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150 Profiles: Josey Kitson

By Josey Kitson

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: Josey Kitson

Current role in the sector: Executive Director for World Animal Protection Canada

Years working and/or volunteering in the nonprofit sector: 15 years.



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

My first job in the sector was with World Animal Protection (then WSPA) as an intern. I was investigating the plight of animals in the entertainment industry focusing on substandard zoos and exotic animals kept as pets. My perspective on animals in captivity changed forever. I will never forget visiting a zoo that kept its primates in a small, dark room with one tiny window. Intelligent and emotionally complex animals were living in miserable conditions. It was horrible. Some improvements have been made in Canada and around the world for captive wildlife but there is still a very long way to go.

Describe your desk/workspace.

Inspirational. A few months ago, my sister helped me pull together a more creative space. I spend most of my time in the office—so I wanted a space that inspired me. I have pictures all over the walls of animals that our donors have saved in places like Haiti, Costa Rica and the Philippines. Of course, I also have pictures of my own pets, past and present. I have always been very passionate about animal welfare—knowing that my work is creating a world where animals live free from suffering motivates me every day.

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

I'm very interested in culture, change and innovation. So I'm reading *Above the Line: How to create a culture that engages employees, delights customers and delivers results* by Michael Henderson. Many non-profits overlook the importance on focusing internally to get results externally. Only a truly engaged and motivated team can deliver the innovative ideas needed to solve the world's biggest problems.

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

People who seek out jobs in the charitable sector want to use their passion and creativity to make a difference in the world. Still, many charities struggle to engage their teams and deliver truly innovative solutions. The industry is faced with a younger workforce, ongoing resourcing challenges and more and more animals and people that need our help. We need to focus on harnessing the passion of our staff and building strong teams that work cohesively. I believe that this approach to staff engagement will get us the truly innovative solutions we need to solve to the most pressing problems that society faces.

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