

## Delays hurt our youth

The LIFE for Youth Program (Learning Innovation for Future Employment) in Caledon Community Services has had profoundly positive impacts on the lives of 216 Caledon youth, their families and employers right here in Caledon.

Results of nine years of programming have been exceptional. Life for Youth has consistently met or exceeded the success criteria established by Service Canada, the federal funder of our country's national Skills Link Program.

CCS always looks to respond to community needs. We strive to ensure that Caledon residents experience excellence at every touchpoint within our organization. There is also a definite focus on unleashing the potential of our youth.

LIFE for Youth provides young people (aged 15 to 30) who are not in school or employed with training opportunities that are closely matched by day to day on-site coaching by a skilled team of professionals. We completed our 10th training cycle in December 2016, providing young people from across Caledon with the structure, routine and employment training that bodes well for their future success. It has proven to be a winning formula. Participants graduate to full-time employment, or return to complete high-school and a move to college and university. Our graduation rate over the life of the program makes LIFE for Youth a top-tier training program.

In August 2016, CCS responded to the National Call for Proposals, a three-year renewal of LIFE for Youth. We continue to wait for confirmation of funding. Over these five months, we have simply waitlisted Caledon's youth who wish to participate or directed them to other employment opportunities. That's been tough on them. They want to commit and we're telling them to idle. MP David Tilson has reached out to the Ministry on our behalf, we've appreciated his advocacy. And we wait. And wait. We're of course hoping that our track record will win the day. But even so, program success doesn't trump the grinding pace of funding approvals. The inordinately long delays seem to fly in the face of the youth agenda, often cited as key in our country's national priorities. CCS's Employment Services' team is eager to support our local employers and our local job seekers. We're known as Jobs Caledon and you can find us in the Royal Courtyards in Bolton. You can also find us on-line where we have lots of resources for those wanting to hire and for those looking for great jobs. If you're 15 to 30 and looking to enter the labor market, develop skills and gain experience; if you're an employer looking to hire for your team; or if you're a parent looking for a bright future for your child, connect with CCS today at [youth@ccs4u.org](mailto:youth@ccs4u.org) to discuss your options. We're eager for LIFE for Youth to be an option again very soon.

Cathy Perennec McLean,  
Director of Employment  
and Development,  
Monty Laskin,  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Caledon Community Services