

Family

Tony DiGiovanni CHT

LO executive director

The green industry is comprised of thousands of family-run operations. It is not unusual to see brothers, sons, sisters, fathers, mothers, spouses and even grandchildren and grandparents working together.



This feel of family is one of the reasons we are different from larger corporate structures found in manufacturing, industrial, commercial and institutional sectors. It is also one of the reasons that Landscape Ontario often feels like a family. I have often felt like a family member, when I attend the many weddings, funerals, birthday parties, retirement parties and anniversary celebrations of our members.

Often, I have been inspired when listening to the life stories of our members. Many times members will relate how they started with nothing. Perhaps it was a beat-up lawnmower carried in the trunk of a rusted car. One member told me he had to sleep in the car, because he did not have enough money to afford housing.

There are many stories about coming from another country with a just a suitcase and a few dollars. Like my father, many immigrated to Canada alone to find a job and prepare a place for their family waiting overseas.

From humble beginnings, many of our members now have successful operations that sustain thousands of people. They have many reasons to be proud of their accomplishments.

Yet members will tell me that their achievements are not entirely their own. They had a lot of help and support. Friends, relatives, parents, customers, competitors, staff, suppliers, family and faith all played a huge role in achieving their success. They are often more thankful than proud.

It is also interesting to note that many participate in the association, because they want to give back a little of what they received. The contribution ethic is a powerful force. It is one of the main reasons for our existence as an association. It is not surprising that it is a main characteristic of a family.

John Somerville

This summer I was privileged to be invited to a number of family celebrations. John Somerville, founder of Somerville Nurseries, was recently honoured (see story on page 6) by his family, friends and a number of associations (including ours) for a lifetime of contribution to the forestry, nursery and landscape industries.

Melo Landscaping

Melo Landscaping recently celebrated its 40th anniversary in Schomberg. Jose Melo has always been an industry leader, especially in the use of stone and water in the landscape. He has also mentored (and continues to mentor) many others.

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Tony DiGiovanni presents a special plaque to John Somerville on behalf of Landscape Ontario.



From left, LO family members help Jose Melo celebrate his company's 40th anniversary: Eddie Almeida of Almeida and Almeida Landscaping, Woodbridge; Jose Melo, Pat Lamanna, G&L Group of Companies, Concord; Charlie Wilson, president of Bruce Wilson Landscaping, Kleinburg.



Connie and Jose Melo shared this gorgeous cake that depicted how property is transformed through landscaping.



This photo of father and son, Guerino and Robert Verrilli from Stone-Link in Woodbridge, was taken at a recent visit. It was wonderful to listen of Guerino's humble beginnings in the construction industry.