



# Respect Works Here

## Community Champion

When **Heinrich Metzger** and his wife Claudia Mueller moved to Vernon in 2011 they were on an adventure, following his dream of living in a new country, outside of Germany. Well established and successful in their town of Bielefeld, just between Dortmund and Hanover, they decided to uproot themselves, sell everything and start over again in Vernon.

“We had been to Canada several times,” explains Heinrich, his happiness, warmly evident in his voice. “We fell in love with this nice country and the people.”

With the decision made to immigrate, they applied to Canadian Immigration and it took two years for the approval to come through. Then they had to move quickly as the approval stipulated that they must land in Canada within six months. They made it in time, but they had to return to Germany for a short time to finalize the sale of things and to complete their obligations there.

On settling in Vernon, they felt welcomed immediately with new neighbors quickly becoming good friends. It seems that Canadian people have probably made the biggest impression on Heinrich.

He references the impact and difference they have made to his experience frequently.

It took Heinrich only a year for Vernon to become home, and although a bit longer for his wife, they are both settled now.

Heinrich credits the Vernon and District Immigrant and Community Services Society with a key part of their settlement by offering support to newcomers, especially through language classes. “This is one thing that other countries could learn from Canada,” he says. “How to treat immigrants or how to get them settled.”

Once he felt confident in his language skills, Heinrich began the recertification process for his Structural Engineering credentials. After two years, he received his Canadian professional designation and could start working here. Through his connections at the Kalamalka Rotary Club, Heinrich learned of a local engineer, Paul Fillipi, who had been looking for some time for someone to take over his client base and look after them.

It was a great connection to make and the two engineers have been working together very well, with Paul phasing into retirement and Heinrich, stretching into taking on more of the clients.

“We fell in love with this nice country and the people.”

- Heinrich Metzger

“He is such a nice guy. He is not selfish – he gave me his books, and all I need,” says Heinrich. “He still helps me if I have questions. And this is one thing that I love here too – I found that the people here are far more friendly or as we would say, warm-hearted, than in Germany.”

For Heinrich, it is evident that he is “all in” and excited to call Vernon home. The call for adventure was answered in the most delightful way and he is raring to give back to the community that so warmly welcomed him.

