

Betty-Lou Souter, LLD,OMC



As Chief Executive Officer, Community Care, St. Catharines & Thorold, Mrs. Souter is responsible for the overall management of the agency which provides emergency food and clothing, emergency assistance and access to shelter services and supports to the less advantaged in the communities of St. Catharines & Thorold.

In her work at Community Care, Mrs. Souter is responsible for several initiatives motivating and enabling the client group served to “do more with less” such as budget counseling, nutrition programs for children and other related life skills initiatives.

With more than 40 years experience in the voluntary sector, Mrs. Souter has earned a reputation as a committed and dedicated volunteer. She was an active volunteer as a member of the Board of the Trillium Foundation between 1989 and 1996 having served as Chair from 1994 – 1996 and was Chair of Caring Communities Award in 1997-1998. In 1989 she received a Volunteer Recognition Award from the City of St. Catharines. She is a multiple Rotary Paul Harris Fellowship Recipient for her work within the community, the province and nationally. She was named Citizen of the Year in 2002. In 2003 she received the Queens Golden Jubilee Medal, and in 2012 the Queens Diamond Jubilee Medal and in 2006 she was presented with the Niagara Award for outstanding contribution to the Niagara community and the well being of its citizens by Niagara College. In 2007 she was awarded the Power of Humanity Award through the Canadian Red Cross. In 2009 Betty-Lou received the Business Volunteer Person of the Year from the Chamber of Commerce and the Communication and Leadership Award of Toastmaster International in 2010. In 2011 Betty-Lou was one of 11 Ontarians who received the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship (OMC) from Lieutenant Governor David Onley. In 2014 she received an Honourary Doctor of Laws (LLD) degree from Brock University.

Currently she is Vice Chair of the Pathstone Foundation and Vice Chair Niagara Workforce Planning Board. She was recently appointed to the Federal Judicial Advisory Committee for the province of Ontario. She is Past Member of the Board of Trustees Brock University, Past Member of the Board of Cancer Care Ontario, Past Chair of the YMCA of Niagara, Past Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Niagara Health System, Past Chair of the Board of Directors of the Niagara Community Foundation, Member of Board Y Canada and Past President of the Rotary Club of St. Catharines, the Ridley College Parents Guild, the May Court Clubs of Canada and the May Court Club of St. Catharines. She has served on several different community task forces focused on improving the lives of those in our midst who through no fault of their own struggle to make ends meet. She has given voice to those who have not been heard and advocated for a healthy and vibrant community for everyone.

Mrs. Souter’s familiarity with the social and health issues of the community coupled with extensive volunteer involvement at all levels has enabled her to develop a large network in all sectors of the community, locally, provincially as well as nationally. She is considered to be the “Voice of Poverty” in Niagara.