



Hero Stories  
December 2015



## Carl's Road to Recovery

You know the feeling you get when you're with a close friend who you can trust with your life? That's the feeling I get from CCS. They helped pull me out of a dark place, encouraged me to go after my dreams, and even more importantly, showed me that I was a worthwhile part of my community.

“ I was in a dark place - mentally, emotionally and physically.”

My whole life I never felt like I belonged, and as a young adult, I found myself heavily addicted and living a life that was completely unmanageable. I was a single dad, living in my mother's basement. Worse than my physical circumstances though, was what was going on inside me. I was in a dark place – mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

Fortunately, I grew up with supportive parents who reached out to the community for help. After getting some clean time I was able to move out on my own – with the gift I call my son. I quickly realized that things were going to be harder than I had imagined though. Financially, I was just scraping by and relying on the system for support.

Luckily a family friend, who was a CCS client, encouraged me to talk to a counselor at CCS, a move which drastically changed my life in a positive way. I felt respected and loved, and I quickly took advantage of all the programs available to me. They didn't pay my rent or hand me money though – instead they taught me to fend for myself. I joined Jobs Caledon – now known as Employment Services – learned a lot about myself and ended up on the path to self-employment.

CCS Santa Fund gift drive put presents under the tree for my son three years in a row when life was hard. Food support kept our bellies full, and counseling services guided me forward. Beyond these supports, though, there was so much more. I witnessed a sense of community that I had never known existed – and I learned to be of service.

One really tough day I ended up in the CCS parking lot. I'd been stuck in my head, stewing over resentment, when something told me it was time to give back. I went inside and asked how I could help. Stacking shelves of the food bank I frequented not only got me out of my head, it also helped me feel better about myself. I became even more involved, and eventually helped to open a mental health meeting out of the Exchange, one which helped others

transform their lives. I haven't made use of CCS' services for over five years now, but my involvement with them hasn't ended – I continue giving back through CCS.

I'm a happy man today – one who provides for and parents a son with confidence. I feel very much a part of my community, and CCS was foundational in my life's transformation. We're incredibly fortunate in Caledon to have caring community members and a multi-service agency in place to support people with changing their lives in so many positive ways. If you are able, I encourage you to get involved with CCS. You could make a world of difference for someone who is struggling to make it in this world – someone just like me.



## LIFE HERO

### CAST

**CARL NISSEN**

CARL'S SON, FAMILY & FRIENDS

CCS VOLUNTEERS, CLIENTS & STAFF

### COMMUNITY IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS\*

\*Statistics referencing 2012-2013 Annual Report

<b>26,022</b>	<b>131,129</b>	<b>35,251</b>
Volunteer hours	Kg. diverted from landfill	Rides for seniors

Struggling with life's challenges? Reach out for a helping hand.

[ccs4u.org/life](http://ccs4u.org/life)