

Good things come in 3's – meet the Selkirk and District Community Foundation's newest board members



Selkirk and District Community Foundation's three newest board members, left to right, David Thorne, Shauna Curtin and Brandon Sutherland.

For IMMEDIATE RELEASE – July 17, 2020

When the Selkirk and District Community Foundation released its Mind The Gap – Vital Signs Report in 2018, board members of the day hoped it would at least spark conversation and at best move community folks to action to make our communities better places for all.

The report is a community check up that informs the reader about all kinds of things, like who lives in Selkirk, St. Andrews and

St. Clements; how old our citizens are and what type of housing we have and what types we need more of, to name just a few.

Two years later, it's safe to say the report isn't sitting on a shelf collecting dust, and two of the SDCF's new board members point to the report as a shining example of the importance of the Foundation and the good work it does.

"It's a great document and it really does serve to highlight what's happening in our community," says Shauna Curtin, one of three new SDCF board members.

David Thorne and Brandon Sutherland are the other two new members.

"A report like that, a general environmental scan, tells you what's going on in the community and what we can do to help."

For Curtin, the report further galvanized her support for the Foundation, an organization she already had great respect for.

The Secretary of the Winnipeg Police Board since 2018, Curtin calls St. Andrews home and prior to her present position, she was the Assistant Deputy Minister for Manitoba Justice, Courts Division, and before that she worked for the Government of Yukon as the Acting Director, Women's Directorate and in the Department of Justice.

She was so impressed with Vital Signs she says she's often used it as a template when doing strategic planning in her own career.

Accepting a nomination to the SDCF board of directors was a no brainer for Curtin, who says the Foundation's work is "right up my alley".

"The idea is funding worthwhile things that are at the grassroots level that ordinary people in the community can be involved in that really support vibrancy and that prevent people from going down other roads," Curtin says.

"If there's activities available or programming available, a lot of times that supports families to be part of their community and improve life overall."

David Thorne also pointed to Vital Signs as an impressive document that really grabbed his attention. Thorne recently returned from Montreal, where he was the Assistant Chief of Police for CN Police Service, North America. He is presently the Commanding Officer of the Prairie Division for the CN Police Service, based in Winnipeg. He joined the RCMP in 1991, working both in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, including a stint as Officer in Charge of the Selkirk Detachment from 2009 to 2011. He retired from the force in 2015 and spent two years with the City of Selkirk as the Director of Protective Services.

He's a St. Clements resident who is thrilled to be taking a seat on the SDCF board.

"I'm extremely happy to be part of the group," Thorne says.

"I've always believed in making Selkirk a little bit better and working with reputable groups and organizations to achieve those goals."

Thorne has been a supporter of the SDCF for years and in his various roles has presented to the board a number of times as well. He too said the Vital Signs report is an important document and demonstrates the value of the Foundation.

"I strongly believe in the 2018 Vital Signs report that the foundation did, and I still find myself referring to that report. It's something that I want to use as a guide towards improving some of the things in our community," Thorne said.

"The Selkirk and District Community Foundation has a fantastic reputation and an excellent path forward and it's something I definitely want to be part of."

Brandon Sutherland is the third new member to the board, and at 24 years of age, he's the youngest as well.

Sutherland, a Selkirk resident, has been volunteering in the community since he was 18 and he credits his grandfather, Wayne Sutherland, long time Lord Selkirk School Division board member, for fostering his desire to give back. He also said he held volunteers in high regard when he was a kid growing up in this town.

“Seeing some of the volunteer hours that go into these programs, I got to a point in my life after my dad passed away that I decided to take that step forward, at a young age because who knows how long everybody’s got, what time’s left? I decided to turn that over at the age of 18 and start volunteering as much as I could,” Sutherland said.

When he was nominated to the SDCF board, he was humbled, and thrilled to be accepted. He’d received a scholarship through the Foundation when he was in high school, and had worked closely with the Foundation when establishing the Parker Sutherland Environmental Fund in his late father’s honour.

“I kind of got to see both sides – I got to see the side of being a recipient of a scholarship and then setting up a fund to be able to give one out.”

The Parker Sutherland Environmental Fund paid out for the first time this year, and though COVID-19 meant there was no granting reception, Sutherland said it was still a thrill to know someone had benefitted from the fund.

“It was kind of disheartening that we couldn’t be at the award ceremony because of COVID, but getting the email come across my desk in the middle of the day that showed the young lady that received it, and that she was going into the environmental field...it warmed my heart,” he said.

Sutherland is the Manager of Geller’s Design/Build/Landscape company and hopes other young people are inspired to start volunteering as well.

“I sure hope to set an example to people to volunteer at a younger age and start to see that giving back aspect at the age of 18 or whatever, even younger than that,” he said.

“The majority of volunteers are retired and have more time on their hands, but I don’t think people really respect the give back that you get as a volunteer and the pride that you feel when you volunteer for some of these projects and start to see the positive things that come out of it.”

The Selkirk and District Community Foundation is a charitable organization that provides financial support to charitable causes and agencies in the region, which includes Selkirk, St. Andrews and St. Clements. Gifts from donors enable the Foundation to support countless groups and individuals in our community. The Foundation has given in excess of \$2.7 million to more than 125 local charities and community organizations during its 25 years. For more details contact SDCF Executive Director Bev Clegg at 204.785.9755.