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## **U of L students log more than 7,500 volunteer hours**

Almost 600 University of Lethbridge students have volunteered more than 7,500 hours at community organizations as they learn first-hand about civic engagement through the UVolunteer program.

Since 2015, the U of L has operated UVolunteer in partnership with Volunteer Lethbridge to match and track students working with non-profit groups in the city. The initiative came about through the efforts of Dr. Mike Mahon, U of L president and vice-chancellor. Part of his vision was ensuring that students contribute to Lethbridge and surrounding communities.

To date, 583 students have registered with the program and they've logged 7,741 hours. During the 2017-2018 academic year, 89 volunteers contributed 2,296 hours.

Each year, a U of L student has been hired through a cooperative education placement to help develop the partnership. This past year, Bryce Baker, a fourth-year Dhillon School of Business student, has further marketed the program, established connections with several faculty and student groups and collaborated with the School of Liberal Education, which now oversees the UVolunteer program.

"My first task with UVolunteer was to organize the UVolunteer fair last fall at the University," says Baker. "It was a wonderful event and we had about 30 non-profit organizations attend. It was a great way to raise awareness right off the bat about the UVolunteer program. And it was a way for me to connect more with the non-profit organizations in the community and establish the link between the University and the community."

To spread the word about the UVolunteer program and its benefits to students, Baker conducted class presentations in every Faculty. He was also the point of contact for students and student clubs interested in the program.

"Students are more likely to receive scholarships if they clearly communicate how much they are volunteering," says Baker. "More and more employers are looking for volunteerism, too."

The cooperative term opened his eyes to the generous and giving nature of U of L students and what it's like to work in the non-profit sector.

“It was an amazing experience. I wouldn’t change anything,” says Baker. “There is such a diverse range of career opportunities in the non-profit sector that I don’t think a lot of students consider when they’re in school.”

For the summer, Baker has taken a position with Volunteer Lethbridge as a Project Paintbrush coordinator.

This news release can be found online at [UVolunteer](#).

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