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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Volunteerism, one of the oldest and most humanistic pursuits, is enjoying a strong boost from the online world - through VolunteerConnection.

The web-based VolunteerConnection service makes it quick and easy for nonprofit organizations and potential volunteers to find each other now in Huron, Perth, Bruce, Grey and South Georgian Bay Counties.

The virtual volunteer services portal which began to take shape in 2006, is now a reality and about to launch thanks to an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant, and the collaborative efforts of United Way's in Huron, Perth, Bruce, Grey and South Georgian Bay, as well as Community Connection. "United Way has long recognized the challenges volunteers and volunteer organizations in rural communities face", said Ellen Balmain, Executive Director of United Way Perth County. "We feel this is an exciting and viable solution for our communities. Easy access to volunteer opportunities that people are interested in and have the skills to help support our overburdened voluntary sector. It is as easy as turning on your computer, or picking up the phone."

This online service makes it easy for an individual, who may have only an hour, an afternoon or a day each week, to find a volunteer opportunity that matches his or her time, skills and interests. VolunteerConnection makes it possible for nonprofits to more easily and cost effectively find enthusiastic, capable volunteers. In addition to a matching service, non-profits can post information on training and workshops, special events, and post policies and procedures documents in the virtual library.

To use the service, would-be volunteers simply go online to www.volunteerconnection.ca, fill in required information, the time's they are available and their specific interests and a list of appropriate volunteer opportunities is presented. Nonprofits interested in listing opportunities simply go into the "post" section of the site to register their organization. Once registered, the nonprofit will be able to post opportunities directly onto the service.

A "help desk" function will also be accessible by email or telephone where the Community will be able to connect directly with a counselor from Community Connection, who will be able to provide additional information regarding human services.

Presentations and meetings are available for any Huron-Perth not-for-profit organizations or service groups to promote the website and explain how it works. "We are very pleased that we could participate as part of the collaborative project. This is an excellent opportunity to match individuals wanting to volunteer and give of their time with organizations and service groups in need of volunteers.", says Shelley Groenestege, United Way of Perth County Vice-President.

To check out the site go to www.volunteerconnection.ca or call United Way at 519-271-7730 or 519-418-1050 (North Perth) or call Mary Schreinert at 519-524-7900 for more information.

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