Early in her career, Christine Lengvari, DPA’78, faced what she calls “a time of hesitancy.” Having completed her degree in psychology, she wanted to follow a different path: “I wanted to get into business,” she recalls, “but I wasn’t quite sure how.” Part of the answer came from McGill’s diploma program in Public Accounting, offered through what is now the School of Continuing Studies (SCS).

It’s clear she chose well. From studying financial accounting in the Redpath Library, Lengvari went on to teach the subject at McGill’s Faculty of Management. Today, she is President and CEO of Lengvari Financial, and an expert on retirement and estate planning.

Lengvari was an active volunteer during Campaign McGill, and as an SCS advisory board member has been instrumental in building fundraising at the School.

Now, she is giving back in a new way, by making a bequest to Career Advising and Transition Services (CATS) at SCS. “I know how difficult it is to wonder, How do I make this change?”, she explains. “I think we all need a helping hand, as well as guidance and encouragement.”

The CATS program, which runs largely on private funding, gives vital support to students, including professionals changing careers, as well as newcomers finding their way. Through individual advising and coaching, networking events, and guidance about working in Quebec, CATS gives users the chance to clarify their objectives and plan for success.

Lengvari is vocal about the good SCS is doing for new Montrealers. “The School offers great opportunities to refugees,” she says, “because they often need to requalify, or change their qualifications, in order to find work.” That benefit hits close to home: like many people displaced by war, Lengvari’s parents had to rebuild their lives after fleeing Hungary.

As a financial advisor, Lengvari finds that planned giving is a natural extension. Most people are familiar with the benefits of life insurance, she says, but to many, the philanthropic side of estate planning is more obscure.

Notably, says Lengvari, “People are surprised at how easily it can be done, and that they can create a meaningful legacy without depriving their heirs.” A rewarding part of any financial advisor’s job is opening that door, and showing clients how personal planning can achieve social good.

“I think once people realize what they can accomplish, their minds open up to that possibility. And then, they get excited.”