

The Community Volunteer Income Tax Program

It's that time of year again — tax season.

For some, it is a very stressful event. However, for many of us, we're able to receive help from certified professionals to relieve much of that stress. For others though, receiving assistance with their taxes is beyond their reach. This is why our government provides the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) each year in communities across Canada.

The Community Volunteer Income Tax Program is provided by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). CRA began the program in 1971 and has worked with community organizations, to help eligible individuals who are unable to complete their income tax and benefit returns themselves, and who are unable to pay to have it completed.

If you are unable to complete your income tax and benefit return by yourself and you are unable to pay for assistance, CRA's Community Volunteer Income Tax Program may be right for you. CRA trains volunteers who can help you complete your income tax and benefit return, if your income is too low and your tax situation is simple.

Volunteers do not complete income tax and benefit returns for deceased persons, bankrupt individuals or people who have capital gains or losses, employment expenses, or business or rental income and expenses. The clinics are typically offered between February and April each year in various locations across Canada and it is a free service.

We are most fortunate here in Dufferin — Caledon to have two Volunteer Tax Preparation Clinics offered each year.

A clinic will be at Caledon Community Services (CCS) office in Bolton, which serves Caledon residents. This clinic will be available each Monday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. until April 30. An appointment is recommended. For more information on this clinic and to make an appointment, please call CCS at (905) 584-2300. CCS is located in downtown Bolton at 18 King St. East, in the Royal Courtyards.

A second clinic began this week at the Orangeville and District Senior Citizens Centre, in Orangeville, to serve Dufferin County residents. This clinic will be available Tuesday through Thursday each week from 9

Ottawa Journal

David Tilson
MP Dufferin-Caledon



a.m. to 3 p.m. until April 29. For more specific information on the Orangeville Volunteer Tax Preparation Clinic, please contact the Orangeville and District Senior Citizens Centre at (519) 941-6012. The Centre is at 26 Bythia St., in Orangeville.

More information on the program, as well as other tax information, can be obtained from CRA by calling 1-800-959-8281 or by contacting either of my constituency offices. For those residing in Caledon, please call my Bolton constituency office at (905) 857-6080 and for those residing in Dufferin County, please call my Orangeville constituency office at (519) 941-1832.

Canada providing rapid relief for Haiti

All Canadians are deeply concerned over the devastation caused by the recent earthquake in Haiti.

The impact is creating overwhelming challenges,

not only for the people living in the damaged country, but also for their friends and family here in Canada.

For more than 50 years, relations between Canada and Haiti have grown stronger due to a substantial Haitian community in Canada, as well as the presence of Canadian development organizations in Haiti. Our two countries are members of the United Nations together as well as La Francophonie — which results in even more reason for us to build and develop a lasting relationship.

It is in part because of this significant relationship that our government feels so strongly for the people of Haiti during their time of need. We offer our most sincere condolences to those who have lost friends and family in this terrible event. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Haitian people.

Our government is proud that Canada was one of the first countries on the ground after the devastating earthquake. Since then, we have been working around the clock to assess the situation and do whatever we can to help the Haitian people. Canada has provided the following rapid response:

- A Canadian Forces DART (Disaster Assistance Response Team) has been sent.
- Canadian Forces aircraft are regularly dispatched to bring such things as emer-

gency supplies, personnel, and search and rescue helicopters. These same planes are being used to bring Canadians home. More than 3,500 people have been brought safely back to Canada.

- We have approximately 2,000 men and women, seven helicopters and two ships contributing to rescue, recovery, and reconstruction efforts in Haiti.

- HMCS Halifax and HMCS Athabaskan, two Canadian naval ships loaded with food, bottled water, medical equipment and humanitarian supplies, are in Haiti.

- A Canadian field hospital is operating in Haiti.

- Our government is directly supporting relief efforts with additional funding to provide essential services for roughly 3 million people over the next six months and helping the UN World Food Program to deliver 100 million meals within the next month.

- We are also providing direct funding to Red Cross societies that are providing water, sanitation and health services to about 300,000 Haitians.

Our government is also taking this time to remind Canadians that cash donations are still the fastest, most efficient way to get help to people living in a disaster zone. Meanwhile, to acknowledge the generosity of Canadians, our government has announced that we will match, dollar for dollar, Canadians' charitable contributions to registered organizations for disaster assistance in Haiti (as of Feb. 8, more than \$113 million in eligible donations had been raised to be matched through the Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund). Canada's total donation to date, through the Canadian

International Development Agency (CIDA) is more than \$85 million for humanitarian assistance, relief, and reconstruction efforts — and that number is growing.

As part of our commitment to standing behind the Haitian people, on Jan. 25 our government hosted a meeting of foreign ministers and key multilateral players in Montreal to begin laying the groundwork for the reconstruction of Haiti. During this meeting, Prime Minister Stephen Harper rallied the international community to a strategic and coordinated effort to help rebuild Haiti. The Prime Minister outlined three principles to guide the work of reconstruction in Haiti:

- Sustainability — the world must commit to Haiti for the long-term.
- Effectiveness — resources must be directed to where they are most needed.
- Accountability — the commitments we make must be firm and lasting to ensure Canadian tax dollars are used effectively.

The devastation caused by the earthquake in Haiti has created an urgent need for help. Our government will continue to look at other ways to provide assistance to the victims of this tragedy.

Friends and relatives in Canada seeking information on Canadian citizens believed to be in Haiti should contact the Emergency Operations Centre by calling 1-800-387-3124. They may also send an email to sos@international.gc.ca

Updates on the situation in Haiti are available at http://www.international.gc.ca/humanitarian-humanitaire/earthquake_seisme_haiti.aspx

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