



Deborah Gregson Bio

Our Executive Director, Deborah Gregson, founded HeARTh Social Profit Company with a few of her colleagues to fill a gap they saw in community care. She is the wife of one, mother of 5 and grandmother of 14 amazing and wonderful human beings. She is an artist, singer songwriter, renovator, mover and shaker, and a systems-oriented servant leader. Much of her art and music comes from her healing journey from mental illness and the truths and insights she earned along the way. Deborah Gregson decided to get a counselling degree after battling with mental illness for a number of years.

While working through her own recovery she realized how difficult it is for human beings to move past illness when the systems they live and work in are not designed or equipped to help them move into wellness. Stigma, lack of understanding, lack of faith in the individuals and their inevitable relapses, and their own hang-ups, keep many people in families, communities, and workplaces from being able to support a person in recovery. So, she changed her focus from one to one counselling to community development and systems transformation. She worked in the field of community mental health for a few years, trying to help build that community of care she knows is needed, and believes is possible.

Deborah has led in the creation of supportive affordable housing for chronically homeless individuals using an unused building, and several versions of an inclusive "momentum building" community centre. After struggling with the challenges of bureaucracy and unflexible systems that continued to hamper those projects, Deborah began **HeARTh Social Profit Company** with some like-minded colleagues, in order to have the freedom to build their vision outside the "system." She has been leading the team in developing an inclusive community center, as well as the business development for a number of social enterprises. These will provide work experience and job opportunities for barriered individuals, as well as help the center become self-sustaining.

Over the years, Deborah has developed an outward accountability management framework as well as several proactive mindfulness tools to help people move forward through recovery. In 2019 she completed the **Momentum Project**, a federally funded 18-month research and development project demonstrating a systems transforming community alignment model for innovative and sustainable solutions to homelessness. This led to the creation of a not for profit company: **DMG (Do More Good) Social Benefit Housing and Development Corporation**.

Currently, DMG is working on launching an online **Musical FUNdraiser** to create passive revenues selling Deborah's music as well as that of other local artists. This ongoing fundraiser can provide some income and exposure for the local artists and technicians that are helping to produce the songs. But most importantly it will raise money to help kickstart some sustainable supportive and affordable housing projects.

In her not so spare time, Deborah loves to hang out with her kids and grandkids, spend time with her supportive husband, write songs, make art, do home renovations and build her retirement garden. She struggles with work-life balance. But in the spirit of systems efficiency, she has incorporated all of her passions and hobbies into a life mission that provides a regular paycheck.

"It is amazing what you can do when you don't know you can't," and

" The only way to predict the future is to create it," and  
"It doesn't matter who gets the credit as long as it gets done"

are mantras that epitomize Deborah and her approach to life. She is well along on her own "journey to wellness" and is trying to bring the rest of us with her, because she understands that we are all in this together.