



Impact Story: Luis M.

Community Member & Newcomer

How did you first learn about Grocer 4 Good?

I actually heard about Grocer 4 Good a couple of years ago. Lisa has done amazing work in our community here in Sault Ste. Marie and she has always been an advocate for our community. **And when she opened doors at Grocer 4 Good it was also a great moment for our community to embrace the advocacy work that she has done.** And I think that was a few years ago.

What impact has Grocer 4 Good had in the community?

I know that they provide employment to people with disabilities, people who are of low income as well. **For instance, it's located downtown, where there aren't many places where you can actually buy food.** So I mean, I think it's the only one or maybe there's only two of them [grocery stores] downtown. **They provide the service of having food items, grocery items at a very low cost for people who reside downtown and they carry everything from dairy, produce and cereal.** They really have everything that a grocery store has and provides to the residents of downtown.

How do you think Grocer 4 Good makes an impact on the lives of others?

It has a huge impact, especially to newcomers as well in Sault Ste. Marie, many are facing, I believe, a crisis in terms of employment, in terms of housing, in terms of groceries in town, there's a lot of newcomers. They make their homes and locate in Downtown, where there are low income apartment buildings. But as I mentioned, there aren't many grocery shops or grocery stores in downtown, and they tend to choose Grocer 4 Good as they have competitive prices that you can't really beat and **they have also started to carry a bunch of other Latin American products that you can't find in the city other than at Grocer 4 Good.** And this has created a big boost in the lives of the Hispanic community especially because they carry those ethnic products that you can't find easily in Northern Ontario.

Could you tell us a little bit more about the people that Grocer 4 Good serves and why it's so important?

Yeah, absolutely. **So in the area where Grocer 4 Good is located there's a lot of, I don't - I'm trying to think of the right words. There's several folks there who are of low income or they're low income families, newcomers, people with disabilities in that specific neighbourhood.** And this service through Grocer 4 Good helps those folks to **afford good quality products at very low cost and that has huge impacts** because as I said, there aren't any other affordable grocery stores downtown. And another important sector is people who are retired people who live in long term housing and they can't really afford their own car or maybe they can't drive a car and sometimes public transit is not reliable to go to a grocery store **that for us, is maybe a short commute but for someone else it takes a lot of effort and a long time to go and get their groceries.** So Grocer 4 Good also serves them, its supporting all kinds of people.

How does Grocer 4 Good make Sault Ste. Marie a better place?

If we look at the work that Lisa does with her team, it gives an opportunity for people with disabilities to obtain employment experience. They are young - those who struggle to find employment in the city - and Lisa advocates for



them, she employs them. And that is something that I sincerely appreciate. I do my grocery shopping there to support the work that Lisa does and that Grocer 4 Good does as well. And as I mentioned earlier, it's a low income neighbourhood and many of these residents, they can't really afford food and Grocer 4 Good provides a competitive price that is lower than any other grocery store in town, and that is **a big impact in our community because many folks can't afford food and Grocer 4 Good either donates food to them or they put products at a really low price that is affordable for many residents.** I also know that Grocer 4 Good has multiple partnerships with local communities with local businesses to be able to gather, for instance, fresh produce or milk from our local dairy as well as bread and any other items that are essential.

Why is Grocer 4 Good important to you?

It is important to me because of all the good work that they have done over the years provides employment to people with disabilities, to young people, young adults and also because it provides foods to that low-income area of the city, **but most importantly, not only it provides job to them, but it also gives them the opportunity to have a feeling of purpose, purpose of having something to do on a daily basis. And they're able to teach some employment skills and gain experience that they can use to perhaps pursue other opportunities.** Also, the store hours are very accessible to many of us where the other grocery store that I was talking about, they close at 4:00 or 5:00 PM. Grocer 4 Good stays open later and also on the weekends, something that the other store doesn't.

How has Grocer 4 Good improved your life?

I think that it has improved in the sense that in my own personal opinion of me being of Latin American descent, because I can't find [Latin] products in Northern Ontario, specifically Sault Ste. Marie. So the fact that Lisa has gone above and beyond and being able to partner with businesses to obtain Latin American products. **It has really helped me to remember the taste of my home country, which is Mexico, and also to the other newcomers who are arriving.** For instance, international students who miss the taste of home, they are able to find products for them, they have been amazing in doing that. While making food prices more affordable. Food prices are becoming very expensive and they have a very competitive rate.