

Title: "150 Profiles: Ray Solotki"

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By Ray Solotki

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:Ray Solotki

Current role in the sector: Executive Director of the Inuvik Community Greenhouse, in Inuvik, NWT

Years working and/or volunteering in the nonprofit sector:This is my 3rd season at the greenhouse, although just over 2 calendar years. I have volunteered in a number of organizations, but this is my first formal job in the sector.



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

This is my first time working in a non-profit and it has been quite the experience. I would say a defining moment was my first time flying into the community of Sachs Harbour to teach about food preservation. Walking through a grocery store with just 4 kinds of sad looking vegetables and one small freezer to meet the needs of an entire community was both heartbreaking and eye-opening. It made me realize that we can do better—and I have been working hard so that Arctic communities know they not only have a say in their food security, but can individually work at providing more nutritious, affordable meals for their families.

Describe your desk/workspace.

In the summer I am able to work out of the greenhouse (it's too cold in here in the winter so I work from home in my pjs most of the time), which means I am looking out at the most beautiful spot in Inuvik. I can see food growing and hear people enjoying the space. However, it is also in dire need of renovations so if it is raining or someone over-watered upstairs, it is raining in my office too!

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

I am mostly reading gardening and food preservation books, but I am working hard at keeping up on more sites like [AICBR](#) (Arctic Institute of Community Based Research), [Food Matters](#) and [Food Secure Canada](#).

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

Currently I feel like a lot of the money being spent by funders is wasted. I know, this is the wrong group to say this to! But I am focusing on making sure every penny we apply for at the greenhouse is money we can use properly. I hate seeing applications submitted because there is money available, not because that money can be put to good use. Creating a project just to get money doesn't mean you are working within your mandate. We actually declined money this year and encouraged the funders to invest directly into the communities they wanted to support. As a result, seven people have summer jobs because of it, and while it means we need to work harder to fund my position, we are making it work.

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