomers, single moms, and vulnerable populations.



"Volunteers are the lifeblood of our work," said Babcock. "Because of you, over 37,000 people receive support, assistance, and most importantly, community from WoodGreen programs and services. Our programs, neighbourhoods, and city are better because of your efforts. Thank you." In addition, managers and coordinators from different WoodGreen programs and services all expressed their appreciation to the volunteers for the dedication and hard work they have shown the whole year in serving the community.

Following that, 21 volunteers from programs such as Meals on Wheels, Financial Empowerment, and Senior Services, who have reached their five-year and 10-year milestones, were recognized and applauded for their long years of commitment and dedication to serving the community. Each volunteer received a certificate of appreciation.

The event finished off with a performance by the "Volunteers Got Talent" competition finalists. The volunteers performed/presented their special talent at the event. Tina Larochelle won first place for three paintings. The first named "Gone but Not Forgotten" is dedicated to the memory of missing and murdered indigenous women and children. The second painting is called 'My Addictions' and the third is named "Tree of Growth" and features traditional marks and symbols that play a central role in the indigenous people's life. Tara Bolavardi won second place for her violin performance and Deniz Toker won third place for his poem titled "Just a Newcomer".

Volunteers of the Month



Emily Hill

Emily Hill volunteers at the Walk-in Counselling Clinic. She joined the program to be part of a community that was making mental health care accessible for all. "Volunteering at WoodGreen has allowed me to provide free mental health services to people who need it most, something I have always believed in and wanted to do," says Hill.

For Hill, the most valuable aspect of her volunteering is to be able to provide same-day, free, and reliable mental health support, which is so valuable and something she is proud to be a part of.

"Through volunteering at Woodgreen, I have learned so much about working with other clinicians and have had the opportunity to share and gain so much knowledge," she adds.

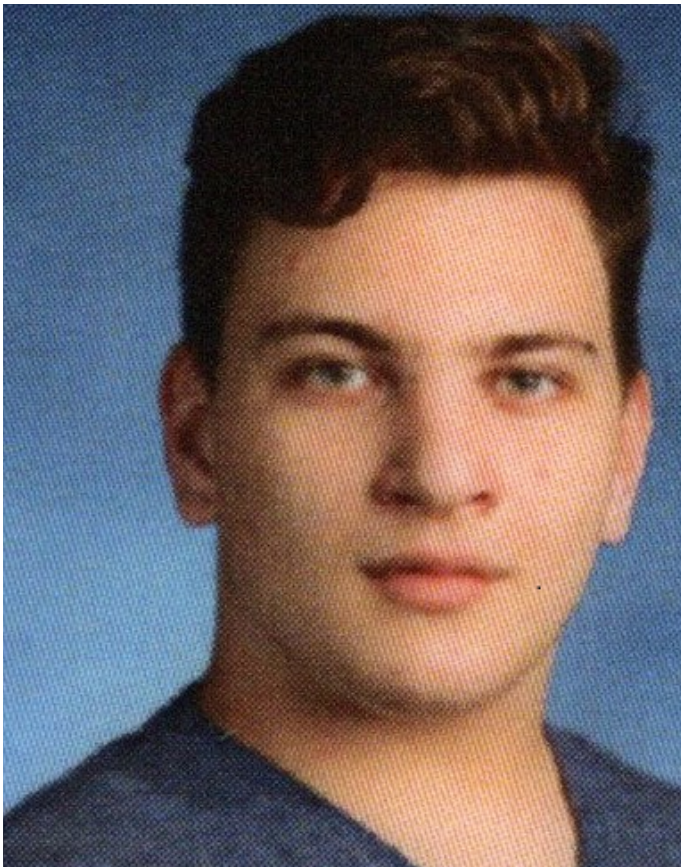
Deniz Toker



Deniz Toker started volunteering at the Community Connections English Conversation Circle in 2021. He joined the Community Connections program because the program provides much-needed services to newcomers to better prepare them for their social and professional lives in Canada.

"As a recent immigrant myself, I thought I could easily empathize and work with newcomers who want to improve their English language skills," says Toker. Through his volunteer role, he gets to connect with people from all walks of life and is always learning something new about other cultures, which expands his horizons. Sharing his lived experiences and skills with others is the main motivation behind his volunteer work.

"By volunteering at WoodGreen, I certainly feel more purposeful and connected to a bigger family consisting of dedicated and multicultural volunteers," said Toker.



Sami Massouh

Sami Massouh is a youth volunteer with WoodGreen's Syrian Support Program. A newcomer, Massouh says he was able to integrate easily socially and academically into Canadian life with relative ease because he went to an English-speaking international school. He says that when he heard about WoodGreen, he knew he finally found an opportunity to lend a helping hand using his knowledge of both English and Arabic to help other newcomers from the Middle East.

For Massouh, volunteering at WoodGreen helped him to develop his public speaking and interpersonal skills significantly which has helped him improve his confidence and performance in school.

"I hope that my tutoring and presentations have educated and entertained many newcomer children and have made many parents' jobs easier," said Massouh. "I am finding new and meaningful ways to contribute to WoodGreen's vision."

Upcoming Events

2nd Session of 2SLGBTQ+ Workshop

This session takes a deeper look into discrimination, systemized oppression, and racism within marginalized groups, and the mental health effects that these actions have on individuals and the 2SLGBTQ+ community as a whole.

When: April 21, 2022

Focus Group Discussions-Volunteer Engagement

The discussion includes:

- Ways to improve and enhance volunteer roles
- Training areas volunteers need
- Program specific challenges and solutions

When: May, 2022

New Volunteers Virtual Orientation

All volunteers who have joined WoodGreen Community Services recently are required to attend the volunteer services orientation session.

This session includes:

- Introduction to WoodGreen Community Services' programs
- Policies & Code of Conduct
- Volunteer opportunities within different programs
- Volunteer engagement, benefits & recognition

When: May, 2022

