

Susan - Building Belonging Volunteer at Spence Neighbourhood Association

Susan is a local community member who has been volunteering with our [Building Belonging](#) program (for children ages 6-12) for 12 years! We sat down with her in the grassy area outside of the MERC to talk shop about all things volunteering with SNA.

Why did you start volunteering with SNA?

I lived in the area and wanted to work with children. Before COVID, I used to volunteer in the kitchen, preparing the snacks but now I get to be with the kids more. I love doing both.

What do you love about being around the kids?

I love giving the kids a wider perspective of the people in their community. Some of them notice when I miss a week and they ask where I've been. I tell them that I had to work, or go on a trip and then they ask me where I work, or about where I have traveled (my plane ride). The kids assume that I work at the MERC. I get to explain to them the difference between working and volunteering. I like having conversations with them about big and small things. I ask them where they've been, where other family members live, where they're from, where they go to church. Seeing the kids outside of the program warms my heart. Sometimes I'll see the SNA van driving the kids around and I'll wave, even though I'm not sure who's in the van!

What would you say to community members that are thinking of volunteering?

Oh! That they should definitely volunteer because everyone has skills to offer. Even if you think you don't - you do! Also, just being with the kids is enough. Volunteering is an important part of community building. SNA has been very flexible and accommodating with my schedule so even if you have a little bit of time to volunteer, you can still do so.

What is the best part of volunteering?

I get to feel like part of the community. I get to be with the kids and interact with them in a fun way. I've always been so proud to say that I volunteer at SNA. There's something for everyone. I have also volunteered with [Environment and Open Spaces](#) committee helping with the community gardening program. I also love seeing the kids get bigger and leave the program. I knew Mavelle before he started working at the MERC and now he's all grown up. It's crazy.

Lastly, favourite BB memory?

I have many great memories of volunteering with BB. The outings are lots of fun. I especially love doing activities with the kids, like playing sports and developing athletic skills. Bowling, swimming,

skateboarding, it's always a blast. Watching kids try something new and enjoying themselves is the best. Even just hanging out at the MERC and doing crafts or playing games is fun. Thanks BB for all the great times!

(Our favourite memory of Susan is watching her help two girls memorize their dance routine for their school talent show.)

Thank you for all that you do for the community Susan! Here's to another 12 years!