

**But That's
Not What
My Mom
Does**

**(a book
about
volunteers)**

Wendy Hollo

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Why Not Publishing Co.

1st Printing 1987

Sunrise Printing Ltd.

But That's Not What My Mom Does

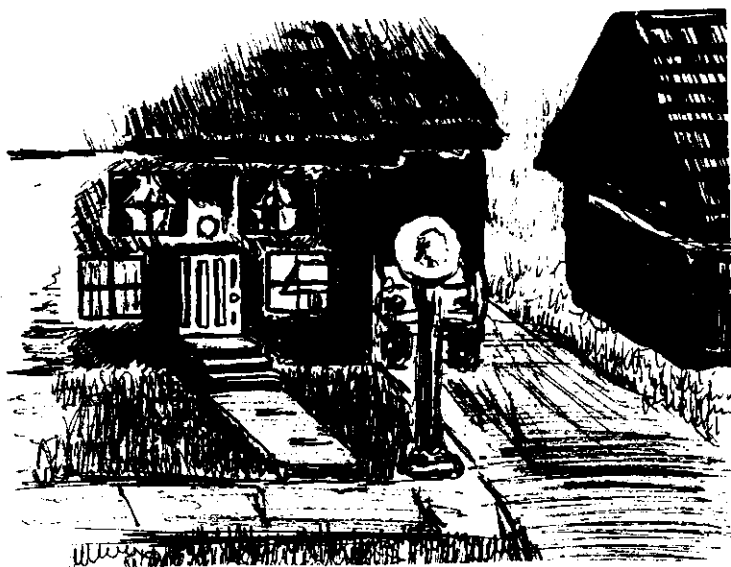
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It was an exciting night in the Hale household. Sarah's mother was going to a special banquet to receive an award for her work as a volunteer. She was even going to shake hands with the mayor!



Sarah was very proud of her mother, but she was also a little bit confused. She wasn't exactly sure what a volunteer was.

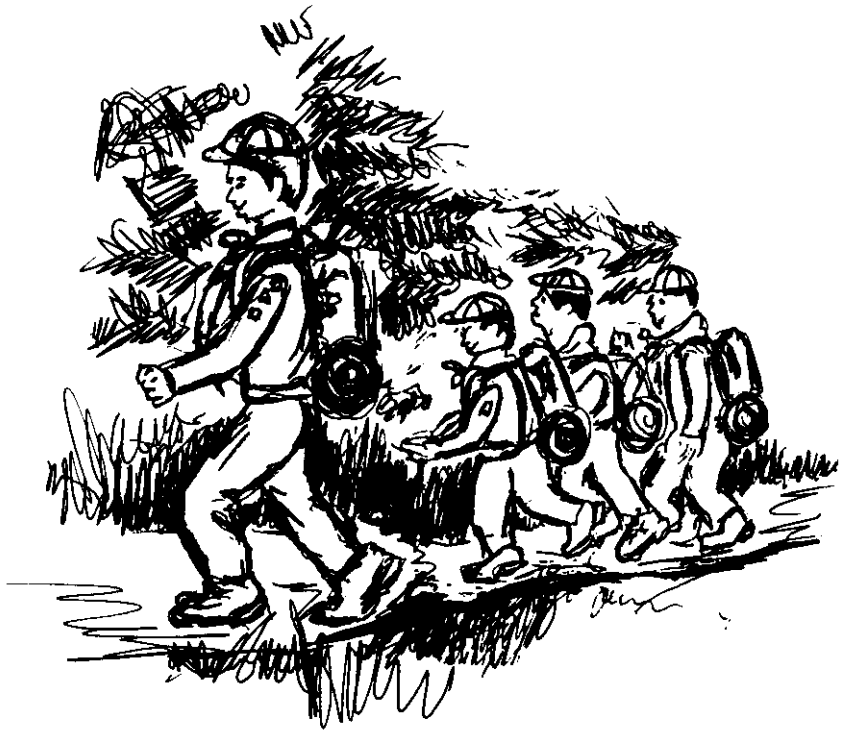
Sarah gave her mother a big 'good luck' hug,



and ran back into the kitchen to have a snack with her babysitter, Scott. She asked, "Scott, do you know what a volunteer is?"

Scott was in college now and he knew almost everything. He said, "Sure, Sarah. A volunteer is someone who helps out with the Boy Scouts. That's what I do as a volunteer."





Sarah remembered seeing Scott in his Scout leader uniform once. He had been taking his Scout pack on a camping trip, and Sarah had thought that he was pretty neat to be doing that. But she was still confused.

“But that’s not what my mom does,” she thought to herself.

Just then Scott called her back into the kitchen.

“It’s your Grandma on the phone Sarah, and she wants to talk to you! ”

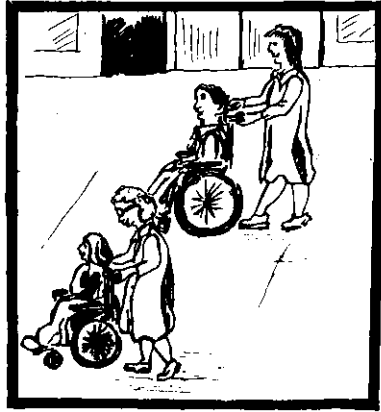
That was a nice surprise. Sarah’s Grandma lived in another city quite far away. She had grey hair, a very nice smile, and she knew almost everything.

Sometimes even Sarah’s mother phoned Grandma to ask her things. So Sarah asked, “Grandma, do you know what a volunteer is?”



“Why yes, Sarah. A volunteer is someone who helps the nurses in a hospital. That’s what I do as a volunteer.” And then it was time to say good night.

Sarah remembered her Grandma showing her a picture of some ladies in special smocks. They were taking people in wheelchairs outside for a walk. Sarah’s Grandma had been in that picture, and Sarah had been very proud of her. But she was still confused.



“That’s not what my mom does,” she said to herself as she tucked into bed that night.

Sarah was still thinking about
volunteers the next day when she was in
school.



She asked her teacher, Mrs. Syme, what a volunteer was. Mrs. Syme definitely knew everything. That's why she was a grade one teacher!

Mrs. Syme said, "A volunteer is someone who sings in the choir at their church. That's what I do as a volunteer."

Sarah remembered seeing her teacher in the choir. It had been Christmas time, and Sarah had been delighted to see her there. But it didn't really answer her question.

"But that's not what my mom does!"

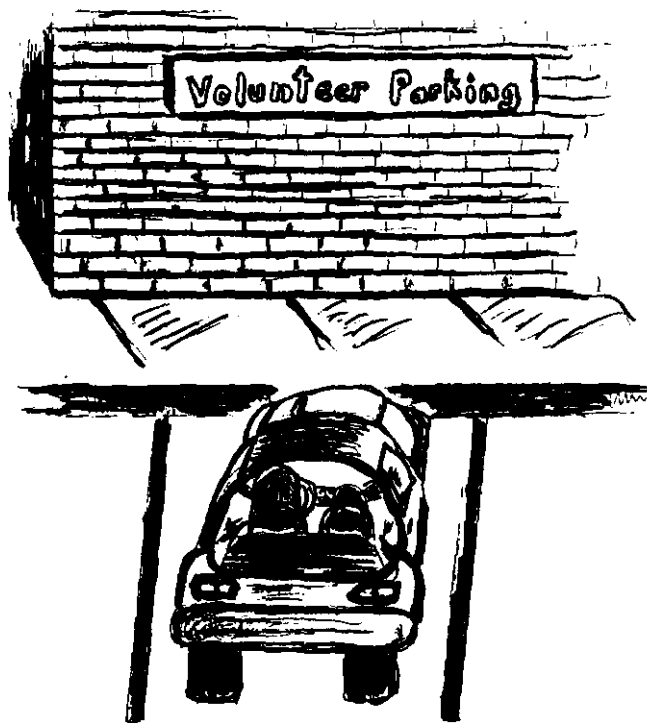


When Sarah came home from school she was happy to see her mother sitting on the steps with some milk and cookies for the two of them to share. She could hardly wait to ask her mother about volunteers. But instead of an answer, Sarah got an invitation!

Her mother said, "I'm going to my volunteer job tomorrow. Why don't you come with me and see for yourself what a volunteer is?"

For once Sarah was up even before the alarm clock rang! She was very excited about going with her mom, and it seemed to take forever until they were buckled into their little red car and on their way.

They came to a stop in front of a large white sign with the words 'Volunteer Parking' hand-painted on it. So this was where her mom went every week!



Sarah and her mother walked around to the front of the big brick building. Her mother helped her read out the words 'Parkview Community Centre' as they looked up over the doorway at the big silver letters.



Sarah was suddenly very shy, and was very glad to hold her mother's hand as they walked through the busy entrance into the building.

“Sarah”, her mother said, “I want you to meet some of the people who volunteer with me at the centre.”

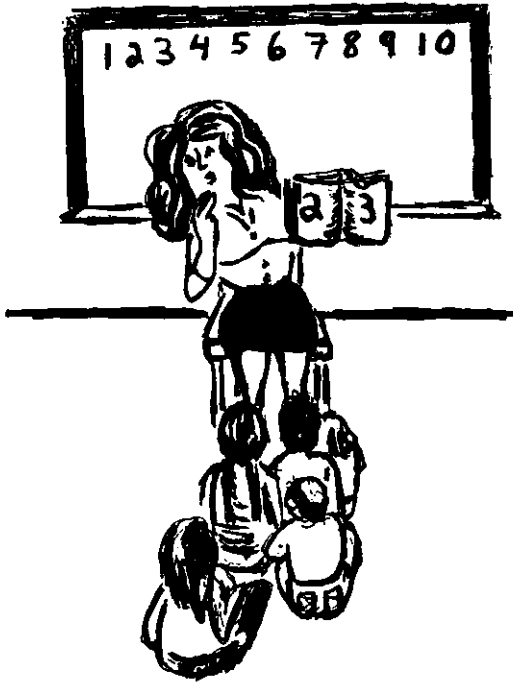
For the next half hour, Sarah, close at her mother’s side, met all kinds of people doing many different and interesting things.

And they were all volunteers.

She met a man named George and a woman named Pat who took in and gave out hampers of food in a food bank, and two grandmas who sorted out the clothes that people brought to them,



and a very pretty woman named Marguerita who looked after children in a daycare.

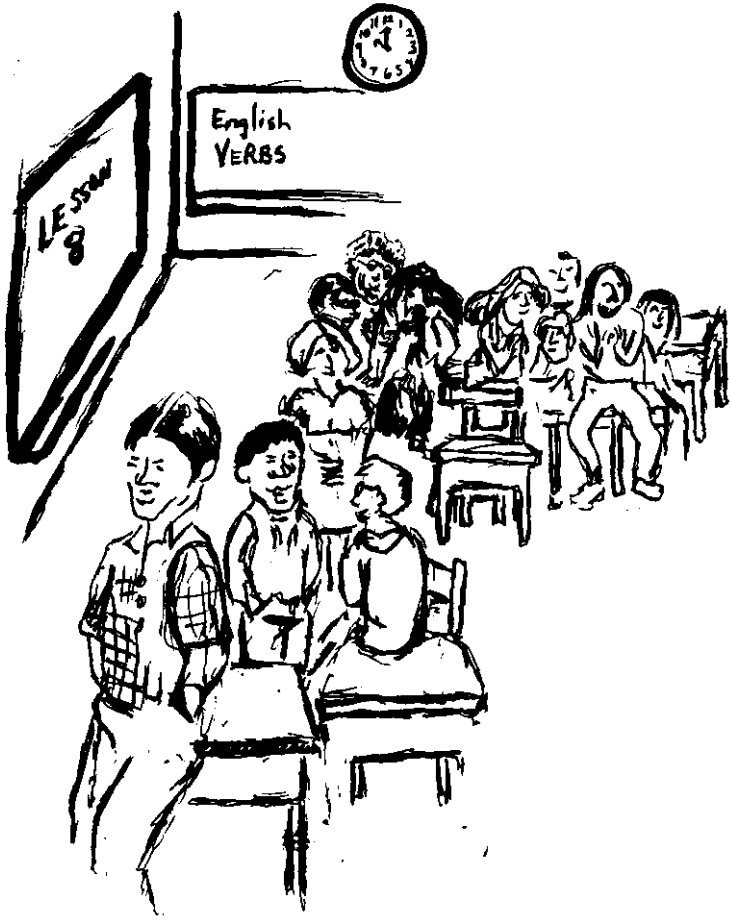


And then she found out what her mother did!

The last room Sarah and her mother came to was a large classroom across the hall from the daycare. There were already lots of grown-ups sitting in the school desks looking very excited, and they were speaking to each other in languages that Sarah didn't understand.

Sarah's mother told her that the people there had just come from many different countries. They came to this classroom every Saturday morning to learn to speak English, and Sarah's mother was their teacher!

"So that's what my mom does!" Sarah thought to herself.



English
VERBS

Lesson
8

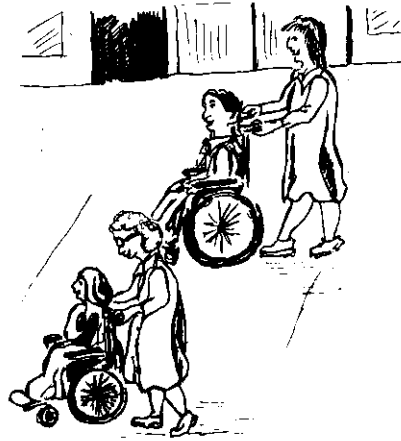


When the people in the classroom saw Sarah and her mother, they all jumped to their feet and clapped and smiled, and a man gave Sarah's mother a big bouquet of flowers. He said that they were from his garden. Then a woman named Miu Sum made a short speech about how they were all proud of their teacher for getting an award from the mayor, and how glad they were that she was there to help them learn to speak English.

Sarah's mother looked very surprised and happy, and she introduced Sarah to every person in the class.

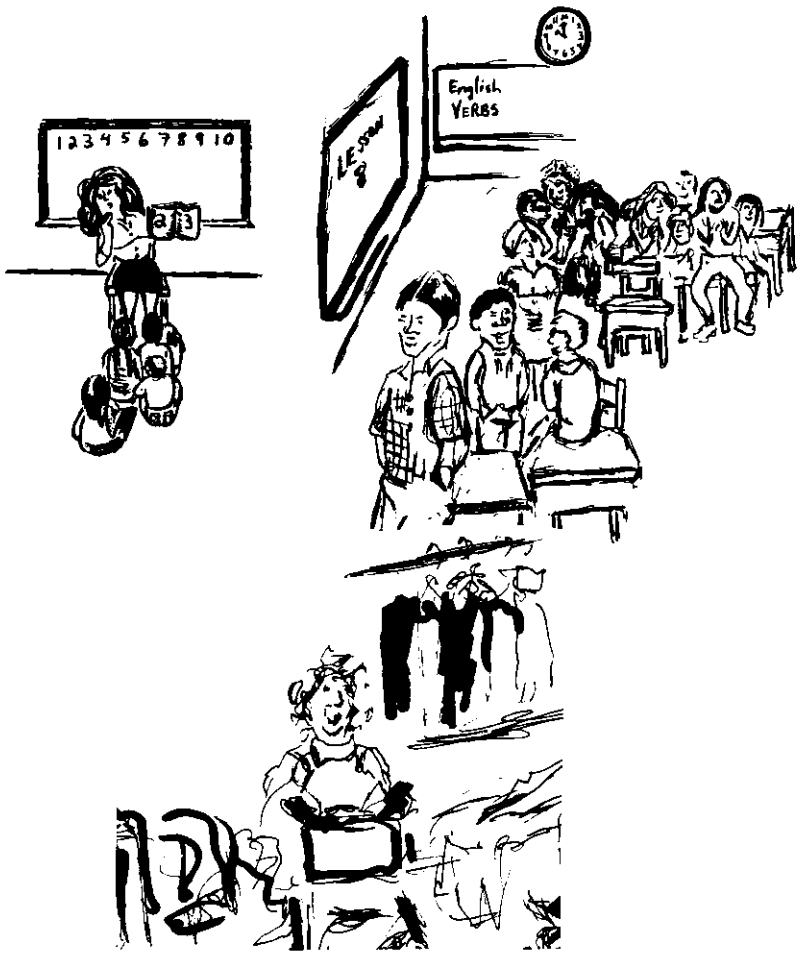
Marguerita and the children from the daycare soon joined in the fun, and in no time at all the whole class had become a party. All too soon it was time to go home.





In the car on the way home, Sarah's mother asked, "Do you think you know what a volunteer is now?"

Sarah thought for a moment. She knew Scott was a volunteer, and that he took Boy Scouts on camping trips. Grandma was a volunteer, and she worked in a hospital. And Mrs. Syme was a volunteer and she sang in a choir at church.



Then there were all the people she had met at the Community Centre. There was George and Pat in the food bank, and the two grandmas who sorted out clothes to give to people who needed them. Marguerita looked after children in a daycare, and Sarah's mother taught people to speak English. And they were all volunteers!

It seemed like anyone could be a volunteer.

Then Sarah was excited! All the way home she wondered what kinds of things SHE would do when she became a volunteer.



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About the Book . . .

This is the story of a young girl's search to discover *exactly* what a volunteer is. Sarah soon learns that a volunteer can be just about anyone, and can do just about anything!

Wendy Hollo works in Edmonton for the Canadian Mental Health Association (North Central Region), part of a national, voluntary organization which is concerned with the proper treatment of the mentally ill, as well as the promotion of good mental health.

She supervises a program called Community Friends, which matches volunteers with people who have experienced mental health problems.

The book was written for her seven year old daughter, Trisha.

Catherine McKinnon is a graduate of Fine Arts from the University of Manitoba and was formerly a Coordinator of Volunteers in Winnipeg, Manitoba.