

Title: "150 Profiles: Keenan Wellar"

Author: Keenan Wellar

Published in: *The Philanthropist*, [150 Profiles](#)

Date: March 8, 2017

Original Link: <https://thephilanthropist.ca/2017/03/canada-150-profiles-keenan-wellar/>

Date of PDF Download: October 21, 2017

150 Profiles: Keenan Wellar

By Keenan Wellar

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:Keenan Wellar

Current role in the sector:Co-Leader and Director of Communications at LiveWorkPlay.ca

Years working and/or volunteering in the non-profit sector: I started working and volunteering in the non-profit sector in 1987. I have also worked in the government and for-profit sectors (up until 1997) during which time I was a volunteer, but I have been in my current position with LiveWorkPlay since that time.

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

My first job in the sector came in 1989 at the age of 21 thanks to a small non-profit supporting recreational opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities. I truly came to the job by accident. My first evening at work was the first time in my life that I knowingly engaged in conversation with people with autism, Down syndrome, and other developmental and intellectual disabilities. This was important to me because my eyes were opened to the reality that these individuals (many the same age as me) had been deliberately segregated from me (and I from them) throughout our school years and into adulthood.

Describe your desk/workspace.

When they see my desk, I think most visitors assume that some sort of software engineer or perhaps a small graphic imaging firm has taken up residence in the LiveWorkPlay office. I have a wide variety of roles, and this includes producing in-house video and constantly generating and sharing images through social media. A treasured knickknack is my graphical “person-centred profile” compiled by my colleague Caitlin Fortier. If someone does find their way to my desk area, it helps set the tone that I am approachable and transparent about my strengths and weaknesses.

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

I am part of online communities at [BoardSource](#) and [The Learning Community for Person-Centred Practices](#), where I read and participate on issues that range from governance to the evolution of human services. I read *The Philanthropist* and [Non-Profit Quarterly](#) and newsletters like [Canadian Charity Law](#) and [Community Living Ontario Friday updates](#). I have an enormous network of online friends and acquaintances through Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and more, and they are more powerful than any algorithm: they alert me to news and articles of interest with amazing efficacy. I am currently reading *Dynamic Relationships: Unleashing the Power of Appreciative Inquiry* as appreciative inquiry is a critical component of our staff development plan.

For you as a past author with the journal, please share with us your reflections on what has changed and/or stayed the same since writing the following article:

It’s hard to believe almost four years have passed since I wrote [Social Change And A Welcoming Environment For Youth In The Nonprofit Community](#)(2013). I daresay that this article might have been a little ahead of its time, as it has become rather common in 2017 to find that organizations are struggling with how to adapt their human resources and other practices to meet the needs of young workers and volunteers and maximize the positive contributions they can bring to non-profits and to their communities. I think a renaissance is underway for the non-profit sector and that Canada 150 is perhaps going to be a defining year as we launch into the newest wave of social change practices that will be highly attractive to young workers.

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