

## Caledon Community Services launching new strategic plan this year

Plan process underway, with end of March completion target

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Caledon's largest social service agency is currently creating a new strategic plan.

Caledon Community Services (CCS) is planning to have a new strategic plan ready by the end of March. The plan will guide the non-profit into the future as Caledon grows and faces new challenges.

CCS CEO Geraldine Aguiar assumed her position last June and said her first six months as the non-profit's leader have been an amazing journey. She said 2023 was a successful year and it culminated in a record-breaking gala fundraiser.

As CCS heads into 2024, Aguiar explained it's currently in the process of creating a new strategic plan, while concurrently reviewing its organizational design.

Before it even began this exercise, CCS conducted an extensive request for proposal process seeking outside help with the project. It ended up selecting HSC Vision Group, an independent management consulting firm.

Aguiar said having outside help will ensure the plan is not biased. She added that CCS has also undertaken extensive engagement with community stakeholders to help shape the new strategic plan.

"I think it's the most responsible thing for me to do as a new leader," said Aguiar. "The engagement response has been tremendous."

Aguiar said CCS has a steadfast commitment to serving the Caledon community in the way the Caledon community wants to be best served.

"In terms of this process, the community is going to see their views reflected in the way we maneuver in the future," said Aguiar.

She said CCS is still concerned that the costs of the services it provides are outpacing the funding available to the organization. Aguiar said while some people think it is, CCS is not a government organization and relies heavily on the community and business partners to provide its services.

"You've got a declining ability to provide service based on current costs and you've got an increasing need for service? it's going to create a gap," said Aguiar, adding that CCS knows there's high expectations for its services.

Aguiar said CCS is continuing to advocate for more funding support and to be at the table for important discussions in the community.

The timeline of CCS' strategic plan process was fairly aggressive, said Aguiar. It began in October and is currently in process right now with the help of HSC Vision Group. At the beginning of March, CCS senior staff and board members are going to have an extensive visioning session.

"The board and senior staff are going to take all of that information, that analysis, and synthesize it into our new strategic plan, which is going to set out our priorities and goals," said Aguiar. "Once those strategic priorities and goals are confirmed, then we'll build the operational plan for that and we'll have an operational plan with key performance indicators (and) objectives locked down

by the end of March.?

The organizational review ongoing concurrently with the strategic plan process will see CCS look at areas it can improve internally.

Aguiar described it like this: the strategic plan is where CCS needs to go to best serve the community, and the organizational review ensures CCS becomes the right vehicle to get there.

Aguiar said she's grateful to have strong staff and board members that are working hard to find the best way forward for CCS in a time where it will face new and growing challenges.

She also shared her desire to hear from everyone in the Caledon community.

?This is the time to raise your voice, raise your hand, share your opinion on what you think is going well and what needs to be done better, we will know what the community needs when we partner with the community and hear what they have to say,? said Aguiar.  
?Let's roll up our sleeves and find a way? it's time to generate solutions.?