

By Peter Kelly

Mayor

Halifax Regional Municipality

Hello again. I hope everything is good for you and your family.

Today, I'd like to touch on a couple of ideas to help newcomers get established in HRM.

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Being new to any community can be a difficult time for some people, especially if you don't know anyone or you feel a bit isolated by language or culture.



One of the best ways to overcome that is to offer your time and talents to help other people. Many Canadians are volunteers; it's a great way to meet others, gain new skills and give back to your community. It's also a way to try something new and practice language skills.

There are many organizations in HRM that depend on volunteers to carry out important local services. For example, summer is a time of events and festivals such as the Multicultural Festival, and organizers are already looking for volunteers. I encourage you to learn more at <http://www.halifax.ca/volunteerservices/index.html> or by calling 490-4000.

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Another way for you to start feeling at home in HRM is with the help of an organization called the Greater Halifax Partnership. It operates something called the Halifax Connector Program, a simple-but-effective process that puts newcomers and

international students in touch with local employers. The idea is to show you how to build a solid support network which, in turn, could help you join the workforce and settle successfully in HRM. As I mentioned, this program is aimed at immigrants to the province and international students attending our universities.

The program helps newcomers and employers equally and allows both to reach out and find new opportunities together.

Since the Halifax Connector Program began in 2009, more than 250 businesses have shared their professional networks and more than 300 connections have been made for those taking part. Of those connections, more than 60 have led to jobs.

The program is so successful that it has been copied in other cities across Canada.

To learn more about this helpful program, please go to www.greaterhalifax.com and click on Our Programs or telephone 490-6000.

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And finally, I'm sure most of you will agree with me that young people are a blessing and a precious gift for all of us. That's why HRM is always pleased to take part in National Youth Week which, this year, happens May 1-7. During that special week, we join with schools, youth groups and other local organizations in saluting the contributions that youth makes to our lives and to our community.

If you'd like more information on activities for youth in HRM, visit www.hrmyouth.ca where you'll find lots of information on teen health, recreation, arts and grants.

Reach me at kellyp@halifax.ca or www.peterkelly.ca or by phoning 490-4010. You're also invited to join me on my Twitter and Facebook pages.

