

The Caledon Institute of Social Policy believes passionately in the enduring need for strong social policy to fight poverty, ensure social and economic security, and achieve social justice. Strong social policy involves not only strong public policies but also creative and collaborative community initiatives. Caledon's Social Partnerships Project, supported by the Trillium Foundation, is exploring a range of alliances between private business and non-profit organizations that harness untapped resources in the interest of all members of a community. Many of these partnership arrangements were spearheaded by dedicated individuals.

In this, the first edition of *real leaders*, we profile three very special Canadians. **Robert Caidwell, Sandra Dean and David Driscoll** have established extraordinary partnerships between business and community groups that have improved the economic and social well-being of their respective communities.

These profiles demonstrate how the commitment of one energetic person playing an exceptional leadership role can make a real difference in the community. The stories describe the accomplishments of these *real leaders* and explore the passion and drive that keep them going. Caledon is sharing their stories in order to recognize their contributions and to inspire others to make similar contributions to economic and social well-being.

### **Boys Shined Shoes To Earn Money, Gave It To Hospital**



Robert Caldwell's interest in combining business and social causes started very early in his life. He recalls a hot summer day, the year he was 5, when he and a friend set up a shoeshine stand on the road. After learning of the local hospital's fundraising campaign, the boys decided to donate their profits. Forty-five years later, he is a successful businessman. President of Robert Caldwell Capital Corporation,

he is well known in Kitchener-Waterloo for using his position in the financial world to support worthy causes. While Caldwell has been involved with numerous organizations including the Philharmonic Choir, the Rotary Club, the Art Gallery, the Freeport Hospital, the Kitchener-Waterloo Community Foundation and the University of Waterloo, he is particularly committed to the Community Opportunities Development Association (CODA), with which he recently has become associated.

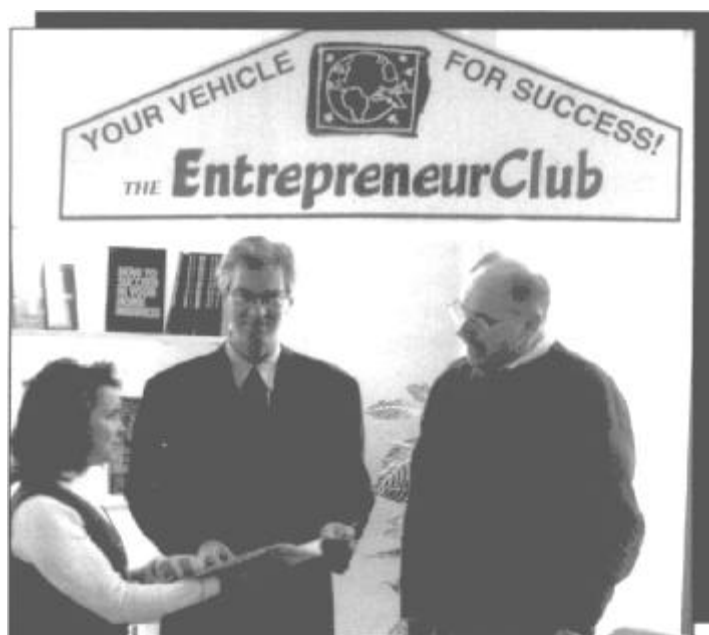
He strongly endorses the concept of community economic development that CODA promotes and believes it is an idea whose time has come. He points out: "Governments are cutting back. They no longer do what they used to do. This kind of economic development is something that current and retired industrialists can and should support."

Dale Ross, Past-President of CODA, recalls the time she first invited her good

friend Caldwell to a CODA meeting "to get free advice on how to fundraise and develop community support and ownership of CODA." Ross says: "One of the major challenges facing a new agency is how to spread its message and have people of influence legitimize its role. We needed a champion to introduce us to key people in Kitchener-Waterloo."

Ross adds: "Rob has acted as a catalyst. He encouraged friends and colleagues to become involved." Executive Director Paul Born says that Caldwell is known for "causing things to happen at CODA." He describes Caldwell's role as untraditional and forward thinking. "I refer to what he does as more 'Friendraising than Fundraising.'"

Born talks about Caldwell's role in the establishment of the Community Loan Fund or Seed Fund which provides business start-up loans



*Helping people help themselves. Robert Caldwell (centre) with members of CODA 'Entrepreneur Club.*



*Seeing the lack of good coffee as a business opportunity, this group was supported by CODA to establish a business that is “so practical, uncomplicated and logical”*

to individuals who have no collateral. Born says: “Because of Robert, the Seed Fund has a blue-chip Board. The Honorary Board includes the Mayors of all the cities in the region.” Canada Trust provided prime space in its main office tower and more than \$700,000 has been raised for the Seed Fund and other non-profit ventures from corporations such as the Toronto-Dominion Bank, the Mutual Group and the Cooperators.

Jim Beingessner, President of B&W Heat Treating, who was named Ontario’s Socially Responsible Entrepreneur of 1994, became involved with CODA because of Caldwell. As the current President of the Seed Fund, Beingessner says Caldwell was instrumental in establishing the Fund. “Rob book-ended the process. Initially, he volunteered to get people of profile on the Board and now he is donating his time to manage the funds.”

Beingessner reflects: “Rob is a great catalyst and he is a real role model. He realizes he doesn’t have to do it all himself. When Rob asks people to do something, they find it difficult to say no, because he does so much himself”

When reflecting on why he is so interested in CODA, Caldwell explains that part of the appeal is that “what CODA does is not charity. It teaches self-reliance. Its mission is to stimulate economic and social opportunities that assist people in creating or finding employment.” He remembers when Ross invited him to become involved with CODA. “I was always impressed with her commitment to CODA. But before agreeing to become involved, I did some research. What I found was an incredibly well-run organization with an impressive management team and Board of Directors. To say I was impressed with what CODA had accomplished would be an understatement. I was flabbergasted!”

Caldwell talks easily about several of the more than 1,000 entrepreneurs who have started their own businesses with CODA’s help. Many of them have used the sophisticated resources and equipment available at CODA’s Business Action Centre to fine-tune business plans to ensure success.

One of his favourite examples of stimulating economic opportunity is a group of women who set up a gourmet coffee

business called Latte on the Loose. He remarks: "I love coffee, but you wouldn't believe how difficult it is to get a good cup of coffee outside urban centres. These women also recognized the need, bought a portable cappuccino machine and set it up at the arena and other community events. They are now so busy that they have hired additional staff" He loves this story and says: "I was struck by how practical, uncomplicated and logical the business is. I think it really drives home what CODA does."

Self-employment is not CODA's only contribution to community economic development. It helped relocate 4,100 people in new jobs after these workers were laid off because of plant closures. CODA found affordable housing for more than 900 people. Each year, it works with more than 500 welfare recipients in the Opportunities Planning Project to help them become financially independent.

Caldwell recognizes he makes a unique contribution. In business, he meets regularly with the presidents of the top 20 corporations in Kitchener-Waterloo. "I transpose what I do at work with what I do for CODA. I recognize that not all CEOs or retired people are able to pull out a crowd. I can, so I host events." He continues: "It's not exactly tough work. I sponsor several breakfasts a year for CODA. I set the stage, get the business types there and invite MPs and Mayors for presence. We tell a few good jokes and have a good time. The breakfast starts at 8:00 a.m. and I am in the office by 9:20 a.m."

Paul Born says that Caldwell downplays his involvement. "Robert sends personalized invitations on his letterhead and caters the events at his office." John A. Pollock, President of Electrohome Ltd. who has worked with Caldwell on many campaigns, notes: "The fact that Rob is involved with CODA says a lot about the organization. Rob is a very respected financial entrepreneur, a guy who makes a significant contribution to whatever he takes on."

Caldwell acknowledges that his personal involvement lends credibility. When I first started out in business, I received many requests for contributions. The ones that were most striking were those from high-profile people who had written a personal note. I have never forgotten the impact it can make."

Caldwell tries to balance his demanding business and volunteer life with another passion - canoeing. He has travelled many of Canada's historic rivers with some well-known Canadians, including Gordon Lightfoot and John Turner, along with regular, annual summer canoe trips with his 8-year-old son Justin. But, at times, he feels a bit overextended and would like to see more of his colleagues participating in community/business partnerships.

"I strongly believe in collective contribution to the community fabric. I feel that if individuals have the ability - the contacts and the community presence - they should contribute a few hours of time. Because of their positions of privilege, they can make an enormous contribution and have a disproportionate impact on the community."

When asked whether there is any recipe for establishing successful partnerships, Caldwell says: "It is absolutely essential to have a first-class organization before you approach people. It is only with a solid infrastructure in place that you will be able to attract people of profile who can do a lot for your organization."

Caldwell finds his involvement with CODA (which won the All Ontario Community Development Award in 1995) very satisfying. He describes it as a kind of 'upward spiralling' experience which shows that individuals can make a difference. Beingessner concludes: "Every community needs 'a Rob,' or better still, a dozen of him. It is his 'can do' attitude that makes a community strong."

The story of South Simcoe Public School in Oshawa begins with a dedicated principal, committed teachers and a community that has pitched in for the sake of the children. The story shows how education can no longer occur in isolation and how partnerships with the community are central to the success of the school and ultimately to the children. In a school that promotes respect, scholastic achievement and partnerships, students increase their self-esteem and learn to work as part of a team. It wasn't always like this. When principal Sandra Dean came to South Simcoe five years ago, she inherited an inner-city school plagued by underfunding, disenchanted staff and a transient student population.

Thinking back on her early experiences at the school, Dean notes: "When I arrived here, the school had a rather tarnished reputation. It was known for its toughness. Vandalism was a problem both on and off the property. Extra-curricular activities were limited because the school had no gym and parent involvement was minimal."



*Sandra Dean (centre), Principal of South Simcoe Public School in Oshawa, with students, parents, staff and business partners from Swiss Chalet, General Motors and Pizza Pizza.*

But Dean changed all that. South Simcoe has become the hub of the community. Students, parents, seniors, police and businesses are working together to implement a range of

interrelated programs. The student-run breakfast and healthy snack programs are supported by the Sydenham Kiwanis Club. Parents help develop programs through the school community council. It is not unusual to see managers from General Motors, K-Mart, Pizza Pizza, Swiss Chalet and Colortron participating in reading circles with young children. Through the initiative of one GM executive, cartoonist Ben Wicks recently visited South Simcoe to promote literacy.

In fact, the transformation of South Simcoe has been so successful that it was heralded as a 'success story' by the Ontario Royal Commission on Learning and was the focus of a program on CBC's *Man Alive*. Last year, the school received both the provincial and national Awards for Excellence in Business-Education Partnerships from the Conference Board of Canada. The awards recognized the Experiential Learning Program in which every class works with a business in the community and learns how it functions. Students have the opportunity to apply the skills learned in the classroom to the world of work.

Reflecting on the progress of South Simcoe, Dean recalls: "The relationship between students and business was not always as positive. At first, the only contact I had was when I received phone calls from store managers at the mall across the street, asking me to come and pick up some kids who had been caught shoplifting."

One day, she went to the mall and told the managers that she wanted to stop the shoplifting and vandalism, but she stressed: "I can't do it alone." She referred to the old



*Sandra Dean with Gilles Rhéaume accepting the Conference Board of Canada national award recognizing the school & Experiential Learning Program.*

African proverb that says it takes a whole village to educate a child; the more people you involve, the bigger the difference you can make.

The business partners see their involvement as a win-win situation. They encourage students to become better citizens while creating a more skilled workforce. Tom McNown at General Motors points out: “By introducing kids to the business world, we are showing them how to improve their position in life. Students learn practical skills and start to see connections between what they learn at school and what happens in the work world. They see how we use computers and graphs at head office and realize that literacy skills are needed at the plant.”

Many people admire Dean’s creative solutions and her ability to involve such a diverse range of people at South Simcoe. Carl Rimar, a long-time volunteer and member of the West-mount Kiwanis Club says: “Sandra is dedicated. But not only is she dedicated, she has the kind of charisma that gets people to work for her and with her.” McNown adds: “Sandra was very creative in dealing with the school’s need for gym facilities. Rather than focus on the lack of resources available to build a new gym,

Sandra established a partnership with the Royal Canadian Legion which permits South Simcoe to use its hall for major events.”

Sandra’s energy is infectious. You can feel it in the halls where teachers, volunteers and custodians talk with enthusiasm about the programs and the students’ achievements. All stress that a great deal of work has gone into South Simcoe and caution: “Don’t let Sandra be too modest. It is because of her creative vision that the school has turned around.”

Dean is realistic and remembers that it hasn’t always been easy. Nor does she pretend to be a saint. She recalls some pretty lively confrontations with the staff when she didn’t feel they were working towards the school’s vision of ‘Together We Light the Way.’ Dean credits the Durham Board of Education for its assistance in the area of staff development and research and assessment. She believes that the initial struggles with staff, coupled with the Board’s professional development opportunities, helped her to grow and developed her staff into the major support team they are today.

Through good times and bad, knowing that she is making a difference is a big motivator for Dean. She refers to Margaret Mead who has been an inspiration for her. Dean notes: “Do not underestimate the power of a small group of committed individuals to change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Dean is a survivor who works on building her inner strengths and encourages others to do the same. Teachers Alvena Dunhill and Sharon McLean concur: “She recognizes that everyone has an intellectual, emotional and spiritual side.

She reads a lot and shares what she learns with us.”

When reflecting on personal growth, Dean states: “You cannot care for others unless you first care for yourself. I come from a background where there is a fundamental belief in the need to take care of one’s spiritual side.” This belief translates into sessions with staff at lunch on Wednesdays. “When I learn something, I share it with others. My job is to help teachers teach more effectively and I believe that this means growth from the inside out.” This philosophy forms the foundation for how staff relate to each other and with the students.

But Dean also recognizes the importance of continuity to ensure the programs will be sustained in her absence and believes that staff and students should be encouraged to assume leadership roles.

Her staff point out: “She has an uncanny ability to know when to encourage, when to coddle and when to confront. Dean recognizes the importance of setting small goals and celebrating successes.” They describe her as a mother bird. “She knows when you are ready for the next step, sometimes before you do. She knows when to throw you out of the nest, but she will pick you up if you need support.”

Dean tries to downplay her role at South Simcoe and credits much of what has been achieved to her staff. “We have always been guided by a vision of doing what is best for the kids.” She explains that while the school has never followed any particular model, they have now been credited with creating a model for successful school and community partnerships. When asked if she has reflected on all that has been achieved at South Simcoe, she says she has started only recently to consciously analyze it. Her vision is based on the belief that every child is important. With the right education and support, each child will go on to do great things.

Dean stresses that there is nothing radical about the program; it is simple, but not simplistic. It is about caring, values and respect. It is about being neighbourly and seeking input from parents, surrounding businesses, the community and then acting on it. McNown reflects: “Who wouldn’t choose to live in a strong, vibrant, caring community compared with one that is just a collection of houses?” The fabric of Oshawa is changing through the partnerships built by this one very special individual.



*Grade 8 student, Trevor Roy learning practical skills at Swiss Chalet with Manager Phil Lawson as part of the Experiential Learning Program.*



*Orist Zaworotynskij (left) and Ken Lyotier of United We Can recycling depot in Vancouver - a project supported by the VanCity Community Foundation Loan Fund*

David Driscoll chuckles when he thinks about the day that four guys “known for their fondness of drink and dumpster diving tactics” came to his office to request a loan to help them establish a recycling business. He recalls: “They had been scavenging in dumpsters and storing the stuff in their rooms. Their landlords and other tenants in the building were not pleased seeing the growing junk piles.”

However since receiving financial backing, the dumpster divers established a formal depot and recycled 4.7 million containers - putting \$360,000 back into the community through handling fees. Driscoll muses: “Imagine how other banks would have dealt with these guys. Yet with our support, they not only have reduced waste through recycling, they also have created jobs and become self-sufficient. Look at what it cost us compared to what they have put back into the community.”

Driscoll is a tireless promoter of community economic development - investing in people and giving them the tools to achieve their goals. His promotion of self-sufficiency

and sustainability is complemented by his vision of local communities and what individuals can do. For 30 years, he has demonstrated this approach at the provincial, national and international levels.

Driscoll is the Executive Director of the VanCity Community Foundation, a dynamic organization that promotes partnerships between the business and voluntary sectors to foster long-term community economic development through non-profit enterprises, employment initiatives and alternative housing.

The Foundation itself is an exemplary partnership between business and the local community. It is supported by VanCity Credit Union through an annual contribution of a percentage of after-tax profits. The Foundation’s pennant endowment reached \$3.6 million in 1994-95. That same year, the Foundation invested more than \$250,000 in the Vancouver area, supporting projects to reduce poverty, create jobs and provide community services.

In partnership with not-for-profit commercial businesses such as the Picasso Café and the Auto Service Training and Employment Project, the Foundation helps young people coming out of foster care and group homes acquire work experience during a six-month apprenticeship course. These initiatives are part of the Foundation’s focus on youth at risk.

Through its Community Loan Fund which supported the dumpster divers, the Foundation provides loans to what the traditional banks refer to as the ‘unbankables’ - individuals without collateral or a strong credit history.

Driscoll believes that this program “is an investment in the human spirit. The concept of charity as ‘noblesse oblige’ is not part of the approach.” The loans are approved



on the basis of character and personal integrity. Applicants are supported when applying for a loan and during the repayment process, resulting in few defaults.

Driscoll's commitment to social issues is complemented by financial acumen, a rare combination that allows him to work easily in both the public and private sectors. Herb Barbolet, Coordinator of FarmFolk/CityFolk, who has known Driscoll for more than 25 years, remarks: "There are very few social policy types who understand the financial world. David does. He speaks their language - which makes the business community more receptive when he talks about social issues. David has established many active partnerships that have benefitted businesses and community groups."

Al Etmanski, who met Driscoll 15 years ago at the BC Association of Community Living, says that Driscoll's approach is unique. "David is 'capacity-oriented.' He doesn't focus on what is wrong; he always looks for what is working and builds on it. David is foremost an educator, a community developer. He never thinks he has all the answers."



*David Driscoll says that the concept of 'noblesse oblige' is not part of the approach at Van City Community Foundation. The loans given to 'unbankables' are approved on the basis of character and personal integrity. There are very few defaults.*

With his roots in the community, Driscoll is accustomed to working with the 'small guys' who have no power. Barbolet notes: "Driscoll has an uncanny ability to listen to people, understand what they are looking for and develop strategies to help them increase their leverage to achieve their goals."

Etmanski recalls when a group with which he was working, Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN), approached VanCity Foundation for support. The group was composed of older parents with adult children with disabilities. The parents recognized they could no longer care for their children and wanted to establish secure housing in an integrated community where disabilities would be accepted and people treated with respect.

Driscoll opened doors for them and obtained in-kind support, such as legal and tax advice on the impact of their proposal. In addition to giving the group a grant, he organized a fundraising incentive program; for every dollar raised by PLAN, the Foundation donated 50 cents. The group was so empowered by its experience with the Foundation that members are now acting as legal and financial mentors, helping other families arrange housing for their children.

PLAN is also establishing a partnership with VanCity Credit Union to develop services that are more responsive to persons with disabilities and their families. An estimated 15 percent of families include a family member with a disability, so this is a potential growth market. "It's a win-win situation," Etmanski stresses. "VanCity will increase its business by tailoring services for this population and we will raise funds working with their Employee Assistance Program and members."



*Bringing it all together under the VanCity Community Foundation umbrella.  
From left to right: Jacinta Eni of PLAN; David Driscoll, VanCity Community Foundation;  
Cindy Chan Piper, First Steps; Coro Strandberg, Chair; VanCity Community Foundation;  
Jan Bulman, Community Housing Land Trust*

Driscoll talks fondly about his involvement with PLAN and speaks about how much he learned from the parents. “They were courageous, they never averted their eyes. They accepted the reality that they could no longer care for their children and they found the strength to deal with the situation creatively.”

Driscoll finds participating in community life inherently rewarding. He loves working with people. He believes that: “We are all essentially social creatures who like to feel good. So when we can do something positive, we will.”

Carol MacLean worked with Driscoll for ten years while he was Mayor of Port Moody, BC. She says: “David was the longest-serving and one of the most popular Mayors. He is a people person, a real leader who is tuned in to his constituency. People and community really motivate him.”

MacLean recalls two projects Driscoll initiated that have created a stronger sense of community in Port Moody. Through the Children’s Banner Program, school kids make the banners that adorn city streets. MacLean notes: “It is so amazing to see children showing parents and grandparents the banner they made. The kids are so proud to see that even at their age, they can contribute to the city. They really feel they belong.”

MacLean loves to talk about Driscoll’s favourite project - the pier at Rocky Point Park. Designed to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Port Moody, this award-winning project turned an abandoned pier and surrounding waterfront into a park with walking paths. MacLean says: “David created a physical environment, a focal point for community activities where people can meet informally or participate in community events.”

Driscoll and his family were often seen walking at Rocky Point Park, stopping and talking to everyone. MacLean points out: “David’s relationship with his wife and daughter is so positive and supportive. They are all active in the community. I think what David wanted to achieve with the transformation of Rocky Point was to bring some of what he most enjoys within his family out into the community.”

Driscoll believes that we should all know what we want to achieve and what we like to do. “Everyone should have a vision. We don’t all need the same vision, just some vision.” His broad view ensures a connectedness with every thing around him. He recognizes the importance of nourishing his internal and external self. To maintain his energy and commitment, Driscoll needs to be involved in community initiatives. He doesn’t do aid work. He says it is disheartening to see the lines of people waiting for handouts growing longer every day. He needs to see people involved directly in solving problems.

To maintain balance in his life, Driscoll is active in a variety of sports including hockey, golf and skiing. He also sculpts, gardens, cooks and reads the ancient philosophers. He designed his own home. Friends are amazed by the range

of his activities and refer to him as a ‘renaissance man.’ They speak about his insatiable curiosity, incredible memory and analytic skills that allow him to relate all he knows to everyday life.

When asked about what drives him, Driscoll reflects and answers: “In an abstract sense, it is a concern for social and economic equity. And in personal terms, my motivation finds strength in two sources. There were a few very critical individuals, including an old aunt who praised me as a child for what I did. This encouraged me to keep exploring and achieving. On the other hand, if I can do it myself, I don’t have to rely on others. I have control.”

Driscoll believes that motivating young people to become involved in their communities and to question the institutions around them is one of the major challenges for the future. “We have to help them realize that we built these institutions and that we can change them to be more responsive. Once younger people are involved, we can be assured that community economic development will continue.”

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