



Hero Stories
August 2024



A Path to Purpose

At long last, graduation day arrived, and I was elated. I felt a mixture of relief and excitement – relief at completing the strenuous Business Technology Management Program at Ryerson (now Metropolitan University) and excitement about beginning my career journey. I was full of hope for a future ripe with opportunity, eager to pursue a field that I was passionate about.

Everything changed the day I was introduced to Mary Falcone.

It didn't take long for my optimism to fade. Application after application, interview after interview – all ended in rejection. Over and over, I heard “not qualified” or “lacks experience.” I wondered, “How in the world can I gain experience when even entry-level roles require so much of it?” Feeling defeated,

I continued working at the organization where I'd started two years before graduating, a role I'd taken thinking a reputable position might lead to future opportunities. Unfortunately, that was not the case, and I began to feel locked in a role where I was offered little guidance and where I felt undervalued and unfulfilled. I felt no sense of purpose, I began to dread going into work, and with little time or money to uplevel my skills, I felt completely stuck.

Everything changed the day I was introduced to Mary Falcone.

Mary was the program manager for Youth Programs at Caledon Community Services, where my sister had just completed LIFE for Youth. As a result of being able to work on things she enjoyed doing, she had become more confident, organized and focused.

From what my family and I could see, she seemed significantly happier overall.

As Mary explained, the benefits of the Learning Innovation for Future Employment for Youth (LIFE for Youth) program could offer me including an opportunity to explore career options, take career-building courses, strengthen my resume and gain work experience - all while getting paid. Hope started to grow! The more I heard, the brighter the spark of hope shined within me, and by the time we wrapped up our conversation, I had decided to quit my job and immediately enroll in the next round of LIFE for Youth.

The months that followed changed me profoundly. Because I was asked, “what makes you feel

valued?” I started to look at success differently. Through the program, I came to understand myself better, and I was able to work towards the future I wanted. I discovered what truly makes me happy, and by the time its final phase came around, I could see just how far I had come – personally and professionally. All my fears about finding a career subsided – replaced with a newfound confidence in myself and my purpose. It was clear to me that I wanted to offer my skills in a job that helped others.

The day my program officially finished; I was delighted to receive an offer to join the Caledon Community Services team full-time. Landing a career opportunity doing something I loved with an agency that helped people in so many ways - felt completely aligned with my purpose. Through CCS, I had come full circle.



JOB HERO

CAST

JESSICA ABDALLA

LIFE for Youth Graduate

MARY FALCONE

Youth Programs Manager

LIFE FOR YOUTH TEAM

CCS' COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING TEAM

COMMUNITY IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS*

*Statistics referencing 2023-2024 Annual Impact Report

1,292

Career journeys supported

193

Jobs secured

38

LIFE for Youth placements

Learn how the LIFE for Youth program can help you land a job you're passionate about.

ccs4u.org/jobs