

Title: "150 Profiles: Clare Northcott"

Author: Clare Northcott

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150 Profiles: Clare Northcott

By Clare Northcott

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: Clare Northcott

Current role in the sector: Business Program Manager for Family Plus Life Solutions



Years working and/or volunteering in the non-profit sector: Twenty-seven.

What was your first job in the sector or a defining moment?

In 1995 I accepted a position with the YMCA of Cumberland County in New Brunswick. It was a challenging role aimed at reopening a relatively new YMCA that had closed due to bankruptcy a mere two years earlier. The success in that role, the people that I worked with and the experience I gained set the tone for what I knew would be a lengthy career in the sector.

Describe your desk/workspace.

Depends on the day. Most days it is relatively neat with piles of work divided into all of my areas of responsibility close at my fingertips because one never knows when there will be a phone call that will totally shift the direction of your day. My door is always open literally and figuratively.

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

I am currently reading a book entitled, *It's Not About Us; The Secret to Transforming the Mental Health and Addiction System in Canada* by Todd Leader. Leader talks about client-centred care and the importance of not losing sight of who we are trying to support in our mental health system. Most non-profits struggle with a bit of mission drift or focus on operational needs. We start out focused on trying to strengthen services or programs for a particular client, but as we grow we put in processes, plans and support more people which can move us further away from the very people we are trying to support. Rich Harwood, of the Harwood Institute, talks about this as being outwardly focused. I think we all need to do regular check-ins to be sure we are aligned with our clients' needs.

What do you think our sector needs to be thinking about?

I think we need to figure out a strategy for attracting the energy and enthusiasm of the younger generation into the sector. I believe we have the autonomy they crave combined with the ability to be innovative in how we deliver services. I hadn't really imagined a career in the nonprofit sector when I was finishing school. When I consider all that the 27 years has provided me, I know that I am extremely fortunate. The flexibility in jobs, the opportunity to learn from corporate leaders who have been on my boards and the hands-on experience could not have been replicated in the career I was expecting in municipal government.

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