



Guest Blog

Shifting the way we spend our time

by the Saskatchewan Nonprofit Partnership

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According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, time is partially defined as “a nonspatial continuum that is measured in terms of events which succeed one another from past through present to future”.

The ways we spend our time has a major impact on our everyday wellbeing. It’s likely that during the past few weeks both our concept of time and our use of time has shifted for most of us, and for some more than others.

As is wellbeing, our time use is shaped and affected by the intersection of our social, cultural, economic, and physical environments in which we live, work, and recreate. And we endeavor to find the balance in the many demands on our lives. As the chapter of time use in the [SIW report](#) indicates, time use looks at the quality of our sleep, our connections with friends and family, and the time we have for other fulfilling activities like volunteering and participating in leisure and culture activities. Let’s take this opportunity to pause and reflect on where we are spending our time now, how this has shifted in recent weeks, and where we will prioritize our time going forward.

As we celebrate and applaud the contributions of volunteers during this National Volunteer Week, we recognize that many of us are not volunteering the same way we did just a few weeks ago. How has this changed? Have we stopped volunteering all together or are we seeking virtual opportunities to help out our community nonprofits? What is the impact of individuals having to limit their volunteerism on nonprofits, communities and on the volunteers themselves? Where have there been new opportunities to assist our neighbours and community organizations? There are resources to help nonprofits grapple with this new reality of volunteer involvement from [Volunteer Canada](#). Also, if you are looking for ways to help out across the province, check out [VolunteerConnector](#).

The most prevalent types of nonprofit organizations in Saskatchewan are in the areas of recreation, social services, arts and culture, and religion¹. Each of these areas enrich our lives and have imperative effects on our wellbeing. They allow us to build and maintain strong social connections with our friends and community, increase our sense of belonging and identity, and allow us opportunities for self-growth. Children, youth, adults and families benefit from the wide variety of programs offered by these organizations, ranging from after-school programs, organized sports, parks and trailways, drop-in programs, art classes, fitness groups, and social clubs.

But since the COVID-19 pandemic, many programs are now closed or are being offered in different ways that affect our experience of those programs. This can have profound impacts on our quality of life. Not only are we not able to benefit from some of these activities and services that used to fill much of our time, but nonprofit organizations are facing a challenging future. These organizations are struggling not only to offer services and programs, but to keep their doors open at all. We've seen organizations adapting as quickly as possible to our evolving circumstances, and they are employing creative solutions in finding new ways to offer programs and services, but they are facing challenges in decreased revenue, disruption of their services, and in human resources².

Nonprofit organizations touch so many aspects of our lives that we often don't even recognize. The nonprofit sector in Saskatchewan is comprised of more than 6,500 organizations located in almost every community across our province¹. Imagine if the curling or hockey clubs, museums, service groups, youth groups, family resource centres, gardening clubs, mental health services, and music clubs disappeared? What would take their place? Would we have to re-create them? Where would individuals seeking support go?

As we reflect on the activities that make our time meaningful and fulfilling, let us also reflect on the community-based organizations that provide those opportunities for us, and how we can contribute back to those organizations to ensure they continue to be there to support us and our quality of life. Volunteer, make a donation of goods, services or money, and just as we are all supporting our local businesses as much as possible, continue to support your local nonprofit organizations too.

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- 1 Saskatchewan Nonprofit Partnership. (2018). A profile of the nonprofit sector in Saskatchewan: An overview. Retrieved from: http://www.sasknonprofit.ca/uploads/1/0/5/2/105211035/snp_overview_report_-_nov2018.pdf
 - 2 Saskatchewan Nonprofit Partnership. (2020). Saskatchewan Nonprofits & COVID-19: Impact Summary Report. Retrieved from: http://www.sasknonprofit.ca/uploads/1/0/5/2/105211035/sask_nonprofits_covid-19_report_april2020.pdf