



SDCF new executive, left to right, Bonny Wynnobel, Deborah Vitt, David Thorne and Brandon Sutherland.

Selkirk & District Community Foundation introduces new executive

There are many reasons why the Selkirk & District Community Foundation is successful but perhaps the biggest is people.

The Foundation is announcing its new executive which includes David Thorne as Chair, Deborah Vitt as Vice Chair, Bonny Wynnobel as secretary and Brandon Sutherland as Treasurer.

For Thorne, who joined the board in 2020, it's been a heck of a ride so far and one that he's as enthusiastic about today as he was on Day 1.

“For the last four years it’s been an absolute magical journey. The hard work of the board itself is very evident by the passion and caring that each board member displays every single meeting,” Thorne said.

“And not just at the meeting level, in the community through their interactions with our community partners. Whether it’s board members, whether it’s staff, the love and the kindness that this Foundation has shared with the community for the past 29 years, it’s just really staggering, and I can’t describe it.”

Thorne was Vice Chair for the last three years and sees his remaining time on the board as an opportunity to carry on the work of his predecessors, including former Chair Shauna Curtin, and ensure the Foundation is Here for Good.

“Spreading the word of the Foundation to the next generation is very important to me and I always think from the 50,000-foot view, where’s the board going to be in 10 years, 15 years, and I have a part in that right now,” he said.

“That’s what I’m looking at, that strategic, down the road, next 25-year level. I want to make sure I’ve done my piece to the best of my ability, and impart some of the knowledge that was imparted to me by previous board members and previous founders of the Foundation, so it’s in a good place. I care very deeply about this organization. It does so many good things, for so many different agencies in the Tri S area and I couldn’t imagine if we were gone tomorrow, who would fill that gap.”

For Vitt, who’s in her third year with the Foundation following one year on the granting committee, stepping into the Vice Chair position allows the former United Church Minister to continue working with the community.

“My time with the Foundation has been another step into the community to see where the needs are and how the Foundation can respond and make a difference in the lives and activities and the projects that are going on for the betterment of not only people of St. Andrews, which is the community where I live, but Selkirk and St. Clements as well,” Vitt said.

“It’s just been a really good way for me to continue to have a place at the table.”

Wynnobel praised her colleagues on the board and their commitment to community in all they do. In her fourth year as a board member, she said it’s the attention to detail that makes the Foundation a success.

“I’m Secretary now, so I’m involved in policy and that’s an area that I like. We pay a lot of attention to policy and keeping them updated so we’re always moving forward. And that’s really a nice thing too, they have an agenda for all the policies, so you have to review them. You have to take the time to sit and read them,” Wynnobel said.

“It’s fun too. We have fun with policies too. I was involved with finance too and everyone made it fun. There’s lots of learning but it was fun and always moving the Foundation forward.”

Sutherland is the new Treasurer and joined the Foundation in 2020 along with Thorne. He says his time has flown by, in part because of Covid, which limited in-person meetings for the start of his term, but still being part of the Foundation is a great experience.

“Everything is positive with the Foundation. The best part of being part of the Foundation is making the phone calls to successful grant applicants and being able to tell the people that their hard work is being noticed and that the Foundation is able to financially support them,” Sutherland said.

“It’s extremely rewarding to hear the emotions going through people’s minds as you’re telling them that their ask has been granted, another project can move forward. A lot of the not-for-profits have extremely tight parameters on where their money can come from, it’s extremely humbling to see the hard work being done by these not-for-profit organizations and being able to spread the good news.”

All four members of the new executive agree they stand on the shoulders of those who’ve come before them and their proud to continue the good work in Selkirk, St. Clements and St. Andrews. Thorne thanked all of the previous members and the current board for their faith in him.

“Being a board member has been a gift really. And now having the trust of my peers to have me lead as Chair for the next year is humbling. I love having fun, this entire board is fun, but we get the work done,” he said.