



A WARRIOR AMONG US

Did you know that Springboard was the employer of one of Canada's top female athletes? Let me introduce you to Cheryl Phillips, Community Justice Worker at Old City Hall in Toronto. By day she provides top-notch service for clients who need help to fulfill alternative, diversion programming. But in the evenings and weekends, she's a fierce competitor and warrior for the Canadian Women's Rugby Team.

Cheryl started at Operation Springboard with a student placement in our S.O.A.R. program in 2002. By September 2003 she was hired as relief staff for the S.O.A.R. program. In late 2006, she applied for and was accepted as a Community Justice Worker with the Diversion/Direct Accountability program at Old City Hall in Toronto. She enjoys her role at the court house because it's fast-paced, is different every day and she meets a wide variety of interesting and unique people.

What is most impressive about Cheryl is that she is able to balance her work responsibilities with her off-hours Rugby activities "all my vacation time is taken up by tournaments – plus I take some unpaid leave. I couldn't do it without my super-supportive co-workers and supervisor". Cheryl trains hard for her sport – practicing all weekend and two or three evenings during the week. She has an even more rigorous schedule when big tournaments are approaching.

She is clearly quite committed to a sport that is accepted as being the most physically grueling sport played professionally. Cheryl is tough – earlier this year she "broke the top of her jaw and had to have my mouth, teeth and jaw wired together. I broke my jaw Saturday, had surgery Monday, and was back at work one week later". Broken, dislocated ribs, sprained ankles and wrists, bruises and black eyes are common for this athlete on a weekly basis. She tells me that crown attorney's are used to "seeing her with bruises and black eyes".

One perk of her athletic endeavors is travelling the world. She has competed in tournaments in countries such as China, the United Arab Emirates, the Bahamas, the UK, and France. While she may get to visit these countries, she is usually restricted to only "one day to explore the cities. Usually the last day before we leave when we can celebrate." Her favourite places that she has visited with Rugby Canada are Dubai and Hong Kong, because "they are very unique, and I probably wouldn't have gone there otherwise."

I asked Cheryl what her best moment was as a member of Rugby Canada. "A game in November 2009 – we played France in France. It was the first game I started for the team against a top tier opponent. Not only did we beat France for the first time in 9 years, but I scored my first try against a team of that caliber."

The Canadian Women's Rugby team is currently ranked 6th in the world. Cheryl plays the position of "Back 3 – either a full-back or a wing". She's been playing Rugby since high school, when she led her rugby team to the All-Ontario Finals (OFSAA).

She may be a warrior on the field, but in person, Cheryl is a genuine and friendly person with lots of energy and a big smile. She is a valuable asset of this organization and, as many of her colleagues have indicated, a pleasure to be around. A true champion, when Rugby joins the Olympics in 2016 she'll be a star for Canada.

EMPLOYEE: CHERYL PHILLIPS
TITLE: COMMUNITY JUSTICE WORKER
DEPARTMENT: ADULT JUSTICE
LOCATION: OLD CITY HALL
WITH SPRINGBOARD SINCE 2002

