



Around *the* Block



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Carol MacLennan receives 2020 Judi Chisholm Bursary



Left to right: Loan Fund General Manager Seth Asimakos with bursary winner Carol MacLennan (Photo: Loan Fund)

By Darlene Jones, Money Matters Coordinator, Saint John Community Loan Fund

In honour of our former colleague and Money Matter\$ Coordinator, Judi Chisholm, and to promote the importance of Financial Literacy Month, the Saint John Community Loan Fund launched the Judi Chisholm Memorial Financial Literacy Bursary in 2013. The 2020 winner is Carol MacLennan.

Carol is a past participant of Money Matter\$, the Loan Fund's financial literacy course. It is a free, five-module program designed to help you understand and control your financial world. The judging panel chose Carol to receive the \$500 bursary because of her commitment to setting up an emergency fund. Unexpected life events cannot be planned for; however, having a reserve of money in a savings account can keep your household afloat. Super job, Carol!

To get enrolled in a Money Matter\$ course, please contact Darlene at darlene@loanfund.ca or by telephone 652-5626, extension 4.

Proud Sponsors of Around The Block



SAINT JOHN



You are not alone! Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS)



By Rhoda Welshman, BBBS of Saint John

Are you interested in giving your child a different opportunity and exposure to new ideas during this difficult time? Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring programs are taking place virtually. Youth (ages 6-16) enrolled in these programs will have the chance to build new friendships and safely interact with adult mentors who really care. We're having lots of fun hosting paint nights, visiting farms, holding talent shows and traveling to far off places (all from the comfort of our bubble!). Maybe you know a high school student or young adult (ages 15-21) who's struggling to find support and make decisions for their future? Our post-secondary and career exploration program might be for them! "PROPEL your education, employment and you" looks at personal needs, skills and interests to make better informed decisions for education and career choices. For more information please call 635-1145 or email brother@nb.aibn.com.

(Poster: BBBS)

From the Editor's desk: Checking in one year later

Lorna Brown

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As I write, Saint John is still at Orange level, so we are publishing Issue 75 electronically only. When spring comes and the municipal elections are upon us, we hope to have a physical paper in your hands - and we hope that you will participate by voting, talking to candidates, even running for office yourself!

Meantime, if you see this issue electronically, please send it around to your friends and neighbours who might not think to look for it. *Around the Block* remains the voice of the priority neighbourhoods, so it is critical that we reach as many community residents as possible in the South End, the Waterloo Village, the Old North End, Crescent Valley, the Lower West Side. United, it's a stronger voice!

It is almost a year since the pandemic was declared. The shining light of camaraderie and hard work in our neighbourhoods, and in the non-profits that serve them, does not dim. Yet the struggles in those neighbourhoods are very real. Read Randy Hatfield's call to action on the housing crisis (p. 20). Also read about the good work that is happening in housing the homeless (p. 9), and in building more affordable housing in Seth Asimakos's article on social finance (pp. 10-11). But much more needs to be done, and not just in housing. Romero House served more than 5000 meals in January 2020. This January it was 10,000.

As ever: peace and joy! You can get them both by giving them. :)

A community has come together



Volunteer Lisa Leblanc (Photo: Jonathan Driscoll)

By Christa Petts, ONE Change

This has been a hard year for all of us. COVID-19 has affected us all in various ways. I am very pleased at how the North End has come together and supported each other and the community. Residents have contributed by delivering groceries, checking on a neighbour, going out and shopping, or picking up stuff they need. Several community members have come in and left messages to contact them if we need any help. Businesses and residents have been bringing in donations. It is a beautiful thing when communities unite to make good things happen.

Thank you to all volunteers and community members who have come forward to make somebody's day or just lend a hand in this difficult time.

ONE Minute Funtivity



(Photo: Jonathan Driscoll)

By Jonathan Driscoll, ONE Change

We are excited to start our "ONE Minute Funtivity." This will help us to stay connected to our community while having fun. Each activity is designed to inspire and encourage creativity. Watch on our Facebook page for our "ONE Minute Funtivity" videos throughout the month, to inspire and share appreciation for others.

This project was started to stay connected with our community during the pandemic and provide a few minutes of education and fun for those at home. We hope to see everyone's creations. Please share your ideas of what videos you would like to see.

Like us on Facebook at The ONE Change today to see all upcoming videos and fun activities.

ONE Future: Digital Media Marketing through storytelling

By Jill Richards-Cook, Coordinator, ONE Future

Are you unemployed or underemployed? Are you 19-30 years old? Are you having trouble finding or keeping a job? We have a program that will help you to build new skills and find work. We offer 12 weeks of paid training in addition to a paid work placement.

We are looking for amazing young people who are interested in learning the skills of Digital Media Marketing. What is Digital Media Marketing? It is marketing that is made possible with an electronic device or the internet. It's the content you see and watch on your phone and computer. Digital marketing allows organizations to reach their targeted audience easily and inexpensively. The program's instructors will teach you how to create high-quality photos and videos. You'll learn how to use images to create a story. These stories can help businesses and non-profits engage and attract customers to their social media platforms (web pages, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram).

Here's what some of our current participants said of our program:

- "I would like to thank you all for the assistance you have provided me during the Digital Media Marketing course...you went the extra mile to help me get a job placement in Fredericton and you did!"
- "You really matched our interests to our placements."
- "I'm loving my new role, it is the best job I've ever had."

All you need is a cell phone with a camera, the motivation to work and learn new things, and we can help. Call Jill at 566-9303 today for our new program starting soon. We are interviewing now!

ONE Future



ONE Pot Wonders

By Christa Petts, ONE Change

We are excited about our new program; we began with twenty residents. We purchased twenty crockpots and every two weeks we purchase groceries for an easy recipe they can make at home.



The program runs for twenty weeks. It has been very successful, providing a hot nutritious meal that can be frozen and saved for another day. We encourage residents to be creative and let us know any new recipe they have tried so we can share with other participants.

Many participants have been prepping meals for their families like soups and chili. This time of year, there is nothing like a bowl of hot soup at the end of the day!

Above: A recipe and ingredients for a crockpot meal
(Photo: ONE Change)

North Neighbourhood Contact

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658-2980



Comings and goings: People United in the Lower South End (PULSE)

By Mary LeSage, PULSE

Don't forget the Heating Rebate Forms will be available.

As always, we ask you to call ahead for an appointment to lessen your wait time in the building.

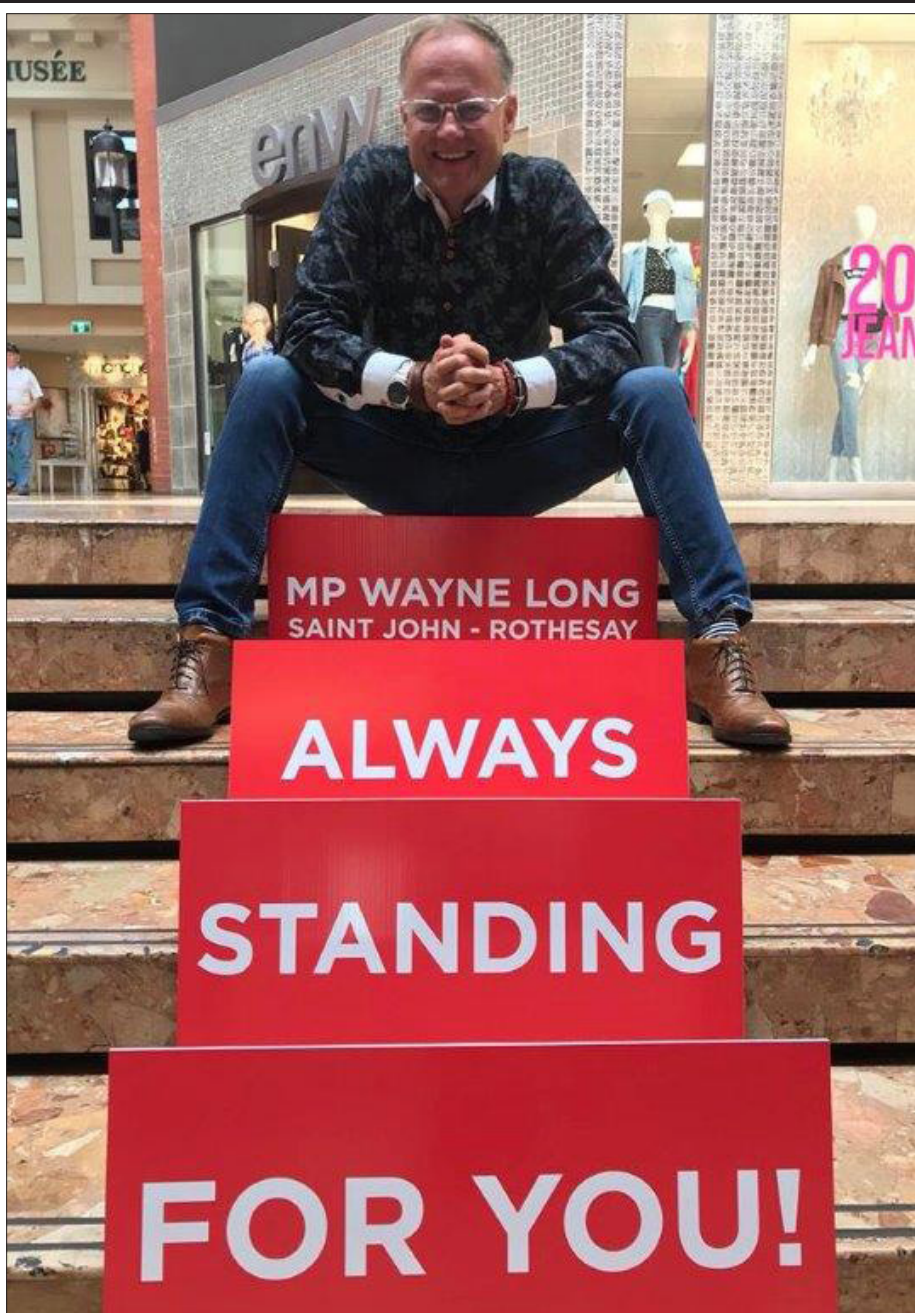
Please remember our monthly Food Purchase Club money is due February 12th and March 12th and comes back to you the following Friday. We have \$15 and \$25 orders available! We even have a Pay it Forward option where you can provide a single person, a couple or a family with fresh fruits and vegetables! How awesome is that!

As always our nurse is available upon request!

We are always looking for volunteers; come in and talk to me and see what you can do to help out your neighbourhood.

Cst Duane Squires can be reached at 977-1733 or duane.squires@saintjohn.ca

Mary LeSage can be reached at 632-6807 or operationsmanager.pulse@gmail.com



Christmas at PULSE



Arlene Dunn and
Mary LeSage
(Photo: Carol Kelly)

By Kaya Sleep, PULSE

This December truly was a magical time at PULSE. As many of us do around the holiday season, there was much running around, prepping, and planning for our holiday bags. With our residents and their family on our minds, we were working hard to keep our pantry full of our staple items. PULSE, like all community centres, relies on the generosity and kindness of others to keep up with the needs of our neighbourhood. Well, in true Christmas fashion, PULSE received some incredible donations before Christmas and New Year. The PULSE family would like to send a heartfelt thank you to the Team at Cloud5, The Honourable Arlene Dunn, and to Shaylee Trail and Robin Fulton, from UNB. We are optimistic about what this new year will bring. Thanks to this support PULSE is starting 2021 on the best footing possible.

Income Tax Clinic 2021

By PULSE

We have a year-round income tax clinic at PULSE, and we can prepare tax returns for individuals who have low income and a simple tax situation for FREE.

PULSE Inc is located @ 251 Wentworth Street.

Call for an appointment @ 632-6807 starting the end of February.

Roots and Wings

By Lisa Morris

So excited for this year's garden project, Roots and Wings: From Seed to Market. If you live in the South End/Waterloo Area and want to join a small group on an awesome garden journey, let me know!

The project will run from March to October with bi-weekly workshops to guide us on our garden journey! Thank you, PULSE Inc. and the Waterloo Village Association, for your support in making this happen!

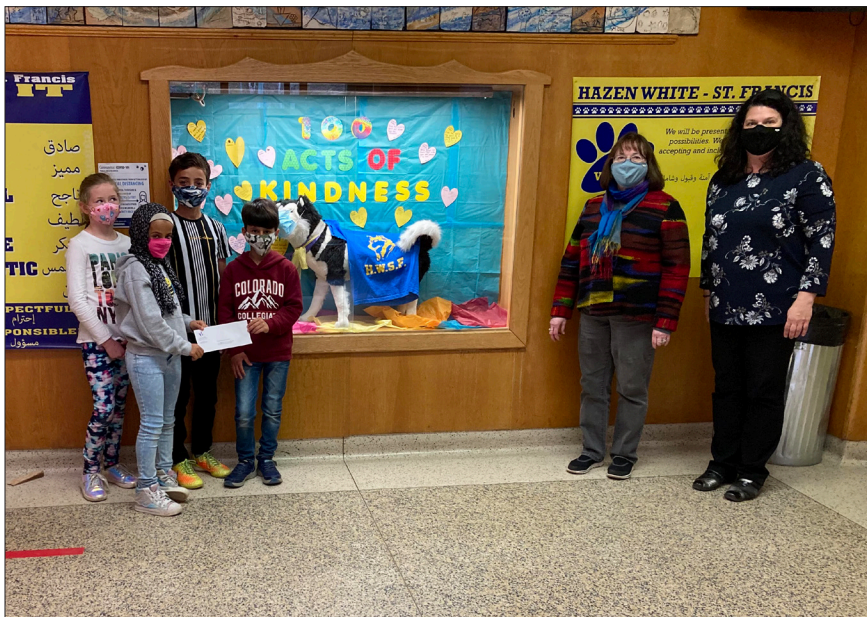
I can be reached at Lisamorris.cdc@gmail.com

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Youth Enhancement Program (YEP) supports wellness at Hazen White/ St. Francis School (HWSF)



Students at HWSF School receiving a donation from YEP Treasurer, Ann Barrett (second from right), with Megan Donovan, Principal (far right)
(Photo: Kate MacDonald, Community School Coordinator, HWSF)

By Ann Barrett, Treasurer, YEP

The Youth Enhancement Program Inc. is a charitable organization that seeks funding to help supplement the HWSF School nutritional programs. During this school year the NB Children's Foundation granted \$9,000 for these programs. This funding helps provide all students with a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and healthy snacks.

YEP also received \$4700 from the Community Foundation to run an after-school Food Security program. Second Harvest and Food Rescue granted YEP \$5400 in gift cards to help provide emergency food during the pandemic. Thank you for your support.

Takeout meals at the Crescent Valley Resource Centre

By Olivia Clancy, Food Security Coordinator, CVRC

This winter, Crescent Valley Resource Centre (CVRC) is offering takeout three times per week. Our programs are below.

Drop by the CVRC (130 MacLaren Blvd.) every Thursday for a bowl of home-made soup. Soup will be available (for takeout only) from 12-1 p.m., and it's free! Stop by CVRC and treat your tummy during the cold winter months. Don't forget your mask!

Take-home bagged breakfast is available 9-10 a.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays at CVRC, 130 MacLaren Blvd. It's free and delicious! Quantities are limited. Social distancing will be in place and your community mask is required.

Stop by CVRC and treat your tummy during the cold winter months.

Don't forget your mask!



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The Honourable Trevor Holder MLA Portland - Simonds

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229 Churchill Blvd. Suite 11
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Email: trevor.holder@gnb.ca

Office Hours: Monday: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday: 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Friday: Closed



Crescent Valley Neighbourhood Contact

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130 MacLaren Blvd.
693-8513



Let's talk Carleton Kidz!



**By Kate Worden, Marketing and Program Coordinator,
Carleton Community Centre (CCC)**

We are so excited to welcome Madelynn Ryan to our team, the new Youth Program Coordinator at the Carleton Community Centre (CCC). Madelynn grew up a "Carleton Kid" and aims to positively influence the lives of youth in our community, she says, much like the way it has impacted her over the years and helped shape the person she has become today.

"Throughout the program, I want kids to have a voice and feel welcome. This is a space of inclusion, diversity, and family," says Madelynn.

Our new Carleton Kidz program is set to begin in February. With COVID restrictions, we have limited placements available. With the intention to reconnect with the community, we will offer programs that marry old traditions with new innovative ideas. There will be small changes to our weekly hours, but we plan to hold true to Carleton traditions like March Break fun and holiday celebrations/events in months and years to come. Our programs will now run Sunday through Thursday, from February until June, with a Friday night dance once a month when restrictions allow. Summer program details to follow – stay tuned!

**We are looking forward to seeing new
and familiar faces - to register,
contact Madelynn!**

By phone: (506) 658-2920

**By email: madelynn@
carletoncommunitycentre.ca**

Office Hours: Sunday-Thursday, 2-9 p.m.



Carleton Community Centre, Inc.



**The Honourable Dorothy Shephard
MLA Saint John Lancaster**

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*Constituency Office is located
at side of building facing Church*

Tel: (506) 643-2900
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Dorothy.Shephard@gnb.ca
www.gnb.ca

Art Mamma brings Art Therapy to CCC

by Kate Worden, Marketing and Program Coordinator, CCC

We're so excited to support Art Mamma on her new venture – virtual style!

Kim Cookson, known for her presence at the Carleton Community Centre as Art Mamma, is an artist in the field of Art Therapy attending the Kutenai Art Therapy Institute.

As part of her internship, Kim is offering an online class "Art Therapy for Self-Reflection for Mature Adults" in a six-week art therapy session.

Registration is limited to allow the opportunity for "hands-on" involvement during each session. Don't miss your chance – register today!

**For more information, or to register,
please call Kim (506) 651-4537 or
contact by email:
kimmy.cookson@gmail.com**



(Poster: Kate Worden)



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Coverdale Acquires New Shelter Location



The new shelter-to-be (Photo: Coverdale)

By Coverdale

Coverdale Centre for Women Inc. has some great news to share! We are officially the owners of 154 Waterloo Street, which will become our permanent shelter location. We will be busy over the next few months getting the building ready for our women, with many renovations and security upgrades planned for completion before we move in. **In the meantime, we continue to operate our emergency shelter services at 344 Somerset Street.** Personal growth and skills-building programs continue to be offered at the drop-in centre by appointment only, and alternative accommodations can be made for women who prefer not to come to the centre at this time.

For information about shelter services, staff can be reached at 672-6285. For information about programs, our facilitator can be reached at 634-1649 or by email at coverdaleprograms@gmail.com.

Exploring the global recovery network at Sophia



Peer recovery coach Johanne Hall introduces and guides women as they explore the virtual recovery community (Photo: Sophia Recovery)

By Julie Atkinson, Executive Director, Sophia Recovery Centre

At Sophia, we continue to meet with women at the house each day, but we are also keeping busy with exciting new ways of “women helping women.” With social distancing and isolation has come the sudden blossoming of new virtual connections. Our peer recovery coach, Johanne Hall, has taken the lead in introducing Sophia women to online recovery groups and meetings that stretch across Canada, the continent, and even the world. Using platforms like Zoom, these groups allow women to share experiences and ideas with each other as they work through the 12-step recovery program.

Johanne is a wonderful guide as women begin to explore this new world. She can often be found at her computer, headphones in place, helping women navigate the technology one step at a time. As Johanne helps women find each other, she isn’t surprised when beautiful friendships, informal mentorships, and even AA sponsorships are formed as a result. These cross-border connections have allowed women in Saint John to give and receive support in equal measure.

While COVID has physically separated women in recovery from each other, it also brought them into the embrace of a welcoming worldwide recovery community - one that is always just a few clicks of the mouse away.

Are you struggling with an addiction? You are not alone. Please call or message us. We are here to help. (506) 633-8783.

www.sophiarecoverycentre.com

Your neighbours since 1854



Sisters of Charity
of the Immaculate Conception
www.sistersofcharityic.com

Waterloo-Village Neighbourhood Contact

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647-8047



Colourful Thoughts

By Ben Gillcrist, Community Schools Coordinator, St. John the Baptist/King Edward School (SJBKE)

This was going to be a “straight-up” article about winter coats (and the gracious donors who provide them), but while getting ready to write, I decided to take a picture of one of the more colourful articles we’ve been given recently. I was struck by the pretty display on this jacket, and how it stood out in my mind in the middle of a busy day. In these unprecedented hours, when people are tired, taxed, and worn down, interludes of beauty and peace become so important. You remember that these things are still present around us, to be thankful for the good people around you who are doing their best; I am so grateful to work with the resilient and amazing people I do, both within the school and in our community. We will all reach a day when we can appreciate a colourful jacket at face value, and take in a better world.

So thank you, PALS partners, for the generous jacket donation - not only are you keeping kids warm, but providing recuperative food for thought in the bargain!



Inspiring winterwear (Photo: Ben Gillcrist)

Princess Elizabeth School is awesome!



The Wall of Awesome (Photo: Jennifer Carhart)

By Jennifer Carhart, Princess Elizabeth School (PES)

While COVID-19 restrictions may be getting some of us down, PES is trying to focus on staying well and positive. Using Neil Pasricha and his work as a guide, PES is focusing on what is awesome about our school, community, and life in general! PES has written three books focusing on all the awesome things that are going on around us daily! We are even focusing as a staff on why it is awesome at PES by taking a moment to write down on our “Wall of AWESOME” the things that make our school so awesome. Focusing on positive mental health and being well is always important but especially so in a pandemic full of restrictions. As a part of the District Improvement Plan, there is a focus on the importance of mental, physical, social/emotional health. As a school, we are enjoying our published writing that we can share with one another, and the feeling of this overall sense of positive!

PALS Celebrates 20 Years!

By Krista Turnbull, Community Schools Coordinator, Seaside Park Elementary School

Right now, with everything going on in the world around us, we all need to have reasons to celebrate. When I look back over my 11 years as a community schools coordinator, memories come flooding back of the times shared with our PALS Partners. They are at the heart of the work I do to support our students. Throughout our lives, many friendships will develop. Some will fade away and others, those strong meaningful ones which bring joy into our lives, and support us when we struggle, will last. PALS are just the same, bringing the support of friendship into our schools, and spilling over into the lives of all they touch. Reaching 20 years is a significant milestone for any relationship, and certainly one to be celebrated. At Seaside Park Elementary School, we celebrate all our cherished PALS Partners and thank them for the many ways they enrich our lives.



Partnering from Kindergarten to Grade 12 and Beyond



- Partnerships
- Volunteering
- Mentoring
- Role Models
- Coaching
- Focus on Literacy
- Having Fun
- Tutoring
- Breakfast/Lunch Programs
- New Opportunities
- After School Programs
- Career Exploration
- Making a Difference



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Susan Tipper
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We ALL have something to offer!



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Your money matters: the holiday hangover



(Photo: Saint John Community Loan Fund)

By Darlene Jones, Money Matters Coordinator, Saint John Community Loan Fund

After the Christmas extravaganza, does looking at your bank balance cause you headaches and/or stomach pain, sleeplessness, or depression, anxiety or irritability? Do you find yourself saying “this cannot happen again?” Or “Why do I do this to myself?” If you relate to these statements, I think it is safe to say you are suffering from a financial hangover, a collection of unpleasant physical and mental symptoms that occur after a session of heavy consumerism.

January is typically a very long month for everyone. It is also, however, the start of a brand-new year and we have 365 days to change our future. Some simple financial changes now, and throughout the year, could be the difference between a hangover and wellbeing.

The best way to plan for the future is to create it. I would encourage you to make a plan for the year. It may seem daunting but, if you keep it simple, it will come to light. It does not require fancy materials or equipment. There is something magical that happens when you write things down.

Here are some suggestions to start:

- 1) Put your pay dates on a calendar.
- 2) Next add milestones...birthdays, anniversary, holidays, back to school, Christmas, vacation, etc. Anything that comes to mind that you know you will need money for.
- 3) Start to set money aside for the above events. Be realistic. I always suggest putting \$30/month per child away. That way you will have \$100 for birthdays, back to school, Christmas and \$60 for a special outing in the summer.

Short-term pains will lead to long-term gains. If you need help with your budget or any other financial matters please reach out to me. Remember—no matter how much or how little your income is, how you spend your money matters.

(506) 652-5626 Extension 4
darlene@loanfund.ca

PCAP, moms adapt during COVID-19

The stress and isolation of the pandemic has presented enormous challenges for Parent Child Assistance Program (PCAP) moms and families. The separation of parents from children in care and the disruption of community support programs have both been deeply impactful. The risk for substance use, family violence, and food insecurity have all increased significantly over this time, and many families are struggling. A silver lining: a number of parents have used this time to confront challenges head-on. Many families have been reunited, and moms have been more deliberately pursuing community programs and services. Since we can't do home visits, clients meet with us and other partners in the spacious Wellness Room at the HUB or in walking meetings outdoors. A grateful and humbled shout-out to our partners (there are too many to list!) who continue to lift up our community during this difficult time.

Green New Year's resolutions are proudly on display at Social Enterprise HUB!



By The HUB Green Team

Thank you to all the community members who sent in environmentally friendly resolutions for the Green Resolution Tree. Together our small acts have great impact!

(Image by Abigail Reinhart)



Have you ever had issues accessing a service or getting a bank account because you didn't have the right identification?



Tell us about your experiences in accessing a bank account or other community services and receive a **\$10 Tim Horton's gift card.**



Visit www.nbsocialpediatrics.com/id to access the survey, or email biobankproject@loanfund.ca to set up an appointment to complete the survey by phone.



"Eyeing the ID: Access to Identification as a Barrier to Banking and other Social Determinants of Health"



\$2 WEEKLY CONTINUOUS 50/50 DRAW



\$88,000 WON IN 2019



634-2011
www.sjbgclub.com



Boys & Girls Club of Saint John



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Thanks to Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP) volunteers!



Marsh Creek cleanup, autumn 2020, organized by the UNBSJ Green Team (Photo: ACAP)

By Shauna Sands, Conservation Coordinator, ACAP Saint John

Wow, what a year 2020 was! As an organization who depends on their volunteers to help with various ongoing environmental projects throughout the year, we were a bit concerned when we were hit by a global pandemic. However, our hardworking, dedicated volunteers came through and despite COVID-19 and its restrictions, ACAP Saint John provided supplies for a total of 12 cleanups throughout the Greater Saint John area, for a total of 199 volunteers! During that time, more than 1800 lbs of waste was removed and properly disposed of at the landfill.

In addition to community cleanups, our volunteers participated in seven tree-planting events, planting a total of 473 native trees, improving watercourses and wildlife habitat in Saint John. Volunteers had the opportunity to be involved in, and learn about, habitat restoration while experiencing nature first-hand and getting their hands dirty.

We want to thank each and every one of our volunteers. We could not have done it without you!



Anne Bardou plants a tree at the Caledonia Brook storm water pond in Milledgeville (Photo: ACAP)

Caring, Collaboration, Coordination: Saint John's Case Conferencing Table on Housing and Homelessness



The Table in pre-COVID times (Photo: HDC)

By Cathy Boyce, Affordable Housing Specialist, Human Development Council

Did you know that every second week in Saint John, non-profit agencies from across the city that work in housing and homelessness come together to discuss barriers and challenges to housing in the city? Bi-weekly Case Conferencing meetings play an essential role in Saint John's Coordinated Access System.

Despite not being able to meet in person, representatives from the shelters, housing programs, and the city's homelessness prevention program come together on Zoom to chat about the next steps for people experiencing homelessness to move into a home of their own. Collaboration and teamwork are what it is all about with this group of people who bring knowledge of the system and years of experience working with clients. They hope that someday there will be a housing option for everyone in our gritty little city.

Saint John is fortunate to have such a dedicated group of caring individuals working towards the greater good and supporting our neighbours who need it most.

For more information on Case Conferencing, please visit: <https://sjhdc.ca/coordinated-access/>

This group of people who bring knowledge of the system and years of experience ... hopes that someday there will be a housing option for everyone in our gritty little city

Questions about our services? Call anytime or visit us at www.BrenansFH.com

It's traditional...

There are many traditions surrounding funerals. The oldest have been with us for centuries, the newest; they're being created every day.

It's our tradition to do everything we can to ensure that each family that turns to us gets the service they expect, the respect they deserve, choices that suit their budget and everything they need to find meaning for today and hope for tomorrow.

Brenan's
FUNERAL HOMES
& CREMATORIUM



1461 Manawagonish Road
634-7425

111 Paradise Row
634-7424

152 Pettingill Road
849-2119



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Launch of new social enterprise for women Energy Auditors

Next Inc.

By Saint John Community Loan Fund

For 10 years the Enterprising Women Program at the Saint John Community Loan Fund has helped women become more self-reliant by starting their own businesses. The Loan Fund's new opportunity, NEXT Inc., focuses on entrepreneurs becoming Home Energy Auditors.

A new partnership with the Canadian Women's Foundation, Toronto, is offering the chance for women to enter the energy industry with training and support. The Loan Fund created the program in response to their ongoing effort to offer cutting-edge programing which addresses emerging industries' needs in New Brunswick. NEXT Inc. leverages this focus, adding the strong desire of New Brunswick women to start their own businesses.

Twelve applicants have now been chosen for the six-month course, which takes place online one evening a week, with spring and summer expanded home energy training sessions. The six-month journey has four phases of learning.

- Phase One: the Enterprising Women Program, focused on entrepreneurship.
- Phases Two and Three: preparing participants for the NRCAN Home Energy Auditor National Exams.
- Phase Four: hands-on work in the field with home-owners, mentored by an Energy Auditor, leading to a position in the energy industry on our Social Team.

As a social enterprise, NEXT Inc. is a two-way win: women gain careers in the energy field and the Loan Fund creates a self-funding model which will allow more women to become trained. Profits of the social enterprise will be cycled back into training for more women to discovery the power of entrepreneurship.

Diane Snelgrove, Business Advisor at the Loan Fund, will be joined by industry leaders from Blue House Energy and EnerCheck. This team of experts will mentor the 12 women of NEXT Inc. through entrepreneurship training and National Resources Canada (NRCAN) testing. Shawna Henderson, Chief Executive Officer of Blue House Energy, was the first female Energy Auditor in Canada; her years of experience will bring depth and strength to the program.

For further information on the progress of NEXT Inc. or the Loan Fund's other exciting opportunities, please contact Diane Snelgrove at 506-512-0836 or General Manager, Seth Asimakos at 506-651-0839.

Profits of the social enterprise will be cycled back into training for more women to discovery the power of entrepreneurship



Diane Snelgrove
(Photo: Loan Fund)

Social finance: Why it matters to our community

By Seth Asimakos, General Manager, Saint John Community Loan Fund

From the editor: The following is the first in an occasional series of educational articles that will shed light on some of the interesting opportunities, challenges, and solutions in Saint John's non-profit sector – those who serve our priority neighbourhoods (and beyond) to raise our community up.

Wikipedia defines social finance as “a category of financial services which aims to leverage private capital to address challenges in areas of social and environmental need.” Seth Asimakos leads us through how it works in our country and community, and why it is important.

I have been asked to do a bit of a section on social finance. Something dear to my heart. Let's start with a simple definition.

Social finance refers to the practice of making investments intended to create positive social or environmental impact, in addition to financial returns.

In simple speak this means financing for social good, not just for profit. In the case of the Saint John Community Loan Fund, this has meant taking investments from individuals, organizations, and some of our municipalities, pooling the money, and from that, lending it to individuals and organizations to create income, build assets, and become more self-reliant. The key is that the Fund is built on loans to us, from diverse sources, and we are obliged to return that money based on certain terms. Fortunately for us, our investors have rolled over their investments, maintaining our pool over time.

Over 20 years we have diversified our organizations and our financing practice. Originally we focused on the individual micro loan, helping a person become self-employed or employed. Those simple term loans were on average \$3,500. It helped our first borrower Marco ship logs he had retrieved from the bottom of the Saint John River to Michigan to be processed.

Since then we have seen the opportunity to have greater impact in investing in social enterprise, and social purpose real estate, and specifically affordable housing, where more than 4500 New Brunswickers sit on a waiting list.

(Continued on next page)

Cedar Hill - Greenwood Cemetery

Limited space still available in our Columbarium



Ask about our interest free payment plan

**Cedar Hill - Greenwood Cemetery have
Traditional and Cremation Burial Choices**



Community Partners • Community Partners • Community Partners • Community Partners • Community Partners

Social finance: Why it matters to our community

(Continued from page 10)

It's not only the type of enterprise or investee we are getting behind, but also how the financing is structured. Here are some examples of the diversity of social finance. In the last two years:

- we have provided a bridge loan to a non-profit incubator in Fredericton, structured with no monthly payment and paid out in one lump sum;
- we invested in a social entrepreneur from Moncton, building an innovative truck body to deliver fresh produce to food deserts in the food bank industry; that loan is structured as a royalty agreement, so as a unit is sold we are paid a certain amount;
- we have an equity stake, that is a share of a business creating a marketplace where companies meet the needs of those looking for Sensory Friendly shopping; in equity, if they do well we do well;
- we provided another bridge loan to help cashflow the transition from a private company to a charity that helps school children take their innovative art program;
- we created an agreement to purchase future revenue to help a couple purchase one of the oldest businesses in Saint John, in the City Market, with a specific social agreement to provide training space for non-profit clients to learn essential skills and to provide a product placement area for our Enterprising Women's products;
- and at the very end of last year, we loaned \$150,000, our largest loan to date, to a non-profit developer to acquire a 12-unit building to maintain as affordable housing in a market that is becoming increasingly unaffordable for many.

These examples are social finance in action. But we need more, here and across the country. Our objective is to scale our Fund to meet the needs in our province. Our first objective is to double in size each of the next five years, reaching \$10 million, which will ensure the Fund is sustainable and will continue to create impact over time. To enable this vision, we have important partners to have a sufficient runway as we build. These include Living SJ, McConnell Foundation, Sisters of Charity, and other angel donors.

With a big goal we need to attract bigger investments from investors. Up until last year our biggest investment was \$50,000. But last year we received an investment of \$300,000 from a foundation in Toronto. They are investing a portion of their endowment, receiving a return to continue to earn interest to enable their granting function. In the past, foundations have invested in the market, with strong index funds and bonds. Some foundations have now realized they can have double impact by both investing in social finance funds for impact while also making their grants to charities. It's really a win-win.

This work is not done in isolation and is part of a larger picture. Through our journey we have been fortunate to be involved in building a national ecosystem, first with the creation of the Canadian Community Investment Network and most recently with the incorporation of the Table for Impact Investment Practitioners. The objective is to bring those managing impact investments around the table to share practice, advocate for policy, and build capital.

We look forward to building
a best-in-class Fund for social impact



And it is no accident that as a result of the collective work of the fund managers around this table over the last decade, the Federal government took a significant step forward.

To help charitable, non-profit and other social purpose organizations access new financing, and to help connect them with private investors looking to invest in projects that will drive positive social change, the Government unveiled a commitment in their 2018 Economic Statement to make available up to \$755 million over the next 10 years to establish a Social Finance Fund. This Fund will invest in intermediaries, local funds, to build the ecosystem. In fact, the Saint John Community Loan Fund was named in the Economic Statement, which we intend to keep top of mind when the Fund starts rolling out! In addition, the Government dedicated \$50 million over two years in an Investment and Readiness stream, for social purpose organizations to improve their ability to successfully participate in the social finance market.

It is expected that a Social Finance Fund could generate up to \$2 billion in economic activity, and help create and maintain as many as 100,000 jobs over the next decade.

As part of the rollout, the Community Foundation has been managing the Investment Readiness Program funding for our region, taking applications from charities, non-profits, and private entities to develop their social enterprise plans and/or validate their models. In fact, the Saint John Community Loan Fund is partnering with the Foundation to help with the non-qualified donees (non-profits and private social enterprises). The potential is that these organizations will then be "investment ready" for further investment, that is social financing, from the Saint John Community Loan Fund.

Other important ecosystem players in the province include the Pond Deshpande Centre's B4C accelerator in Fredericton, from which many of our Launch Social investees have graduated, and our partner, the Cooperative Enterprise Council of NB in Moncton, which has been promoting and educating individuals and organizations on co-ops, community investment funds, and social enterprise development for a decade. With these partners and others around the province, we hope to build capacity for social enterprise and to finance social impact opportunities for increased and sustainable outcomes.

So the pump is primed for social finance scaling in our province. We look forward to building a best-in-class Fund for social impact investors, and for working with risk takers and dreamers who want to build stuff that creates change!



Seth Asimakos (Photo: Loan Fund)

Christmas lunch and gifts!



A Boys and Girls Club member excited to receive her gift after the Christmas lunch (Photo: Lori Doyle)

By Ben O'Neill, Special Projects and Public Relations Coordinator, The Boys and Girls Club of Saint John

This year the Boys and Girls Club, in partnership with Prince Charles School and Stone Soup, was able to provide the entire student body with toys, pyjamas, a book, and a Christmas lunch through our lunch program. We want to send a major thank you to our dedicated donors, partners, and our club community for the support we saw in 2020. We cannot express how magical you made the year.

The Boys and Girls Club works to provide every opportunity possible for our club members and looks to ensure that no young person is left behind. We look forward to working closely with our partners and our donors in 2021 to ensure that we are all doing our part to combat food insecurity through our programming.

To date our lunch program has served over 700,000 healthy meals and snacks to our club community – so from the bottom of our hearts, thank you!

News From the Hive



Bee me Kidz

By Sheila Greig, Centre Lead, Bee Me Kidz, Nick Nicolle Centre

Recently Bee Me Kidz partnered with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Saint John to share our lessons of social and emotional learning. We are very excited to be working with such a great organization and bringing our programming to a wider audience than our in-school programming and Saturday mornings.

In the Orange Phase/Red Phase we are unable to run our regular Saturday morning programs. Continue to check our Facebook and Instagram pages to stay up to date on all the buzz as we are still busy beez - or better yet, download our Bee Me Kidz App.

Hope to see you soon!

Download our Bee Me Kidz App!

**In these ever-changing times
we are hoping to be able to
once again host our annual
Saint John Exhibition.
Please stay tuned and stay safe.**



**Good wishes
&
fingers crossed
for a
healthy & happy
2021!**



Teen Resource Centre (TRC) Update



By Letti Eastwood, Drop-in Coordinator, TRC

Making the most of what we can do safely continues here at the TRC. We continue to try to provide fun, positive, and safe recreational and learning opportunities for our youth. Lately this has looked like holding more sessions with small pre-registered groups of youth for things like drop-in, tutoring, craft workshops, yoga, skating, movie nights, and anything else we can come up with to have fun and grow in a socially distanced and safe way. As always our youth have stepped up to the challenge to make the best of a tough situation; they are great about keeping in contact with staff, helping with cleaning and sanitizing, passing on important information or changes to each other and just generally keeping a good attitude. Big thank you to our youth for this!

Free cybersecurity help for non-profits from Civic Tech Saint John!

By Ben McHarg, Co-organizer, Civic Tech Saint John

Do you work with a non-profit that is hearing a lot about ransomware attacks or cybersecurity in general? Perhaps you are wondering if your computer systems and data are safe? If so, Civic Tech Saint John has an initiative that can help. In collaboration with our excellent volunteers from local IT companies and educational institutes, a Cybersecurity Health Check process has been created to help you.

We will need six to eight hours of your time to meet and collaborate virtually, but when complete, in addition to a table of your risks with proposed solutions, you will receive a cyber awareness training package for your entire team and an incident playbook for you to follow, if unfortunately you find yourself dealing with a cyber incident.

To request help, please send an email to civictechsaintjohn@gmail.com or join us virtually any Tuesday night via <https://www.meetup.com/Civic-Tech-Saint-John/>

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Newcomers
Centre



Le Centre
de nouveaux arrivants
de Saint-Jean

Free, virtual Family MakerSeries in Saint John!



(Photos: Brilliant Labs)

By Brilliant Labs

Join Brilliant Labs' free, virtual learning sessions, in partnership with the Saint John Free Public Library, East and West Branch libraries, and Bibliothèque Le Cormoran.

Thursday, March 18th (6-7 p.m.) – Bird feeders
Registration deadline: March 6th

Thursday, April 22nd (6-7 p.m.) – Mini greenhouses
Registration deadline: April 10th

Thursday, May, 20th (6-7 p.m.) – Build a rocket
Registration deadline: May 8th

Free activity kits for each virtual learning session will be available for pick-up at the library. Register online at <https://bit.ly/BLFamilyMaking>
Have questions? Email Kathy@brilliantlabs.ca.



Brilliant LABS  **LABOS Créatifs**

Around the Block interview: Carrie Tanasichuk and Harry Daley, The Community Foundation



Carrie capturing the learnings from a workshop with clients
(Photo: The Community Foundation)

The Community Foundation is part of a worldwide movement of community foundations whose objective is to help build stronger and more vibrant communities. Around the Block sat down with Carrie and Harry to find out about their new focus on helping non-profits measure their impact and thus serve their clients better.

What were your paths to The Community Foundation?

Carrie: I have a PhD. In graduate school I concentrated on applied research and program evaluation. I spent a little time in the private sector but found my niche in the non-profit sector – 15 years or so working in health, criminal justice, poverty reduction, community development. I was at the YMCA in Toronto for five years. My family moved to New Brunswick for a quality-of-life change. We moved to Saint John and we love it! I was at Living SJ for a couple of years; then I moved about a year ago to the Community Foundation. What really drew me was a chance to build capacity in our non-profit sector in Saint John. I am working with a lot of different non-profits in my job now, which I really like.

Harry: I was born and raised in Saint John, grew up on the East Side and have lived uptown about 12 years – in the South End, Saint James Street. I started working with the non-profit sector in Saint John soon after I graduated from UNB, Renaissance College. I volunteered at the Teen Resource Centre (TRC), then worked there. I was offered an opportunity with The Learning Exchange as the job developer when the WorkLinks program started - an amazing experience, for four years. I made the move back to the TRC to work for the Pathways to Education program. I really love working with youth. There were great opportunities to focus on engaging youth in evaluating programs and self-reflection, so I honed my skills there as a facilitator. I've been involved with the Community Foundation for close to 10 years, sitting on the grant review committee and more recently as a board member. In March 2020 the Impact Measurement and Evaluation committee started and I was really interested in contributing my skillsets to this. I started part-time and just recently came on full-time.

How did the Community Foundation pivot during COVID?

Harry: COVID disproportionately impacted the populations that many organizations we work with serve and support. Some organizations had their funding significantly impacted because they can't run their fundraising activities, and national funding organizations may have scaled back. They also had to adapt, pivot, and work twice as hard to meet the needs of the people they support. We were able to help them through the Emergency Community Support Fund, an initiative of the Community Foundations of Canada. We received more than

\$500,000 for Greater Saint John populations and the organizations that work with them. We were able to get that money out the door quickly to those organizations. [See below]

That will be really interesting to our readers! Carrie, how did joining the Community Foundation and doing a new job right at the start of COVID impact your new role?

Carrie: Harry and I were hired one week before the world shut down! So it was a little slow to start, which was a good thing because it gave us time to reflect and be very intentional in what we wanted to create. By the time people could re-enter the world we had a strong understanding of how we wanted to work with organizations.

Please talk about the program in which you are helping non-profits with evaluation skills.

Carrie: The Community Foundation saw that there were many organizations doing great work in the community but that they didn't always have the capacity to tell the story of the impact of their work - to themselves, potential participants, volunteers, or funders. So we created a new branch, Impact Measurement and Evaluation. We don't go in and do a research project, write a report, and then leave. We partner with the organization to understand what they're doing already - what's working well, what are some gaps they want to fill, how we can help design a way we can work with them to help build their capacity. We work as coaches. A coach doesn't play; a coach helps the players become the best players they can be. We think of ourselves as evaluation coaches who give ideas and encouragement and point them in the right direction, so when we leave they can do it themselves. When there is a grant, we build in learning - that would just be part of the granting program. The other piece is the evaluation coaching, whether it's a workshop, whether we go in one-on-one with the organization and maybe develop tools. That, we do charge for - but we work with the organizations to understand what kind of support they need and how we can make it work with whatever budget they have.

So you're helping them tell their stories better. Do you get into how they can use their data for that?

Carrie: Absolutely! Some organizations are not using data to its full potential. We try to help them use it to improve their programming. They might not have tools for capturing data so we come in and say, let's help you create a tool. Sometimes they say surveys are good at giving us numbers, but we don't feel they're capturing the full extent of what's happening in the programs. We can work with them to design a more qualitative way of capturing their impact - maybe interviews, or a way of telling stories that isn't just numbers.

How can the person reading this article see the benefit for themselves in what you're doing?

Harry: We have some principles about the way that we work. The work that the organizations do needs to be accessible to the population that they work with. So if it's young people, they need to be talking to them and engaging them. We truly believe that they are the ones that have the information; they're the ones who should be in the driver's seat of decision-making.

So what I'm hearing is power to the people.

Harry: That sums it up for sure.

Carrie: Organizations sometimes think evaluation is something between them and donors, but really it's measuring their effect so that they can better serve the people that use their program.

The Emergency Community Support Fund (ECSF)

The Community Foundation distributed approximately \$510,000 June-November 2020 to support organizations working with vulnerable populations impacted by COVID-19. Some organizations funded for projects focused on the priority neighbourhoods: Avenue B, Outflow, Community Christmas Exchange, the Learning Exchange, TRC/ Pathways to Education, and Elizabeth Fry.

2020 - change, challenges, and community sharing at Romero House



The uplifting window at Romero House (Photo: Romero House)

Evelyn McNulty

And what a year it was... an extremely busy, labour-filled, exhausting year of preparing and serving a record-breaking number of meals. Also, a very humbling year of alleviating fears, lifting spirits, and sharing whatever extra comforts we could with those coming for a meal and missing some companionship.

2020 was a year of distinction for us for the number of meals we served but more importantly it has shown us the true strength of our community and reinforced for us the belief that in order to thrive we all must be valued.

Total meals served in 2020 = 106,644 (91,568 of which were served “out the window”). For reference, the 2019 total was 82,402.

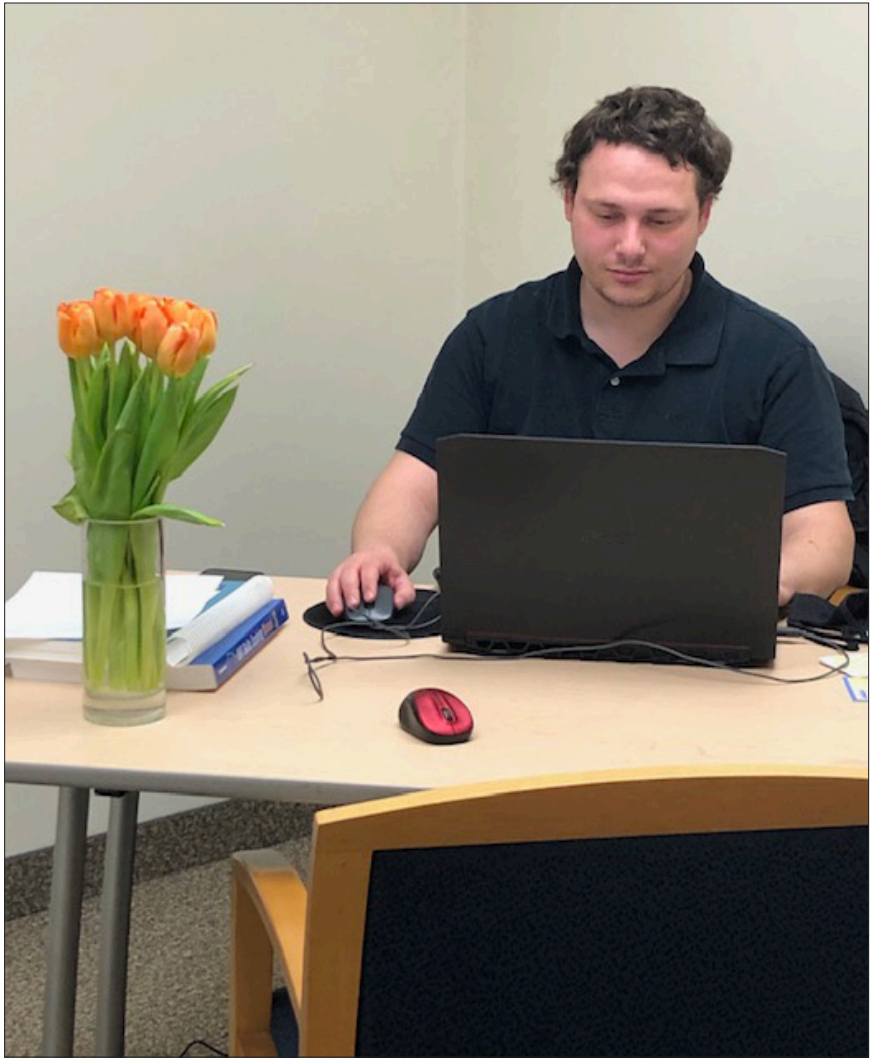
Monthly Breakdown:

- January 2020 = 5,969
- February 2020= 6,204
- March 2020=. 7,359 (4,456 of these out the window)
- April 2020= 8,333
- May 2020= 8,169
- June 2020= 8,581
- July 2020= 9,456
- August 2020= 9,814
- September 2020= 10,625
- October 2020= 10,666
- November 2020= 11,185
- December 2020= 10,283
- 2020 Total= 106,644
- January 2021= 10,461

January 2020: 5,969 meals served

January 2021:
10,461

Welcome, Adam Saunders!



Adam Saunders (Photo: EFry)

By Aubrey Heber, Case Manager, EFry

The Elizabeth Fry Society of New Brunswick (EFry) is excited to welcome new team member Adam Saunders. Coming to us as a student placement from ONE Change, Adam will be using his keen video editing skills over the next 18 weeks to story board, direct, and edit videos that will be useful for women arriving in the Saint John community, potentially after a period of incarceration.

When a woman arrives in the community, she can face many new changes and challenges. To help bridge this gap, Adam will be creating welcoming, short videos to act as ice breakers on important topics such as finding your way around town, cooking on a budget, as well as meet and greet with staff at EFry and other supporting community organizations that we collaborate with.

Adam is passionate about woodworking. He hopes to merge his skills in video editing and digital marketing to create his own business that produces products such as game boards, basic furniture, and cosplay weaponry.

We are excited to work with Adam to create a sense of safety and community from which women are inspired to take new steps in their life journey. Check out our new website to learn more! Efrynb.ca



Christmas at Brunswick Drive



Connie Hachey, Sue Fanjoy, Debbie Reynolds, Richard Northorp, Brenda Northorp (Photo: Ann Main)

By Richard Northorp, Vice Chair, Brunswick Drive Tenants Association (BDTA)

This was the first Christmas in a few years that we put up a tree and decorations in the lobby. The tenants were very happy. My wife Brenda and I dressed up along with three helpers to deliver gift bags supplied by Social Development to every apartment. We added plenty of goodies to the bags. Tenants were very delighted.



Connie Hachey, Joyce Thorne, Richard Northorp, Debbie Reynolds, Pauline Long, Brenda Northorp (Photo: Ann White)

Christmas at Charlton Place/Stephenson Tower

By Debbie McLeod, Community Involvement Coordinator, Social Development (Housing)

The volunteers from Charlton Place/Stephenson Tower were hard at work a week before Christmas putting together 400 Christmas bags which were delivered to seniors.

Thank you to the third-year nursing students from the University of New Brunswick Saint John as they put together a toolkit to help seniors cope with COVID. This toolkit had lots of information about COVID, mental fitness games, colouring pages, important support phone numbers, and inspirational stories. The toolkit was included in the bag, which was then filled with lots of yummy, wintery treats.

Thank you to Beltone (Laura and Pam) for their generous donation which helped with the number of goodies we could provide to each senior. Some of the buildings added to the bags before they delivered them door to door.

Thank you to everyone involved in this project as I know how grateful the seniors were when they received their Christmas bags!



Left to right: volunteers Charlie, Jean, Sandra, Mary Ann, Kimberly (Photo: Debbie McLeod)

We Made It Through!

By Gerri Gautreau, Needle Knockers Member

The Needle Knockers Knitting Circle from Stephenson Tower and Charlton Place made it through the COVID shutdown. Instead of meeting on Wednesday afternoons for a cup of tea and a chat we knit in our apartments.

We knit enough to donate to four non-profit groups: First Steps, Fresh Start, Coverdale Centre, and Outflow Ministries. All the groups were very pleased to receive homemade hats, mitts, scarves, and blankets.

We do not do this alone. We want to thank all the people who donate yarn to our group. We really appreciate the donations. We are always looking for more yarn and knitters.

Hope this new year will be a happier and healthier year for all of us.

Left: Gerri Gautreau and Sandra James in pre-COVID days, selling their knitting at a craft sale to raise money for community groups that they donate to each year (Photo: Debbie McLeod)



Retirements/Retraites



Brian Marks (Photo: Debbie McLeod)

By Debbie McLeod, Community Involvement Coordinator, Social Development (Housing)

Congratulations to Brian Marks, Regional Director of Social Development Region 2, on his retirement. Brian has been with Social Development for 18 years. He started his career as a Program Delivery Manager overseeing housing programs, and programs and services at Agar.

Brian has made a huge impact on the people we have the pleasure of serving every day. Brian has been the Regional Director for the last three years of his career, and we thank him for all his leadership and support. Good luck to Brian on his retirement. Let's hope there is lots of family time and golf in his future.

Par Jonathan Poirier, Agent des communications et relations publiques, ARCf (Association Régionale de la Communauté francophone) de Saint-Jean

Le 17 décembre dernier, l'ARCf a souligné les 20 années de service d'Alvine Savoie avant son départ en lui remettant une lithographie et une montre personnalisée. Tu vas nous manquer Alvine, nous te souhaitons beaucoup de succès pour 2021!



Alvine Savoie (Crédit: Jonathan Poirier)

New Stroke Navigation Program being offered in Saint John



By Taylor Devlin, Stroke Navigator (Saint John and Charlotte County), Heart and Stroke Foundation of New Brunswick

Stroke recovery can be difficult.

That's why the Heart and Stroke Foundation of New Brunswick is proud to be offering our no-charge Stroke Navigation program with support from the Healthy Seniors Pilot Project Grant.

This service is specifically designed to help individuals to adjust to life back in the community after experiencing a stroke.

Our Stroke Navigators are ready to support recovery goals, to provide resources for the management of the effects of stroke, and to offer tools and strategies to navigate the healthcare system.

Our Stroke Navigators can...

- Support your transition between the hospital and the community by connecting you with services and programs in your area.
- Help you to better understand your stroke and its effects, find strategies to prevent future strokes, and develop skills to help you manage your condition.
- Collaborate with you through a partnership approach to help you stay motivated toward reaching your recovery goals.
- Find resources and strategies to help you participate in activities such as daily tasks, recreation, and socializing.
- Provide you with consistent care throughout your recovery journey that is tailored to your preferences, needs, and values.

Though stroke recovery can be a long road, it doesn't have to be so hard. The Heart and Stroke Foundation of New Brunswick is here to help.

For More Information:

Taylor Devlin

1-506-634-1620

heart.stroke@hsf.nb.ca

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of New Brunswick is proud to be offering our *no-charge* Stroke Navigation program with support from the Healthy Seniors Pilot Project Grant



PRUDE celebrates 40 years!



(Images: PRUDE)

By Lin Zhang, Community Engagement Officer, PRUDE Inc.
(Pride of Race, Unity and Dignity through Education)

PRUDE Inc. was incorporated in the City of Saint John, New Brunswick, in 1981. PRUDE Inc. is a home for every race to grow.

We believe that diversity and equity matter. We focus on education of both newcomers and Canadian-born individuals, communities, and businesses to build bridges to understanding within the Saint John community. We believe that “Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.” (Rumi)

We are celebrating our 40th anniversary throughout 2021. Follow PRUDE Inc.’s activities in February as we celebrate Black History Month! We’re working closely with the New Brunswick Black History Society to bring you our Speaker Series, a series of interactive online talks by 7-9 presenters from around the province.

Our guest presenters will engage you with information on such topics as Black Loyalist history, PRUDE’s establishment in 1981, stories from the local Black community, the Willow Grove settlement, N.B. Black cemeteries, poetry and book readings, and more!

“Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.”



Black History Month at the Library!



TD presents
présente

Black History Month
Mois de l'histoire des Noirs

Discussion Panel Series **Une série des panels**

Pioneers of the Past Feb. 6th, 2:30 pm	Pionniers du passé 6 févr., 14 h 30
Voices of Today Feb. 13th, 2:30 pm	Des voix d'aujourd'hui 13 févr., 14 h 30
Voices of Change Feb. 20th, 2:30 pm	Des voix du changement 20 févr., 14 h 30



New Brunswick
Public Library
Service

Service des
bibliothèques publiques
du Nouveau-Brunswick



New Brunswick
Public Libraries
Foundation

Fondation des
bibliothèques publiques
du Nouveau-Brunswick

By Daniel Teed, Saint John Free Public Library (SJFPL)

Join us at the SJFPL as we celebrate Black History Month! We’re hosting an exciting virtual panel discussion series; we started with Pioneers of the Past, and upcoming are Voices of Today and Voices of Change. We have gathered an exciting and diverse group of speakers from the black community whose voices, backgrounds, and experiences will help to inspire and inform fellow New Brunswickers.

These discussions will be live-streamed through the public library’s Facebook page on Saturdays at 2:30. They will be free to watch and no registration is required.

We will also have informational posters from the University of New Brunswick and from the New Brunswick Black History Society throughout the library with interesting biographies of black New Brunswickers. Keep an eye on the library’s Facebook page for more information!

Here’s the schedule of remaining programs:

- Sat. Feb 13th at 2:30 p.m.: Voices of Today
- Sat. Feb 20th at 2:30 p.m.: Voices of Change



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University of New Brunswick Saint John's (UNBSJ) Promise Partnership celebrates 10-year anniversary



A tree-planting ceremony, held in October at Hazen White-St. Francis School, marks the 10th anniversary of the UNB Saint John Promise Partnership and honours those who support the program. (Photo: Rob Blanchard/UNB)

By UNBSJ

Toward the end of 2020, UNBSJ's Promise Partnership marked a decade of supporting the community.

Launched in 2010, the Promise Partnership connects UNBSJ with the local community through a number of programs, all aimed at closing educational attainment gaps associated with low socio-economic status.

The initiative's student mentoring program was the first program launched by the Promise Partnership and pairs children from Hazen White/St. Francis School with UNBSJ volunteers to provide educational support through structured literacy activities.

As part of the anniversary celebrations, a tree was planted at Hazen White/St. Francis School in honour of project donors Emera NB. The theme of the 10-year anniversary was "We Grow in Mentoring," with the planting of the tree symbolizing the growth that has taken place in the Hazen White/St. Francis students as a result of the mentoring program.

**The theme of the 10-year anniversary was
"We Grow in Mentoring"**



Around The Block Team (Issue 75)

Publisher: Human Development Council

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Lower South End: Mary LeSage/Kaya Sleep

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Waterloo Village: Penni Eisenhauer

Lower West Side: Dustin Leclerc/Kate Worden

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Layout and design: Lorna Brown and Juanita Black

"Thank you, Parkland!" from the Anglin Drive Tenants Association



Anglin Drive Christmas bags
(Photo: T. Roy)

By T. Roy

The Anglin Drive Tenants Association would like to give a special thank you to Parkland Retirement Living (Shannex) Saint John. Sadly, Shannex has been battling with some cases of COVID-19 over the past couple of months.

Although they have been under immense stress, they still thought of our little community during the hectic Christmas season. They have graciously donated money for three years to our Tenants Association. Their kind donations help us put together Christmas care packages for our local children.

All of us from the Anglin Drive area send our well wishes and hopes for speedy recoveries and a healthy, happy New Year.

In our April issue...

- The food purchase contest returns!
- The May municipal election - what you need to know.
- News from our communities, in their own words.

Let us know what you think of *Around the Block*.

It's YOUR voice!

sjcommunitynewspaper@gmail.com

Rental housing: unavailable + unaffordable + pandemic = time for action



Randy Hatfield (Photo: Laura Foote)

By Randy Hatfield, Executive Director, Human Development Council

Saint John has always struggled with the availability and affordability of rental units. In 2020, there was a waiting list for housing in the region of over 1100 people - and 42% of those on the waiting list were families with children. When families with children can't afford or find housing, they resort to substandard, overpriced, unsuitable accommodation.

There is a declining vacancy rate in our city coupled with increasing rents, and the global pandemic is making the situation particularly acute. COVID-19 has affected our economy and disproportionately impacted vulnerable sections of our population – those with low fixed incomes, lone-parent families headed by females, and people with disabilities.

We also know that certain types of workers are more vulnerable. Those who are employed in the hospitality and accommodation industry, participating in the gig economy, or are precariously employed are having increased financial struggles on top of low wages. They are dealing with rent inflation and food inflation, along with overall increases in the cost of living. In many cases, incomes are simply not keeping pace - or are decreasing or even disappearing.

The current situation has an impact on our neighbourhoods. Huge rent increases will force those with low fixed incomes to try to find less expensive accommodation. And that is often found in places that are underserved by public transportation and far removed from the services that people need.

We know that emergency shelter use remains at near capacity in this community. We also know that over the last year we have been successful in transitioning many shelter users into housing, so many of this year's shelter users are new to homelessness. Faces we haven't seen before, of people newly struggling. We need to work on homelessness *prevention* - preventing people from having to use shelters by ensuring people have housing and can afford to stay in it.

This is a crisis.

Social assistance rates in this province remain too low. Yes, benefits have flowed through the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and its successor, but that's income replacement for those that *have* employment income. Those on social assistance or disability supports haven't had the help that others have had.

This is a crisis

Nova Scotia, our neighbouring province, addressed this situation in November. They introduced a 2% cap on rental increases for existing tenants. They also introduced a ban on "renovictions" – when landlords serve tenants with notices of eviction for the purpose of renovations. This ban is short-lived: it is meant to get people through the pandemic. But it ensures that those who are currently housed and paying their rents can remain where they are and can count on modest increases in rent, rather than the huge amounts that have been reported in the media on the part of some individuals. *New Brunswick tenants deserve similar consideration.*

The short-term solution is a moratorium on evictions and a cap on rent increases, as in Nova Scotia. Rent controls have been described as a blunt instrument. Developers and landlords will claim that they have to increase rents to meet their fixed costs and make a profit. But the impact of this global pandemic requires immediate short-term measures so that people can remain properly housed.

In the long term we have to work on incomes, and we have to work on income supports. It's important to ensure that people have sufficient means to *afford* rents. Workers deserve a Living Wage.

We are joining the New Brunswick Coalition for Tenants' Rights to urge the government to respond to the crisis. They and anti-poverty activists and others are calling for urgent responses to an unregulated market.

As the Coalition states: "Improving support for tenants during the pandemic will serve as both a response to the numerous financial hardships brought on or exacerbated by the pandemic and will support the continued efforts of public health to stop the spread of COVID-19 in New Brunswick."

We would welcome any reader to send us an opinion. Send us your stories. Tell us about the impact of COVID on your rental situation. We want to compile evidence to show that this is having a serious impact on renters in our neighbourhoods.

The voice of tenants needs to be heard – loudly!

Get it touch by emailing info@sjhdc.ca or calling 506 634-1673.



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