

volunteeregin.org

20 ANNUAL 25 REPORT

A Message from Our Chair:

As we reflect on 2025, Volunteer Elgin's first full year of operation, we are proud of the foundation that has been built and the momentum that continues to grow. What began as a small group of passionate community leaders has evolved into a collaborative network focused on strengthening volunteerism across Elgin County, connecting people with meaningful opportunities to give back, and supporting the organizations that rely so heavily on volunteers.

Much of the momentum we experienced in 2025 was built upon an important milestone reached at the end of 2024 with the launch of the Volunteer Elgin website. In its first year, the website became an important community resource, helping connect residents with volunteer opportunities across Elgin County while giving organizations a central place to promote their needs and engage new volunteers. The positive response from the community affirmed the need for a dedicated volunteer hub and reinforced the importance of the work we are doing together.

In May 2025, we proudly hosted our first Volunteer Fair at the St. Thomas Public Library. The event brought together local organizations, volunteers, and community members, creating new connections and raising awareness of opportunities across the region. As our first event of this kind, it was a successful beginning and highlighted the opportunity to expand future fairs so more communities and organizations across Elgin County can participate and benefit.

We closed the year on a high note in October with our first Annual General Meeting. The AGM was very well attended and served as both a celebration of how far Volunteer Elgin has come and a reflection of the growing support for

volunteerism across our community. We were also pleased to welcome Catherine Harrison to the committee at the AGM, bringing additional communications and community engagement experience to our work as Volunteer Elgin continues to grow.

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the dedication of our committee members, member organizations, partners, and volunteers who continue to invest their time, ideas, and passion into Volunteer Elgin. Together, we are building a stronger and more connected community where volunteerism continues to thrive.

As we look ahead to 2026, we are energized by the opportunities before us. Building on the foundation established in 2025, we remain committed to growing our reach across Elgin County, expanding partnerships and membership, strengthening community engagement, and continuing to create meaningful opportunities for residents to make a difference. Together, we are building a more connected, compassionate, and resilient Elgin County for all.

Carolyn Johnson
Chair, Volunteer Elgin
Executive Director,
Big Brothers Big Sisters St Thomas-Elgin

Volunteer Elgin

We exist to connect individuals with meaningful volunteer opportunities at organizations across Elgin County that depend on the enthusiasm, commitment, and skills of volunteers. As one of more than 150 volunteer centres across Canada, Volunteer Elgin is a member of Volunteer Canada and Pillar Nonprofit Network.



Our Mission:

Volunteer Elgin enhances our community by empowering volunteers and providing support to the non-profit sector.

Our Vision:

Volunteer Elgin envisions a connected and inclusive community, strengthened by dedicated volunteers and an increasingly vibrant non-profit sector.

Our Values:



Community Engagement: Fostering a connected, supportive community where members actively participate and contribute to each other's well-being.



Collaboration: Building strong partnerships with local organizations to create impactful volunteer opportunities and expand community resources.



Inclusivity: Promoting an environment where everyone feels welcome, valued, and encouraged to volunteer regardless of their background, skills, or experience.



Empowerment: Enabling individuals to use their skills, talents, and passions to make a difference and grow personally and professionally through volunteerism.



Respect and Dignity: Treating all volunteers, partners, and community members with respect, recognizing each person's unique contributions and worth.

Our 2025 Steering Committee

Volunteer Elgin is a volunteer-led, non-profit organization serving Elgin County. Our steering committee is made up of local nonprofit professionals and community volunteers who contribute their time, experience, and community knowledge to strengthen volunteerism across the county.

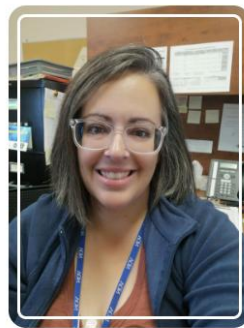
The committee meets regularly throughout the year, typically monthly from September to June, to guide Volunteer Elgin's planning, outreach, member support, and community engagement activities.

In 2025, Volunteer Elgin's steering committee included:



Carolyn Johnson

Committee Chair
Big Brothers Big Sisters of St. Thomas Elgin



Tifanie Smith

Treasurer
VON Middlesex-Elgin



Kristina Pringle

Member at Large
West Elgin Community Health Centre



Megan Fife

Interim Vice Chair
Alzheimer Society Southwest Partners



Susie Wray

Community Engagement
Manager of Parks & Recreation
Town of Aylmer



Dakota Smith

Secretary
Manager, Programming and Outreach
St. Thomas Public Library

Our 2025 Member Organizations:

During Volunteer Elgin's first full year of operation, our focus was on building a strong foundation: supporting members as they began using the newly launched website, refining the portal and related processes, hosting our first community events, and increasing awareness of Volunteer Elgin's role across the county.

By the end of 2025, the following organizations were part of Volunteer Elgin's growing member network. Their early participation helped establish the portal, shape our outreach, and demonstrate the value of a central hub for volunteerism in Elgin County.

- Alzheimer Society Southwest Partners
- Backus-Page House Museum
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of St. Thomas Elgin
- Central Community Health Centre
- Family and Children's Services of ST. Thomas and Elgin
- Leads Employment Services
- Neighbourhood Outreach for Kids
- St. Thomas Public Library
- Town of Aylmer
- VON Middlesex-Elgin
- West Elgin Community Health Centre

Our Partners:

Volunteer Elgin gratefully acknowledges the Elgin St. Thomas Community Foundation for its generous support. The Foundation's funding made the development of the Volunteer Elgin website possible, creating the central hub that now connects residents with volunteer opportunities across Elgin County.

We are also grateful for the Foundation's ongoing encouragement, guidance, and networking support, which have been invaluable as Volunteer Elgin continues to grow and strengthen its role in the community.



Volunteer Elgin – 2025 Year in Review

2025 was Volunteer Elgin’s first full year of operation following the launch of the website in late 2024. It was a foundational year focused on building awareness, supporting member organizations, introducing residents to the new volunteer portal, and creating opportunities for community connection.

Throughout the year, the committee worked to strengthen Volunteer Elgin’s role as a central hub for volunteerism in Elgin County. Much of this work involved helping organizations use the website, refining processes, increasing visibility, and beginning to establish Volunteer Elgin as a resource for both volunteers and the non-profit organizations that rely on them.

2025 Timeline

February

Volunteer Elgin facilitated a community presentation in Aylmer focused on volunteerism, community engagement, and the important role volunteers play in supporting local organizations and services throughout Elgin County. The presentation provided an opportunity to share Volunteer Elgin’s mission and encourage greater community involvement.

May

Volunteer Elgin hosted its first Volunteer Fair on May 3, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the St. Thomas Public Library. The event brought together 15 organizations from across Elgin County, giving residents the opportunity to learn about volunteer opportunities, connect directly with community organizations, and discover ways to become involved in causes that matter to them.

As Volunteer Elgin’s first event of this kind, the fair provided valuable experience in promotion, event planning, member engagement, and public outreach. It also confirmed the value of bringing organizations and prospective volunteers together in person.



October

A major milestone was reached on October 14, 2025, with the first Annual General Meeting of the re-established Volunteer Elgin committee. The AGM was held from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Railway City Brewery in St. Thomas.

Fifteen individuals attended the meeting, representing community organizations and partners from across Elgin County. The AGM provided an opportunity to celebrate progress, review organizational priorities, and discuss future opportunities to grow Volunteer Elgin's impact within the community.

Volunteer Elgin was also pleased to recruit two new committee members during the AGM, further strengthening the committee's capacity, perspectives, and leadership.

Organizational Development

In 2025, Volunteer Elgin continued to focus on strategic growth and organizational development. The committee worked to support the website's first full year of use, respond to emerging needs, and build the internal capacity required to sustain outreach and engagement.

To support increasing communications and public engagement, Volunteer Elgin also established a new Communications Chair position. The addition of this role reflects the organization's commitment to strengthening communications, enhancing community awareness, supporting promotional initiatives, and increasing engagement with volunteers, member organizations, and community partners.

Throughout the year, the committee worked to strengthen Volunteer Elgin's role as a central hub for volunteerism in Elgin County.

Looking Ahead: 2026 and Beyond

Volunteer Elgin enters 2026 with strong momentum and a growing sense of purpose.

By the end of 2025, our membership had grown to 11 organizations. As of May 28, 2026, that number has increased to 19 — a nearly 60% increase — reflecting both the need for a central volunteer hub in Elgin County and the value local organizations see in working together to strengthen volunteerism.

This momentum is also being reflected in growing community awareness. In the first half of 2026, Volunteer Elgin has benefited from significant local media coverage, expanded social media outreach, and stronger public engagement around volunteer opportunities and member organizations.

We have also broadened our connections across the community. This includes sharing information about Volunteer Elgin with federal, provincial and municipal representatives, including our MP, MPP, and the Mayors of St. Thomas and Elgin County municipalities; establishing communications with Elgin County high schools; and expanding our sector resources through membership in Volunteer Canada and Pillar Nonprofit Network.

In the months ahead, Volunteer Elgin will continue to build on this progress by expanding awareness, strengthening member support, and increasing the visibility of volunteer opportunities across the county.



Key priorities include:

- Growing membership to 25 organizations by the end of 2026.
- Creating a Service Club Directory on the Volunteer Elgin website in partnership with Elgin County service clubs.
- Streamlining the membership onboarding process so new organizations can join and begin posting opportunities more easily.
- Holding a second Volunteer Fair on October 24, building on lessons learned to increase awareness, attendance, and recruitment opportunities for members.
- Expanding social media outreach to promote member organizations, share volunteer opportunities, and celebrate local volunteerism.
- Strengthening communication with member organizations so Volunteer Elgin can better amplify their messages and highlight current volunteer needs.
- Communicating more regularly with registered volunteers to keep opportunities visible and encourage ongoing engagement.
- Exploring funding opportunities to support outreach, communications, member support, and community engagement.
- Developing a regular print media campaign, subject to funding, to reach residents who may not be active online.
- Building Volunteer Elgin's own volunteer base through flexible, skills-based roles in communications, outreach, social media, event promotion, and member engagement.

As Volunteer Elgin continues to grow, our focus remains clear: to make it easier for people to find meaningful volunteer opportunities and easier for organizations to connect with the people who want to help.

The work ahead is about more than numbers. It is about building a stronger volunteer infrastructure for Elgin County — one that supports community organizations, welcomes new volunteers, and helps ensure that volunteerism remains visible, accessible, and valued.

Treasurer's Report

In 2025, Volunteer Elgin successfully managed a shared operating budget to support our collaborative goals. We finished the year in a healthy financial position with no outstanding debts.

Cash Flow Overview

Starting Balance as of January 2025:		\$4,831.23
Total Money Received:		
Membership Fees	\$2,000.00	
Bank Interest	<u>\$ 5.08</u>	
	\$2005.08	\$2,005.08
Total Money Spent:		
Website Maintenance – Dark Horse	(\$1,625.49)	
Volunteer Fair	(\$980.01)	
Annual General Meeting	(\$263.52)	
Bank Fees	<u>(\$ 18.00)</u>	
	(\$2,887.02)	<u>(\$2,887.02)</u>
Ending Balance as of December 31, 2025:		<u>\$3,949.29</u>



Save the Date

Volunteer Elgin Autumn 2026 Volunteer Fair



Saturday, October 24, 2026



10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.



St. Thomas Public Library

♥ More details to come.




**Stronger
Together.
Stronger
Elgin.**



Connecting people.
Building **community.**



VolunteerElgin.org
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2025 Annual Report – Published June 2026