

**Tuesday October 19**  
**8:45 to 10:15 a.m.**

## **The Gift of Time is The Gift of Health: The Health Benefits of Volunteering**

Volunteering is good for your health – fact or myth? Professor Gottlieb and an interdisciplinary team of researchers from the University of Guelph are conducting research to see if this is in fact true. Together they are following 160 volunteers, aged 60-and-older, who are engaged in active volunteer work such as meal delivery, which involves bending, lifting, carrying, walking, and associated cognitive activities such as route navigation. This study on volunteerism is unusual in that it will not rely solely on the self-reports of participants, but also on measurable data resulting from physical and cognitive assessments. Such tests will be similar to those performed during a yearly physical, including measures of lung and heart function, strength, blood pressure, and laboratory analyzes.

Key Learning Objectives:

1. Review of past research on volunteering and the health of older adults.
2. Consideration of the many possible reasons or mechanisms whereby volunteering may affect health.
3. Findings to date from Prof. Gottlieb's own study of the differences in physical and cognitive fitness between active older adult volunteers and sedentary volunteers,
4. How staff at Older Adult Centres throughout Ontario can apply this research.

**Professor Benjamin H. Gottlieb** is a Professor of Psychology at the University of Guelph. A Fellow of both the Canadian and American Psychological Associations, Ben has devoted his career to the study of social support. With

grants from the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, Ben is now examining the benefits older adults derive from volunteering as well as the nature and effects of social usefulness among Seniors. Ben is also a Director of the Waterloo Wellington Community Care Access Centre (CCAC).