



Community Roots – Meet Dorothy Hagel

By Leanne Pauchuk

Since 2006, Dorothy Hagel and her husband Jaro have been living in Port Credit, a move they made in search of a quiet, mature neighbourhood, one where they didn't hear the hum of the highway from their bedroom, but one that still allowed easy access into Toronto. With the assumption that they would be driving to the city for work until retirement, they wanted to have the best of both worlds. Port Credit checked off all the boxes on their wish list and they found their own personal piece of paradise here, with a home that they fell in love with the moment they walked through the door.

These days, Dorothy and Jaro not only still love their home, but they are in love with Port Credit as well. As Dorothy says, "It has its own personality!" she continues, "It all feels like a small town, true European living," coming from Poland, Dorothy and Jaro can really appreciate this feeling. From their home they can walk to the village, where they love to stroll along the Lakeshore strip to window shop, stopping at the local bakery in the morning for a fresh loaf of bread, or visiting one of their favourite restaurants. They also love the fact that there is always something happening

in Port Credit. The Canada Day celebrations being one of their favourites, as Dorothy describes, "There is a real community spirit that day, especially because of the sweet contribution of La Villa bakery. But we truly love most of the Port Credit events. They make the community come alive!" They try to get involved in the community living as much as their schedules permit, but perhaps not as often as they would like. However, they fully support shopping locally by supporting our many wonderful restaurants and shops.

Dorothy is also very familiar with the community as she not only lives here, but she also works here. She began her professional career as a financial advisor and has held her designation as a Certified Financial Planner (CFP®) since 1999. She then decided to pursue a law degree from York University, Osgoode Hall Law School and has been practicing law ever since. In 2009, Dorothy left the corporate world behind in search of something that would free her from big company office politics and do something that would make a real difference for people. As Dorothy describes, "When I was working in a big corporation, I



didn't get that satisfaction. I was just a small piece in a big machine. A lot of work seemed meaningless and I was faceless." While she was searching for this new position she realized that there was a growing need for services in the estate area right here in her own neighbourhood and it presented a wonderful opportunity for her to build something that was hers. Dorothy has always been inspired by people who created something on their

own and she had been lucky enough in her life to witness the making of some very successful, self-made people. From these observations, she learned that you have to set your own goals, set out to pursue them and to not allow anyone else put limits on your dreams. Before too long, Dorothy found herself running her own practice right in the heart of Port Credit. She acknowledges this move as pivotal to becoming a much happier person.

Dorothy's firm, Hagel Lawfirm serves the community with respect to all matters affecting estates including estate litigation, estate planning, wills and trusts, inheritance planning, probate and estate administration, power of attorney for property and personal care, guardianship application, personal finances and asset protection, applications to pass accounts, business law and succession planning, as well as residential real estate. Dorothy's real pleasure is being able to practice law in her own community and she is truly a neighbourhood lawyer. As her practice has grown within the neighbourhood over the years, she now finds that it isn't unusual for her to run into clients on the street or at the grocery store and they always greet her with a smiling face and a "hello". Running her own practice has given her the satisfaction of dealing with real people, who actually appreciate what she does for them. Many times her office has received flowers, home baked cookies or a simple thank you note from a happy client, as she says, "It warms my heart when that happens and wipes out all of the daily frustrations." Dorothy continues, "It makes me feel that I belong somewhere," she continues, "I belong to the Port Credit community. This is especially important for someone like me, who was an immigrant and had to grow new roots in Canada."

These aren't the only roots that Dorothy and Jaro have put down in Port Credit. As avid gardeners, they find real joy and pride in taking care of their many plants and flowers. In fact, Jaro grew up in his grandfather's house that had a big garden, so he has been getting his hands dirty in garden beds since his childhood. Although Dorothy was an inner city child and grew up surrounded by concrete, her grandmother had a little piece of land with a garden, which she loved to visit. In Port Credit, they have a sensible yard that they have transformed all into gardens and a greenhouse. They look at their garden as an investment into their happiness and well-being; they are frequent shoppers in all the gardening stores and are always on the hunt for

interesting plants and flowers. Dorothy admits that she probably spends too much time and money buying gardening books and researching online, but she loves to follow her passion. Their indoors are also filled with plants, as Dorothy laughs, "Probably too many plants!" They are even having their windows enlarged in their home and are in the process of adding two additional bay windows because they have run out of space for all of their plants. As her many friends call her a "passionate gardener", they will often come to her looking for advice on their own gardens, plants and flowers. Dorothy loves to grow a range of spices in her garden that she can experiment with in her cooking and Jaro has an impressive collection of succulents.

When they aren't busy working or spending time in their gardens, as empty-nesters Dorothy and Jaro also love to travel and experience new places. They love old architecture and learning the history of the places they visit. Dorothy loves to hunt out graffiti as she finds it very fascinating and believes that you can learn a lot about a city from their graffiti. The warmer the destination the better, even though they are not beach people. Warmer weather gives them greater opportunity to tour the area and explore architecture, museums, galleries, shows, and of course the many botanical gardens and parks. Some of their favourite places to visit include the Caribbean, Georgia, Florida and Arizona as there are always many interesting plants in these regions to admire.

As Dorothy and Jaro look to the Port Credit community with admiration; Dorothy especially acknowledges the open arms that have been extended to her with the support of her business. You may run into Dorothy and Jaro enjoying a Hawaiian pizza at Great Canadian Pizza or a dinner with friends at Aielli or perhaps just picking up groceries at the local grocery store.

