

the power of ONE

mom³

MOMeOs making
a difference in their
community by giving back

by Joni Evans

the power of ONE . . . continued

Margaret Mead once said “we must never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

One group of “thoughtful committed citizens” who fit this category perfectly are volunteers. For MOMEos Shauna Baty and Shabana Ahmad, volunteering is more than a commitment – it's a way of life.

“As a business owner, I try to pick charities that mean something to me,” says Baty.

“I don't want to just write a check. I want to be involved and know my time and effort is benefiting the organization.”

Baty is president of The Business Block, a company dedicated to helping small businesses make it through the critical first year and beyond.

“Volunteering is an important part of my life,” she says, “I believe if you give back, in a way you get back too.”

Currently, Baty volunteers with the Canadian Diabetes Association as an area manager. In addition, she's on a steering committee for Powerhouse International – an organization that provides small business owners with tools and resources they need.

Balancing career and family responsibilities with volunteering commitments is a juggling act, but the key is picking volunteering activities which fit in with your lifestyle, she says.



For Baty, it's very important to find an organization that “hits her hotspot” and supports a cause she can relate to. As a woman entrepreneur, she looks for organizations which will benefit from her involvement in these two areas.

In the future, she plans to establish a scholarship for young entrepreneurs. Although this is not traditional volunteering, it shows that with a little creativity, you can find or make unique ways to give back.

“There are countless ways to volunteer,” agrees Ahmad, “volunteering can be as simple as picking up some garbage off the neighbor's lawn.”

Ahmad, like Baty, is a life-long volunteer who has recently started her own small business. Integrity Human Capitol grew out of her personal experience as a life and business coach.

As a life coach, Ahmad helps people discover what they are born to do, and then guides them through the steps needed to achieve their goals. In business coaching, she helps align a company's beliefs and values with internal policy.

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Ahmad is a member of the Speaker's Bureau with Volunteer Calgary, and she often speaks to groups about the hidden rewards of volunteering.

"It's a little like describing chocolate to someone who has never had chocolate before," says Ahmad laughing.

"It's almost impossible to do. You really have to gain it through experience."

One of her most memorable experiences was volunteering for the 1988 Winter Olympics, when she was just 12 years old.

"That event required the community to come together to make it what it was," says Ahmad.

"We weren't just bettering the community; we were offering something better to the world."

Ahmad says this didn't dawn on her immediately – she was only 12 – but as she continued volunteering, she began to see the larger picture:

"Volunteering actually changes your perspective on everything. It's priceless," she says.

Ahmad also volunteers with Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Alberta Cancer Foundation during their Weekend to End Breast Cancer.

As the mother of a 13-year-old son, Takaiden,

Ahmad understands that balancing career and family leaves only a limited amount of time to volunteer. But there are countless opportunities, for example, helping your son or daughter pick up bottles for a bottle drive.

"People really need to make the decision they want volunteering to be a part of their life style," she says.

After that, opportunities which fit your lifestyle will pop up all over the place.

"There is an unbelievable satisfaction that you get from helping other people," she says.

"It's a very interesting flow of prosperity really. What you get out of it is just incredible."

Volunteering together with your family is a great way to bring everyone together, and it helps create a "foundation of service" for your children that will benefit them throughout their lifetime, says Ahmad.

"People may stand there and say I am just one person what can I do? But it's every one person that decides to make even a small contribution until it grows into something incredibly huge. Really that's the power of one."

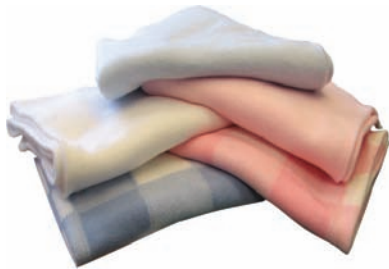
For Shauna Baty and Shabana Ahmad, they understand their small contribution not only benefits their communities but also greatly enriches their lives. Together, in their own ways, they are "offering something better to the world."

ways to help



1. Pick up litter along your street.

2. Shovel a neighbor's walkway in winter, or mow their lawn in the summer.



3. Take old blankets, towels and piles of newspapers to local animal shelters to help care for abandoned dogs, cats and small critters.



4. Order cards and address labels through non-profit organizations, which benefit from the proceeds.

5. Grow your hair for Locks of Love. It only takes 10 inches to make a wig for a child suffering from a medical illness.



6. Clean out your closet and give any gently used clothing to the local Goodwill.

Remember to check for damage and stains, these items may not be appropriate for donation but they will make great cleaning rags.