

Spotlight on Volunteers

Roger Grist

One of Compassion Society's older volunteers is 77-year-old Roger Grist, a native of Bexley, England, who first came to Canada 53 years ago. Roger is a Registered Nurse who trained in England. When he came to Canada he worked for three years in Burlington's Joseph Brant Hospital, which had just opened. By the time Roger left there, he was Head Nurse in the Intensive Care section. During that time he also worked weekends in a psychiatric hospital in Hamilton in wards where criminals were detained. He left these jobs to work 37 years as a nurse in the medical department at Ford Motor Company in Oakville until retiring in 2001.



Roger and his wife, Avis, have lived in Burlington since they first immigrated to Canada. They have four children (three sons and one daughter), eight grandchildren (all girls), and two great grandchildren. They all live nearby in Southern Ontario.

Roger's hobbies include volunteer work, gardening, travel, his Teacup Poodle, Rocky, and keeping up his house. (He and Avis still live in their family home.) He travels widely, and in addition to visits to his native England and elsewhere in Europe, he has been to South America, Africa, and Asia. When asked what his favorite places are, he named Peru, Burma, and Egypt.

Roger began volunteering at Compassion Society about five years ago along with a group of other senior men from St. Matthews Anglican Church. The others dropped out for one reason or another, but Roger stayed. He currently comes in all three days in the week when Compassion Society is open and works four hours each day. When asked why he does this, he gave three reasons: (1) the company of other volunteers is good, (2) a person needs to make himself useful, and (3) the work is rewarding.

Roger, both with his life background and with his experience as a volunteer, is able and ready to help at Compassion Society in whatever way he is needed. But like all volunteers, he also makes his own unique contribution in other important ways. These contributions vary from one volunteer to another, but Roger's gifts include his lively and positive humor that brightens the day for the rest of us who work alongside him.