
150 Profiles: Megan Van Buskirk

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: Megan Van Buskirk

Current role in the sector: Office Manager & Volunteer Coordinator, Saskatchewan Environmental Society; Coordinator, Saskatoon CarShare Co-operative; Deputy Provincial Commissioner, Saskatchewan Girl Guides (volunteer)

Years working and/or volunteering in the non-profit sector: I have been volunteering in the non-profit sector since I was a young Girl Guide, and my entire adult life for Girl Guides of Canada and for various environmental organizations in Saskatchewan and across Canada. I have been working in the non-profit sector for over five years. I can't imagine it any other way!

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

One moment that comes to mind was a realization I came to while attending the United Nations Climate Negotiations on behalf of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in 2010—the work we are doing to achieve climate justice and gender equity is bigger than any one of us, and is so vital for the survival of marginalized folks and future generations alike.

My first job in the non-profit sector is my current—the Saskatchewan Environmental Society. This organization is chock-full of incredible people who inspire me every single day to do my part to make our world a better place for all.

Describe your desk/workspace.

This really depends on the hat that I am wearing—as I think most people working in the sector can relate to. At the Saskatchewan Environmental Society, I am lucky enough to have a sit-stand desk that houses my laptop, phone, and day planner. Otherwise, my desk is my lap on the couch, a table at a local coffee shop, a chair at a council meeting, or a phone to my ear during a conference call. Flexibility is key!

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

I enjoy reading about the various ways to manage volunteers, raise funds, and plan campaigns. I especially enjoy Doug McKenzie-Mohr and William Smith's book, [Fostering Sustainable Behaviour: An Introduction to Community-Based Social Marketing](#) and Ryan Meili's book, [A Healthy Society: How a Focus on Health can Revive Canadian Democracy](#). One of my favourite books that I think everyone in the non-profit sector should read—no matter their cause—is, [Becoming an Ally: Breaking the Cycle of Oppression in People](#) by Anne Bishop. I also enjoy reading about feminism and decolonization.

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

Across the board, the non-profit sector does amazing work. The people who work for and volunteer with non-profits are passionate, committed, inspiring, and selfless. However, I think self care is often forgotten amongst the fast-pace of life in the non-profit sector. We deal with difficult (and intersecting) issues every single day—such as climate change and women's rights—and spend countless hours furthering the causes we care so deeply about. In order to do good work, it is important to take a step back and read a book (for fun!), take a relaxing bath, or spend valuable time with loved ones.

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