



Our Stories
January 2023



Embracing the Unexpected

As a wife, mother, and grandmother of two, family is incredibly important to Carine Strong. She is close to her mother, who remains in Eeklo, Belgium, where Carine emigrated four decades ago. As a newcomer, it was a tough move, one she now realizes would have been easier if she “had been able to access newcomer services like those Caledon Community Services (CCS) offers today.” Her look back comes after a decade of involvement with CCS – as a passionate volunteer, a Board Member, and a Board Chair.

Carine spent 30 years with Husky Technologies, but on Saturdays, she could be found volunteering at Chez Thrift, CCS’ fundraising store now known as Evolve Caledon. Volunteering became a lifeline when she was unexpectedly downsized from her role as Director of Customer

Relations. When she made a commitment to volunteer full-time for six months, her husband Bob asked incredulously, “why are you working such long hours when you’re not even getting paid?” Her reason was simple – she’d found her purpose.

Fueled by her growing passion, she volunteered as Acting Manager, using her expertise to lead the store through major changes that turned sales around. Some of her favourite memories are of running silent auction fundraisers and contributing to somebody’s special day with a deal they normally would not be able to afford. Many high school volunteers blossomed into adults under her management and maintaining those connections, “becomes part of your volunteer history” she enthuses.

Six months at Chez Thrift helped Carine find direction and meaning that went beyond a focus on making money. Volunteering there also launched her into a career in the non-profit sector. She credits her time spent serving on CCS' board for her education in the industry. When a position opened to lead Volunteer Mississauga, Brampton, Caledon (VMBC), it was the CEO of CCS who encouraged her to apply. The knowledge she gained at CCS continues to serve her well today in her role as VMBC's CEO.



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Carine admires CCS' focus on “helping people to help themselves with services that help the individual to get out of that poverty.” It's “why I stayed with CCS for so many years; they're about giving people the tools to help themselves.”

As a Board member, Carine chaired several Home for the Holidays fundraising galas. She has fond memories of their themes – Motown, Dancing with the Stars, and the Red-Hot Gala. However, it's the relationships she developed while volunteering that continue to shine brightest. “One of the most important things that comes from volunteering is the relationships you build.” When she reflects on her years of service with CCS, she proudly states, “the staff and volunteers of CCS are a community of caring, passionate individuals.”



LIFE HERO

CAST

CARINE STRONG
Honorary Life Member (2017)

CCS CLIENTS, VOLUNTEERS & STAFF

COMMUNITY IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS*

*Statistics referencing 2022-2023 Community Impact Report

20,899

Rides provided

2,592

Food pantry visits

7,035

Volunteer hours

Discover the joy in helping others and see the impact for yourself.

ccs4u.org/get-involved



ccs4u.org



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