

“Samedi du Partage”

A Geneva-based charity taking place this month

You may have already heard about “Samedi du Partage”, or maybe not. Christian Pauletto, a long-time supporter and volunteer, was interviewed by Julien Rigoulet, a staff member of the association, to raise awareness about this unique activity.

JULIEN RIGOULET, ASSOCIATION PARTAGE

Can you introduce yourself?

I was born and raised in Geneva, and had my career mainly focused on international affairs, with the Swiss government. However, my canton is very dear to me, and I take pride in contributing to giving a better life for people in precarious situations in Geneva. My motivation to engage with “Samedi du Partage” was a natural fit. The association warmly welcomes people from all paths of life to join us in the action, and I think it would reinforce the position of Geneva as the main hub for international affairs to have a variety of volunteers, such as expatriates. It’s also a meaningful way to get involved in the life of Geneva.

What is “Samedi du Partage”?

It is a charity association created in Geneva in 1993 whose aim is to provide food for people in need in Geneva. Despite our robust economy, there are people in need in this canton. Four times a year, the association collects food from about a hundred retail shops across the canton. The latest edition of June 2022 collected over 150 tons of food, thanks to the generosity of the population. The next edition will take place on November 25th-26th. Concerning volunteers, they are typically located at the entrance of retail

shops to encourage shoppers to get a little extra food to donate to the association at the end of their errand. Then, the association stores the food donations and organizes a gradual distribution to over 50 grassroots-organizations working with people in need in Geneva. These organizations help close to 13,000 persons per week in the canton. However, for obvious perishability reasons, the association can only collect non-perishable items, like pantry produce (rice, pasta, cereals, etc.).

How did you hear about this association?

I simply saw volunteers in the Migros in my neighbourhood and started chatting with them. I was amazed by their actions and the overall mission of the association and immediately decided to join as a volunteer myself, and since then have enrolled in every edition of the action. Now, the association is also quite visible on social media and in conventional media as well, making it easy to follow its activities.

How does it work for volunteers and how do you sign up?

It is very easy and flexible. The association has a dedicated volunteers’ registration web page, www.partage.ch/benevole, and people can choose one of the listed shops and pick a time



slot. Having close to a hundred shops participating on a regular basis makes it easy to find a good slot. This canton-wide action still requires a total of 1,500 volunteers per “Samedi du Partage”. It is open to everyone to give a bit of their time, and there is no commitment requirement. It can be a one-time volunteering action or much more! If you have some queries, you can directly interact by e-mail and send your question to benevolat@partage.ch, or call 078 692 90 80. The association works in a very lean, user-friendly manner and is always keen to

assist and guide newcomers in French and English.

What would you say to someone who is hesitant to get involved?

If someone is hesitant, maybe an expatriate who has recently moved to Geneva and isn't familiar with its charity network, I would advise you to ask yourself the following questions. ‘Do I wish to be involved in a true Geneva “tradition”? ‘Do I value helping others around me?’ Am I ready to give just a couple of hours of my time to be part of a canton-wide action alongside

more than a thousand of other volunteers?’ If the answers are yes, I encourage you to check the website and the shops taking part in the action and the time slots available. If this fits in your agenda, save the date and register! Two hours is so little when you think of it objectively. I believe it is the addition of multiple small involvements that make “Samedi du Partage” so successful and popular. The idea of this action is not just to follow a conventional donation scheme, but to have a true, collective engagement of the people that make Geneva, with

its international community that is, in my opinion, most definitely part of it. Participating in this action is also an opportunity to meet new people who share the same values, and that can only be a humbling and enriching experience. ■

Contact info:

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