



From Mechanical Engineering to Social Services - John McVeigh - CLL Staff Member

It started back in 1992. I was enrolled in Mechanical Engineering, and was fast becoming aware that I should NOT be enrolled in Mechanical Engineering. I had not taken any of the recommended courses in high school, drafting would have been particularly helpful since if I did manage to successfully graduate part of my job would be to create blueprints for the parts/gadgets/machines I would be designing!

I spoke with one of my professors for reassurance and he had some fantastic advice. Was it “You can do anything if you put your mind to it”? No – it was that if I did not quit in the next couple of weeks I would lose my 2nd semester tuition!

So I was now officially one of those kids who was “taking a year off” after high school. I did not feel as great about this as one might think. I had a part time job as a cook at the Keg and I loved it, but it wasn’t enough. I knew someone at the time who worked at Community Living London and I thought “why not”?

Once I started I knew that I was good with people. I didn’t know that about myself.

I also found out that Community Living London was good to people. I liked that about them.

I registered for the DSW program at Fanshawe starting the following September and have been with Community Living London ever since.



I have had many jobs here. I provided supports to many different people in many different areas of this agency. I worked for years in our Accommodations Program. I ran a fitness program out of Carling Heights Community Center through Community Access Services. But there came a time when I thought it was coming to an end. I thought that I had had all the best jobs here that I could.

I accepted a job back in Accommodations in a new program providing behavioural supports for the first time. I was not particularly looking forward to it. I accepted the position because it offered a rotating shift of days and afternoons and I thought I could use the flexibility in hours to find a new career. Once I met these new young men I never looked for another job. I had found my niche. I loved my job and loved these challenging young men.

Eventually I took some management courses and took the next step in my career moving into management as a Supervisor in Accommodations.

I have since become a CPI instructor, Supervised DSW Students while on placement through Fanshawe College, as well as teaching some classes part time at Fanshawe.

This agency has supported me every time I needed to make a decision. It is a great place to work, and I am very lucky that I made the wrong decision back in 1992.

Mechanical Engineering? To be completely honest I didn't even know what it was. Having had the opportunity to work for CLL for all this time, I have learned who I am.