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MEDIA RELEASE

Retired Seniors Volunteer Program Provides Direct Connection to Community Service Organizations

July 18, 2014 – Brampton, ON – Volunteer MBC gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Pendle Fund at the Community Foundation of Mississauga, a registered charitable public foundation serving the people of Mississauga. Through this funding the centre is now able to provide additional support to their Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP).

The objective of the RSVP program is to provide retired seniors, age 55 and over, with volunteer opportunities in the community by directly connecting them with community service organizations who are members of the centre.

“Over the years, Volunteer MBC has been providing a number of opportunities for older adults, 55 years and older,” says Carine Strong, Executive Director of Volunteer MBC. “The City of Mississauga is undergoing an unprecedented demographic shift, with the addition of 7,000 older adults each year for the next 20 years. This will translate into a doubling of the older adult population, or over 300,000 residents 55 years of age or older by 2031. This funding will provide us with the opportunity to connect with seniors to help transform Mississauga by sharing their expertise and knowledge through civic engagement.”

Research has shown that there are numerous health benefits to engaging seniors in volunteer activities. These benefits include, but are not limited to, enlarging their social network and support system; enhanced physical fitness; increased happiness; lower stress, anxiety and depression; and increased self-esteem and sense of value. Through the RSVP program, Volunteer MBC will reach out to seniors in the City of Mississauga and promote the benefits and importance of volunteering. As well, the centre will coordinate events such as volunteer fairs and invite member community service organizations to introduce the volunteer needs that they have available for seniors. Volunteer MBC will further encourage and educate their member organizations on the best practices of older adult volunteer engagement through various training programs.

To help guide and support the direction of the RSVP program, Volunteer MBC is also seeking seniors who are interested in joining their *Seniors Community Engagement Task Force*. This task force will lead and provide their input, expertise and talent and serve as “ambassadors” by providing connections to meaningful volunteer opportunities for seniors.

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With the approaching Pan Am/Parapan Am Games, Volunteer MBC is also working closely with the City of Mississauga, where the games will be held. The *Seniors Community Engagement Task Force* will help to develop a strategy on how to specifically engage senior volunteers to take on leadership roles with many of the sports organizations located in our community before, during and after the Games.

The Community Foundation of Mississauga has been matching acts of caring with community needs since 2001. Working with donors and the broader community, the Foundation invests in building strong and resilient places to live, work and play. By providing effective and efficient endowment options for donors, the Foundation is creating a lasting legacy of community vitality. To find out more about the Community Foundation of Mississauga, visit the web site at www.CFofM.org.

Volunteer MBC is a volunteer centre serving the Cities of Mississauga and Brampton, and the Town of Caledon. The centre offers a referral and matching service for volunteer placement within the community for all ages (youth, adults, seniors, and families). They also provide education and support for volunteers and community service agencies and organizations, and serve the corporate community with various programming services that engage individual and team volunteering. Additionally, the centre strives to be a strong voice to support and promote volunteerism.

For more information about Volunteer MBC, to access their on-line volunteer opportunities database, and to find more details on the centre's three convenient locations in Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon, visit www.volunteermbc.org. For more information about Volunteer MBC's Retired Seniors Volunteer Program, go to: www.volunteermbc.org/olderadults.

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Photo caption: Hema Vaswani, a senior volunteer, instructing a yoga class to a seniors group at the Dixie-Bloor Neighbourhood Centre.



Photo caption: Senior volunteers assisting with a community garden at Punjabi Community Health Services.

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