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Celebrating University of Lethbridge student volunteers

National Volunteer Week from April 16 to 22 celebrates the contributions of some 24 million volunteers across the country, including nearly 200 of them from the University of Lethbridge.

The theme of this year's volunteer week is Volunteering Weaves Us Together. Whether that's sharing time or talent, volunteering strengthens the fabric of the community and helps weave supportive interconnections between people.

"I'm extremely proud of all the ULethbridge students who have supported non-profit agencies in our community through volunteering," says Alieza Cyr, UVolunteer coordinator and Dhillon School of Business student. "In 2022, ULethbridge students logged 834 volunteer hours and they've already logged more than 360 hours so far this year."

One student who has embraced volunteering is Talayna Ekelund. Last year, she volunteered close to 600 hours at a variety of local organizations, including the Interfaith Food Bank, Lethbridge Family Services, Lethbridge Senior Citizens Organization, Inclusion Lethbridge, Stitch It Forward Society, Lethbridge Therapeutic Riding Association, United Way, Lethbridge Dragon Boat Festival, Southern Alberta Art Gallery, the YMCA, Opokaa'sin Early Intervention Society and more.

"There are so many great reasons to volunteer," says Ekelund. "I choose to do so because I grew up learning the benefits of helping others and it is something I have always enjoyed doing."

Ekelund says volunteering has given her the opportunity to gain diverse experience while helping organizations and people. She has served as a role model for junior high school students through arts and crafts, sharing stories and playing games. She has helped serve dinners, sorted food donations, handed out food, made sandwiches for the food bank, sold 50/50 tickets, crocheted items for several organizations, collected toy donations, wrapped gifts and prepped meals for displaced youth.

"There are so many cool opportunities waiting for more volunteers to get involved; there is always something for everyone," says Ekelund. "As a student, I appreciate groups like UVolunteer and Volunteer Lethbridge that partner up to provide university students a place to

track hours of volunteer commitment. At the end of the year, it is really mind blowing to see just how much you were able to benefit the community you live in.”

This news release can be found online at [ULethbridge student volunteers](#).

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Our University’s Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.