
150 Profiles: Bruce MacDonald

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Author: Bruce MacDonald

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As we mark the 150th anniversary of confederation, The Philanthropist is profiling Canadians from across the non-profit sector and putting a face to 150 individuals who work or volunteer in Canada's social sector.



Name: Bruce MacDonald

Current role in the sector: President and CEO, Imagine Canada

Years working and/or volunteering in the non-profit sector: Working since 1983, but volunteering since I was a kid.

Can you describe a defining moment in your career working/volunteering in the non-profit sector?

My first job in the sector was working for the YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington creating programs for people with disabilities in the newly renovated downtown YMCA. I would say that a defining moment was having the opportunity to attend the youth conference of the Y in 1984. At that event, there were delegates from around the globe and it was a time that reinforced how fortunate we are to live in Canada and that I wanted to play a role in contributing to the quality of life that we enjoy.

Describe your desk/workspace.

Functional with a few personal touches. Book of quotes from Monty Python. Darth Vader gumball machine. Family photos of our travels. Poem and photo from my last job (okay, I'm wearing a Cat in the Hat, hat!). Whiteboard for drawing out thoughts.

What are you reading or following that has expanded your understanding of the non-profit sector?

Having had the great fortune to participate in the McGill/McConnell Masters program, I was greatly impacted by 'Getting to Maybe' by Westley, Zimmerman and Patton.

What matters to you that you think our sector needs to be thinking about?

I have come to believe that the sector needs to link its long-term thinking to the profound changes taking place in Canadian society and indeed, across the globe, in a more intentional way. With sector leaders busy delivering on their organizational missions, little time is left for understanding the shifting landscape and planning how to adapt--in a timely way, not years later. From the changing face of Canada to the global post-truth trend to the implications of an aging society, real thought needs to be given to how to connect these issues to the day to day work of charities and nonprofits.

Do you know someone we should profile as part of this series? Email us at philanthropistprofiles@gmail.com