

FREE TAX CLINICS

Tax season is upon us, and community organizations are once again hosting free tax clinics in 2023.

It is important to complete your taxes every year to qualify for and receive many federal, provincial, and municipal programs and services.

Through the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP), community organizations host free tax clinics. Volunteers complete income tax and benefit returns for people with a modest income and a simple tax situation to ensure they receive, or continue to receive, the benefits and credits they are entitled to.

Volunteers may be able to complete and file your taxes for free if you meet the eligibility criteria, and this includes doing taxes for current and previous years.

In order to be eligible for the program individuals must have a modest income and a simple tax situation. In general, a **modest income** means

the total family income for a single person is less than \$35,000 or a family of four is less than \$50,000.

In general, a **tax situation** is **simple** if an individual has no income or if their income comes from these sources:

- employment
- pension
- benefits, such as the Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, disability insurance, employment insurance, and social assistance
- Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs)
- scholarships, fellowships, bursaries, or grants interest (under \$1,000)

Find a tax clinic in your area that meets your needs. Simply go to www.canada.ca and type “free tax clinics” in the search box. If you cannot find a tax preparation clinic in your area, check back again as community organizations add clinics regularly.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH



As we marked Black History Month in February, I would like to pay tribute to the amazing Al Sparks, who passed away in 2008.

A North End Winnipegger who became Canadian Light Heavyweight Boxing Champion and world-ranked contender, Al was also a CN and Via Rail employee. For Black Canadians of his generation, job opportunities were limited because of discrimination. Employment on the railways was one of the few jobs available to them.

I got to know Al at the old Pan Am boxing club, where he sometimes worked out and donned the boxing gloves. Our coaches would line up 3 or more young local boxers to spar with him and learn a few things. Often, he would spar over 20 rounds in an evening.

I consider myself fortunate to have been able to spar with him on many of those occasions. He would sting you but was careful to never hurt you. After the workouts, he would share stories of his travels throughout the

US and the world as he pursued his dream.

Al was an amazing athlete and boxer. But more importantly, he was an exemplary role model, a gentleman and an inspiration for young people.

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