

15 MINUTES WITH

# RACHEL DAY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
SFU CHILDCARE SOCIETY



## HWC INTERVIEW SERIES

We're a big fan of our clients & placed candidates. In this monthly series we will feature some of the fantastic people we have been lucky enough to work with.

At the time of interview Rachel was a few weeks away from taking up her post as Executive Director, SFU Childcare Society.

## 15 MINUTES WITH RACHEL

*By Harbour West Consulting*

Harbour West had the pleasure of interviewing Rachel Day before she took up her new position with SFU Childcare Society as their Executive Director.

Harbour West was the Leadership Search Firm at the helm of the recruitment process for the SFU Childcare Society. We thoroughly enjoyed working on this search!

Read on to hear from Rachel about her career, her expectations and excitement around starting her new position and her experience working with Harbour West. We have also nabbed Rachel's top book recommendation for our #HWestBookClub.





## ABOUT SFU CHILDCARE SOCIETY

SFU Childcare Society is an internationally recognized childcare centre known for its quality early care and learning.

They have been providing and promoting a play based, family focused early care and learning program for children aged 0 to 12 for 50 years.

SFU Childcare Society values children as the heart of a respectful, collaborative and reflective community by providing them with a place to develop their potential through freedom to explore and engage the world around them.



## TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR CAREER PATH.

Back in the 90's I trained to be a teacher in the UK and I taught for a long time. I initially worked in the north of England before moving south to work in London in increasingly senior positions. This was the point in my career when I developed as a leader and as a manager. I was part of a leadership team where we were sent in to support failing schools. In the UK there are a lot of school inspections by the government, with metrics all around pupil progress. We worked to try to improve the outcomes for the children and I was also consulting in the field of Early Years Education.

It was 7 years ago that I made the move to Canada. Due to the differences in requirements to teach in Canada I couldn't directly transfer my teaching qualifications. I had to rethink the direction of my career. Fortunately, I also had extensive experience and education in Early Years Education. My initial position was a short one, as a Junior Kindergarten Administrator before taking up the position as Executive Director at Highlands Pre-school Centre Society.

For the past two and a half years I have been the Manager of Childcare Services for Britannia Community Services. There are five independent childcare societies - with 300 childcare spaces total - through service level agreement with Britannia and I am the bridge and support between parents, management teams and five separate boards.

It's been really interesting, as Britannia is a huge community hub. In my time I have been involved with work on reconciliation and working with the Indigenous population around Commercial Drive. Learning more about this community has been an interesting and eye-opening new experience for me professionally. These are experiences that I am looking forward to taking forward with me to my new position as Executive Director of SFU Childcare Society.





## WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THE ROLE AT SFU CHILDCARE SOCIETY?

I wasn't looking for a new job when Harbour West reached out to me. This sort of job in childcare does not come around very often; for instance, the former ED had been in the role for 14 years.

I saw the job as an opportunity to be at a similar level to where I was when left my career in the UK. As a new immigrant 7 years ago it has taken me time to build up a reputation here, which keeps you humble.

My skills and experience lend themselves very well to the organization. I am well versed in working with families, staff and children, all in same place at same time. In the UK, I used to work with universities in conducting research, so I am looking forward to some opportunities to dive back into research. It will also be great to go back to reporting to just one board!



## WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL BE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN YOUR FIRST 6 MONTHS ON THE JOB?

Transitions are hard for any team, especially with a new leader. You have to have a plan. The great news is that the SFU Childcare Society already has experienced knowledgeable staff, so that's a strong start.

In my new role I will aim to get a few early wins. It's so important to observe by being at the sides of those people doing the work every single day.

The first 6 months are critical in understanding what staff are motivated by. I will also take the time to look at the community around me. Building the board is going to be important. I believe that being in a leadership position at any place you need to have a good 5 years under your belt to make long term sustainable changes.

## HOW WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH HARBOUR WEST CONSULTING? HAVE YOU WORKED WITH AN EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT FIRM BEFORE?

I've never worked with an executive recruitment firm before, so this was all new to me!

I worked with Carol and she was really, really good. I valued that she was highly professional and that communications were very clear. The process was expedited by Carol to keep it moving along as quickly as possible.

All in all, I enjoyed Carol's clear communication and would work with Harbour West again.



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## RACHEL'S PICK

Sapiens

*Yuval Noah Harari*

**AT HARBOUR WEST WE HAVE A BOOK CLUB.  
HELP US ADD TO OUR LIBRARY!**

**WHAT IS THE BEST BUSINESS/INSPIRING BOOK  
YOU'VE READ RECENTLY, AND WHY?**

I am a total book fiend and normally have a fiction and a non-fiction book on the go at once.

I just finished reading a really interesting book called *Sapiens* by *Yuval Noah Harari*, which provides a brief history of mankind. It is a bit of a slow read to get into but I found it really interesting. The author delves into the creation of society, religion and economics.

I have a history degree; I found it interesting broadening my understanding of how homo sapiens have been able to dominate over the years and how will that change in the future. The book prompted me to dwell on how the human race is going to adapt to technology.



## ABOUT US

Harbour West knows the importance of finding the right leadership for high profile organizations across Canada. We are experts in finding, interviewing and placing the best and brightest candidates with the fantastic organizations we partner with. We provide executive and leadership search services to public sector, post-secondary and non-profit industries and we're really great at it.

## WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

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