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Letter From the Editors: A Preview of the Year Ahead

By Danny Glenwright

Happy new year 2017 and welcome to our 45th year of publishing.

Since 1972, *The Philanthropist* has fostered discussion and debate on issues that matter to the non-profit sector, and provided information about the sector's important contributions to our communities, our country, and our world.

More than 530 authors have contributed to the journal since we began publishing, and more than 1,570 individuals currently subscribe.

For us at *The Philanthropist*, our milestone anniversary – and Canada's 150th – provide an opportunity to take stock and celebrate the achievements of our vibrant sector, as well as dig into the challenges we face in today's turbulent world.

It is interesting to note that when we started out in 1972, we had a Trudeau as prime minister. As we head into 2017, we once again have a Trudeau as prime minister. During the span in between, Canada grew up and came into its own. So did its social sector.

As we celebrate the achievements of our country and our work, we have also envisioned the sesquicentennial as a timely opportunity to underscore the importance of leadership. Change happens because people make it so – and most accomplishments in our sector can be traced to men and women who created the conditions to construct lasting impact.

Thus, in 2017 *The Philanthropist* aims to profile 150 people from across the non-profit sector – those connected to our past, and others who will shape our future. We want to put a face to 150 of these individuals, allowing our readers to get to know just a few of the people who have chosen to work or volunteer in Canada's charitable and non-profit sector.

Our authors and readers include not just conventional leaders, but also those who influence outcomes in other ways, including frontline workers, legal and financial advisors, academics, volunteers, board members, funders, policymakers, and others from across the country.

We will post and share these profiles throughout the year on our website and our social media platforms and we encourage you to get in touch if you know someone we should feature.

The Philanthropist will also spend the year looking beyond individuals to some of the trends and forces shaping our area of work, including our sector's passion for "social innovation" – a "trend" we've been discussing almost as long as we've been publishing.

So why more discussion?

At the time of Canada's 150th, we are a country grappling with reconciliation, environmental issues, integration of immigrants and refugees, and myriad other challenges that call for innovative responses.

With this in mind, *The Philanthropist* will work in partnership with the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation to produce a special series about social innovation that will run throughout 2017. This leading foundation has been exploring innovative philanthropy for some time, pushing our sector, as it notes, "not simply to solve problems, but to transform systems."

Our series will ask tough and important questions about the role of social innovation in Canada's non-profit sector, including: How is the practice evolving and changing? Where is social innovation having a real impact in people's lives and on the issues they are mobilizing around? What is uniquely Canadian about the practices and values underlying social innovation?

We hope this series will provide fodder for current debates on the subject, as well as spark new ones – for those "inside" the tent and out.

This year our journal will also feature six pieces from young professionals working with Connect the Sector on a writing fellowship, as part of our new collaboration with the Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN). The collaboration is giving participants a chance to connect with peers, mentors, and sector leaders in order to delve into complex sector-wide issues and propose solutions to improve how we work.

Loyal readers will notice another noteworthy change to our publication this year as we incorporate a visual element to the online journal for the first time, introducing monthly illustrations that we hope will complement and amplify some of the above noted work.

Finally, we invite you to engage with our first piece of 2017, Joanne Cave's look back on some of the highlights of 2016, as well as her predictions about trends on the horizon in the year ahead.

Do you agree with her forecast? What has she missed?

We encourage readers to contribute to this conversation in the comment section or on social media – and please share this piece with colleagues.

The Philanthropist will continue to be a forum to explore the issues that matter to our sector. We always appreciate your constructive feedback and ideas.

Thanks for reading and all the best in 2017,

Susan, Gordon, Malcolm, Leslie, Jillian, and Danny