

We all want to leave a legacy, but knowing where and how to give back can often make this goal feel like a monumental task.

“Anyone can have a legacy of giving,” says Lynn DeCaro. “You don’t need to have millions of dollars to give. All you need is to discover the causes you care about.”

As the executive director of Muskoka Community Foundation (MCF), Lynn has a front-row seat to some incredible philanthropic gifts and their impact across Muskoka. The foundation, which was started in 2007, acts as a conduit to connect donors with causes that they care about. To date, MCF has granted over \$1 million into the Muskoka community and has \$1.8 million under its management.

“We have a wealth of expertise, knowledge,

and connections in the community. We know which programs and organizations are doing impactful work and can help donors meet their philanthropic goals.”

The foundation is responsible for administering the Stan Darling Environmental Education Fund and the Dara Howell Fund, among many others.

“The Stan Darling legacy gift is one of the clearest examples of legacy giving,” says Lynn. Stan Darling was MP for Muskoka-Parry Sound for 20 years. An active environmentalist, he was instrumental in establishing the Acid Rain Treaty with the USA in 1991. The fund created in his memory awards grants to graduating students who are pursuing post-secondary education in environmental studies.

“A number of donors contribute to the Stan Darling Fund each year,” says Lynn. “It’s a collaborative effort, promoting environmental protection for generations to come.”

Another recently created MCF fund is the Coco Bear Fund, created by Shari Dubois in honour of her son who died of a drug overdose, as a way to support young people who are struggling with mental health and addiction.

While some funds invest their donations and use their interest to sustain the giving, Lynn notes that Coco Bear’s fundraising targets and grant sizes vary, based on Shari’s targets. With the support of MCF, Coco Bear supports mental health and wellness organizations and students through bursaries for their post-secondary education in visual arts and social services.

“These are not large sums of money, but between Shari’s personal contributions through the Coco Bear Fundraiser and the Coco Bear Fund at MCF, these grants have added up to approximately \$70,000. Any gift – even seemingly small – can have a long-lasting impact on a charity or a student as they fund their education.”

Create your legacy

Gifts go further with a partner

Regardless of your passion, MCF can help you find your match – whether that is an existing fund, or establishing a new one with family and friends.

a conversation, to help you give in a sustainable way, that will provide a lasting impact to the Muskoka community that means so much to you and your family.”

“You don’t have to come with a plan,” says Lynn. “Let’s have

TEXT SHELANNE AUGUSTINE
PHOTOS SCOTT TURNBULL



Muskoka Community Foundation’s Executive Director Lynn DeCaro (seated) with the chair of the engagement committee Val Fleck and her dog Carly, treasurer Bob Collins, and chair Glen Norton.



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