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150 Profiles: Carolyn Tuckwell

By Carloyn Tuckwell

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: Carolyn Tuckwell

Current role in the sector: President & CEO, Boys and Girls Clubs of South Coast BC

Years working and/or volunteering in the non-profit sector: 16 years (plus many more as a volunteer).



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

I was recruited into fundraising for BC Children’s Hospital Foundation, after working with the Foundation on a number of projects in my role as Department Head of Speech Language Pathology and Audiology for Children’s and Women’s Health Centre of BC. Coming from the public sector what immediately resonated with me was the possibility that comes from private funding, especially when it is intended to meet a need, make something happen and contribute to the greater good.

Describe your desk/workspace.

I’m definitely a person who likes to have the files I’m working on in front of me. I also like to laugh, so there are always a few surprises—a picture, a funny card from a friend, or something unexpected like my current favourite: a “tiny hands” prop from the Lawrence Welk skits Kirsten Wiig did on Saturday Night Live. And there’s usually candy, to incent/reward people for meeting with me.

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

Dan Pallotta’s *Uncharitable* both immediately resonated and unnerved me because it challenges so many deep rooted concepts and beliefs. It reinforced that great things are possible if we can disrupt old thinking about the world of non-profits. And right now I’m reading *Collaborating with the Enemy* by Adam Kahane, a gift from a good friend, which is about finding the way to relentlessly pursue big goals, even where the partners are “people you don’t agree with, like, or trust.”

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

I believe elevating our sector’s status requires a change in our public narrative. Too often, we focus on

how hard fundraising is, the competition, and the struggle to operate, instead of the impact of our work. Case in point: when's the last time you heard a banker complain that it's really hard to keep track of people's money? When we allow that dialogue to continue unchecked, we diminish the incredible contributions our sector makes! Disrupting those old stereotypes is possible by pointing people to the countless examples of thriving, well-run non-profits who are consistently delivering on their mission.

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