



# Agents of Change

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TREB PRESIDENT'S COLUMN AS IT APPEARS IN THE TORONTO SUN

March 27, 2009

Some people may only know the Toronto Real Estate Board as a provider of information on current market conditions and a voice that lobbies on issues that affect homebuyers and sellers.

What many people don't know though, is that it takes hundreds of REALTOR® volunteers to undertake these and other efforts. TREB's use of volunteers is in fact so effective, that it was recently recognized with the Ontario Real Estate Association's Volunteerism Award. Given that each of the 42 real estate boards in Ontario were eligible to receive this award, it was quite an honour to be chosen.

For many years our REALTOR® volunteers have served on Committees, like those related to the Multiple Listing Service and Government Relations. In recent years though, these roles have expanded to reflect new initiatives that focus, for example, on quality of life and environmental issues.

As a result of this work, TREB recently made a long-term commitment to a Toronto District School Board children's breakfast program called Feeding our Future. Through this program Toronto area REALTORS® are helping to provide nutritious meals and snacks to 1,700 Toronto students each school day.

Our volunteers continue to explore new opportunities. At a recent two-day symposium to discuss future initiatives, we also had the pleasure of presenting 19 different shelter related charities from throughout the Greater Toronto Area with REALTORS Care Foundation grants totaling \$160,000.

Shelter is not only a basic need, it's every REALTOR's® passion. Last year we hosted a reception called Gathering for Giving where we honoured those who work tirelessly on behalf of shelter-related charities.

At that event, I was proud to present the REALTORS Care Foundation with a cheque for \$320,000 on behalf of the Toronto Real Estate Board.

At nearly every event we organize we take the opportunity to raise funds for worthy causes. Last year more than 7,000 Greater Toronto REALTORS® attended our annual two-day REALTOR® Quest conference where we raised funds for the Salvation Army and Habitat for Humanity Toronto. Our annual Charity Golf Classic raised a further \$10,000 for the Salvation Army.

Holiday food and toy drives and the TREB/ThinkFood partnership, which since 2002 has resulted in 4500 pounds of food donated to local food banks in exchange for empty ink jet cartridges, are just few of the other ways REALTORS® have offered a helping hand.

Through these contributions REALTORS® are working to make a difference in the lives of thousands and in addition to providing donations, we routinely roll up our sleeves to pitch in.

It is estimated that 27 per cent of Canadians volunteer and according to a survey conducted by the Canadian Real Estate Association in 2007, 69% of REALTORS® volunteer, more than double the national average.

There's no doubt that REALTORS® play a vital role not only in our organization, but also in your community.

If you're planning your next move, find out about how a REALTOR® can help you; visit [www.TorontoRealEstateBoard.com](http://www.TorontoRealEstateBoard.com).

*Maureen O'Neill is President of the Toronto Real Estate Board, a professional association that represents 28,000 REALTORS® in the Greater Toronto Area.*