

Message from Jim Dahl, Executive Director of Canadian Feed The Children from 2003-2010

After seven years as the Executive Director of Canadian Feed The Children, I have decided to step down to pursue other activities in the social development field.

My decision to leave is a bittersweet one, as I feel I am leaving a family of dear friends who are so united in trying to create a better world for vulnerable children and their communities, both in Canada and overseas. Yet at the same time, I feel this is a good time to pass the leadership mantle to a new Executive Director. On this note, I am very excited and happy that the Board of Directors has identified my successor, Debra Kerby, and I have no doubts that she will take the organization to even higher levels of achievement. Debra is so well qualified for this position and I know the entire CFTC family will love working with her!

I feel very honoured to have been part of such a dedicated and passionate team, including our Board of Directors, our staff, both in Canada and overseas, our partners and the communities they work with, as well as the many loyal and committed donors and supporters across Canada who have never let us down, even during this last and very challenging recession. I would be remiss if I did not also include many of our CFTC stakeholders such as our suppliers who are simply amazing people who demonstrate their care and compassion in every interaction they have with us.

As the Executive Director for CFTC, I have also been very gratified by the attitude of the Board, staff and partners to be totally accountable and transparent to the thousands of remarkable donors and supporters who have supported our work. We take accountability very seriously and will not hesitate to address any issues that stand in the way of efficiency and sending as much resources as possible to the communities we support.

In my monitoring visits to our programs, I have been repeatedly struck by the incredible spirit and true generosity of the people we are supporting – despite the fact that life is challenging for them, they are able to rise above poverty and demonstrate an attitude of optimism and faith in their abilities to create a better world for their children. I have seen the impact of our support in so many programs including education, health, water, sanitation, income generation, leadership development, food production, but to name a few. I have also noticed that as the communities we support become stronger, their collective self-esteem grows exponentially and they become even more receptive to new challenges. This change in attitude becomes very dramatic when one visits these programs over time, and all one has to do is to look in the faces of the smiling children and their parents to know that there is no turning back!

I think organizations such as CFTC and the many other capable development organizations have, and will continue to play a critical role in the empowerment of communities and over time, will be able to leave knowing that the communities will carry on the work be a catalyst for further changes.

In closing, I will never forget the wonderful people who are part of CFTC and I just thank the Board for giving me the chance to serve this wonderful organization!

Jim Dahl