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NEWS LOCAL

Edmonton-made website GozAround brings together individual volunteers and organizations that need them

By [Doug Johnson](#)
Wednesday, September 24, 2014 11:32:01 MDT AM



Edmontonian Ben Block created GozAround, a social media platform that aims to connect volunteers with volunteer organizations. PHOTO SUPPLIED

Ben Block has been volunteering since high school and while he saw many people struggling to find volunteer opportunities, he saw just as many organizations struggling to fill their ranks.

"It struck me that I hear quite often that it's too hard to volunteer or too difficult to find a way to volunteer," he said.

"Then at the same time, in my own travels, I came across people who needed help with something or other that I was pretty sure there was somebody out there who would be happy to help, but they didn't have a good way to connect."

Years later, in 2013, he took a look at social media and its power to bring people together, and took it upon himself to use this power to connect volunteers with the groups that need them.

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Last August, Block launched his website, GozAround, with the hopes that it would help these groups come together.

Since then, it has reached over 100 volunteer organizations, and has been growing, he estimated, from five to seven per cent ever since.

GozAround allows individuals and organizations to register for free, and for the latter to post help requests that volunteers with applicable skills can apply for.

When the service is done, the website also tracks the work of the volunteer, and awards them points which can be redeemed online for anything from gift cards to experiential opportunities like stock car driving.

"Long-term plans, I would like to see things on there that money can't buy," Block said, adding that his dream is to have the most active user go on the Ellen Show.

"I know that the times in my life that I've felt the best are the times in my life where I've done something for somebody else," he said.

For more information, visit gozaround.com

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