



Hero Stories  
July 2018



# Supporting Kids, Impacting Futures

Growing up, I didn't feel all that different from other kids around me – which is miraculous when you consider the obstacles my family overcame. Even though my mom fled an abusive relationship, left the U.S., travelled to Canada and moved my two siblings and I to Bolton to be near her family, my childhood looked a lot like the friends I went to school with. We had Caledon Community Services (CCS) to thank for that, as they supported my mom with the enormous challenge of solo parenting and with the additional need to care for a kid with special needs, as my brother is autistic.

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Like thousands of university students, I needed a summer job after completing my first year at the University of Toronto (U of T) in Engineering. When I saw CCS Canada Summer Jobs posting for an IT Intern right in Bolton where my family still lived, it seemed like the most natural thing to apply. After all, CCS helped ensure I felt like every other kid growing up. They made it possible for me to participate in sports and recreation, where I developed the confidence that made attending University a possibility. Joining their ranks for the summer just felt right.

Despite all the obstacles our family faced while I was growing up, me and my siblings were still able to attend overnight March Break camps, and our fridge was never empty. Our table was full at Thanksgiving

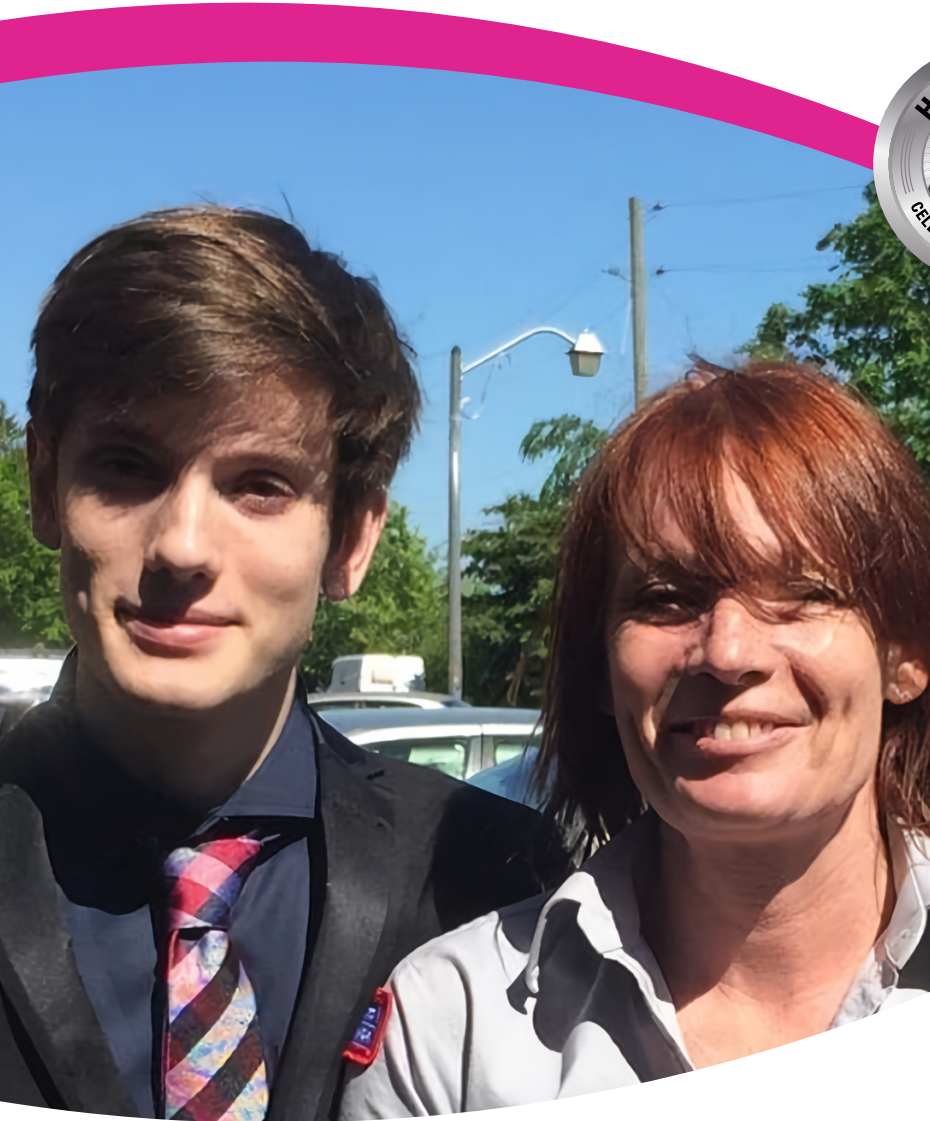
and our tree had presents under it at Christmas – we didn't miss out. And although I didn't know it when I was young, I came to realize once I got older that CCS had a big hand in relieving my mom's worries and making sure me, my brother and sister were well supported.

The services we received through CCS directly and positively impacted my family – they quite literally changed our lives for the better. And the staff offering these services – the heart and soul of CCS – are incredibly caring and compassionate people. Even beyond the they provide they connected my mom with other social supports that ultimately helped her reestablish her life in Canada with a young family.

As my summer internship unfolded, I came to see

it as a full-circle journey. Getting an insider's view into all of the great work CCS does unveiled hidden ways they had actually helped my family when we were at our most vulnerable. Spending my summer employed on the Communications and Marketing team at the agency allowed me to share my IT knowledge and informally mentor one of the younger summer students – I was grateful to have that chance to give back. Since I've graduated from U of T, I've gone on to work for some of the biggest names in technology as a cloud engineer, something that took every bit of confidence that CCS helped me develop as a child. I'm incredibly grateful for their role in making it possible for me to travel my chosen path.

Thinking back on my childhood I have the fondest of memories, a large part thanks to CCS and I appreciate the life I have built and the dreams I have realized.



## LIFE HERO

### CAST

**ERIC GEERTS**

ERIC'S FAMILY

CCS VOLUNTEERS & STAFF

### COMMUNITY IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS\*

\*Statistics referencing 2018-2019 Community Impact Report

**3,364**

Food pantry visits

**3,735**

Workshop attendees

**106**

Kids supported

Help every child dream big and succeed.  
Support Kidz in Caledon or find support for your family today.

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