



Around *the* Block



Issue 80 December 2021/January 2022 sjcommunitynewspaper@gmail.com

Published six times a year by the Human Development Council

New positions in the neighbourhoods



Left to right: Mary, Tim, Rachel, and Kyla (Photo: Christa Cramm)

By **Mary LeSage, Tim Chaffey, Rachel Milne, and Kyla Scott-MacBeth**

Our job as Neighbourhood Developers is to be a resource referral source for residents and to assist with whatever challenges or issues you may be facing. We work with you on your journey to make sure you have access to services in the community and provide support to you during this process. Issues someone may come to us with can include goal setting, needing help filling out paperwork, finding local programs to meet basic needs, etc. If there is anything we can work together on to achieve for you or your family, do not hesitate to email or pop into one of our locations!

Mary - PULSE Inc.:
pulsedeveloper.lesage@gmail.com, 632-6807

Tim - Carleton Community Centre:
tim@carletoncommunitycentre.ca, 658-2920

Rachel - Crescent Valley Resource Centre:
cvrc.milne@gmail.com, 693-8513

Kyla - ONE Change Inc.:
Developer@onechange.ca, 658-2980

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SAINT JOHN



Celebrating francophone immigration



Mabela a préparé des beignets congolais. (Crédit : Jonathan Poirier)
Mabela prepared Congolese doughnuts (Photo: Jonathan Poirier)

By **Jonathan Poirier, Communications Officer, ARCf de Saint-Jean**

From November 7th to 13th, the Association Régionale de la Communauté francophone de Saint-Jean (ARCf) celebrated the importance of Francophone immigration to the region's community. With 25% of its employees coming from all over the world, the organization has recognized their essential contribution to Saint John's Francophonie. **Read the full story in English on page 14.**
Lire l'article complet en français à la page 14.

From the Editor's desk:

ATB - what it means to you

Lorna Brown, sjcommunitynewspaper@gmail.com

In Issue 79 we invited you to write a line or two about what *Around the Block* means to you and to share it with us. Here are the three winners of gift cards and some of their wonderful words.

Jannette Jarvis:

I have been reading this publication since it came out. 13 Anniversaries later this one paper I will read cover to cover as there are always interesting things going on. And the contribution keeps me informed by those who live in each part of their community. You are the best, better than our local newspaper - this one is way better. Thank you. You put a name with a face with each story - well received. You're awesome. Happy 13th anniversary and I hope to be reading this publication for many years to come. I wouldn't change anything; it's not broken, so why fix it? Keep up the great work.

Rebekah Pearce:

ATB is the lifeblood of communication in Saint John. For a city that prides itself on word of mouth, only ATB provides the information to survive and help with our responsibilities and help us learn and grow along the way.

Beth Roy:

I've just finished reading the October 2021 edition of *Around the Block*. What a wonderful resource for people in the neighbourhood to get the information they need. I especially appreciate the human interest stories and abundance of photos. ... The staff you have working on the paper are great to deal with and we certainly appreciate all you do for the community.

**

Thanks for your contributions, Jannette, Rebekah, and Beth! *Around the Block* is a voice for everyone. Tell us what you think - we'd love to hear from you. See page 18 for how to reach us.

Meet Shane, ONE Future: Digital Media Marketing Through Storytelling



Shane Winnie (Photo: Jill Richards-Cook)

By Jill Richards-Cook, Coordinator, ONE Future

Meet Shane Winnie, a forever resident and familiar face around the Old North End. Shane is a 2021 ONE Future Digital Marketing Through Storytelling participant, who completed his training at ONE Change Inc. at the end of August.

Shane describes his life as “literally lying on my couch 24/7” before taking part in the ONE Future program. He feels that ONE Future has not only given him some great digital media marketing training but has also assisted with his shyness.

Shane, who has a passion for videography and sports, especially hockey, is on work placement with the Saint John Sea Dogs. Working with the Saint John Sea Dogs is “a dream come true” for Shane who does everything from shooting photos and creating content, to working social media accounts and helping with set up for game days. One of his greatest moments on the job so far was the day the Sea Dogs announced that they would be hosting the Memorial Cup in 2022!

Please join us wishing good luck to the Sea Dogs, and if you see Shane at the games be sure to give him a big wave!



The Honourable Trevor Holder MLA Portland - Simonds

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Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday: 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Friday: Closed



Tinker Tuesdays at ONE Change!



(Photo: Jonathan Driscoll)

By Jonathan Driscoll, ONE Change

Tinker Tuesdays is every Tuesday from 6-7 p.m. This program is designed to engage youth and teens and inspire them to open their minds to something more; this could be creating their very own video game with code or even making an action figure that can move with sound or even light! These are just some of the cool and creative things we do here each Tuesday. Since the start of this program in the last week of September the youth have come up with so much inspiring stuff! For the first month it was Halloween and learning to use the 3D printer to create some cool spooky things they created all on their own, using the power of imagination. Recently they have started using computer code, Micro-Bits and more to create their very own board games and then 3D print all the pieces they need. I have had parents come up to me after the program and say some wonderful things like “Thank you for inspiring my child to want to do more family time with the board game” and “Since my child has gone to the program, they are more open and willing to participate in other activities.” Sparking someone’s imagination today can mean a big outlook on the future. If you know a youth that would benefit from this program or any we offer check us out on Facebook to find a program that best fits you and stop by our lobby to register.

Kyla Scott-McBeth: ONE Change Neighbourhood Developer

By Christa Petts, ONE Change

We would like to introduce our new Neighbourhood Developer, Kyla Scott-McBeth. Kyla joined our team in September. Along with other Neighbourhood Developers, she will be advocating for all neighbourhoods.

Kyla will be available to support North End residents with many resources, connecting residents with community resources and programs - finding resources to assist residents to meet the challenges of everyday life. She will be able to assist with resume building, applying for benefits, and developing goals for community residents.

You can reach Kyla at 658-2980 if you would like to make an appointment to see her. (Photo: submitted)



North Neighbourhood Contact

Christa Petts
christa.onec@gmail
Nick Nicolle Community Centre
85 Durham Street
658-2980



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

By PULSE

New hours at PULSE!

Visit us Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Stop in and visit our staff and volunteers.

Vaccination lamination

Need your vaccination record laminated and made to fit into your wallet? Stop in and visit Lisa in the office and she can resize and laminate a copy for you to keep in your wallet at no charge. Donations are appreciated.

Tax season is over but that doesn't mean we are not here for you; we are open year-round. Drop off your taxes and pick up in two to three business days.

Low-income seniors, don't forget we can apply online for the Low Income \$400 Seniors Benefit. Deadline to apply is December 31st, 2021. As always, we ask that you call ahead for an appointment to lessen your wait time in the building.

Monthly calendars available! Next time you stop in don't forget to grab a monthly calendar to keep track of the comings and goings at PULSE!

SJ Food Purchasing Order - Looking for affordable veggies? SJ Food Purchasing offers once per month \$15 and \$25 food orders. Money can be dropped off to PULSE or e-transferred to:

Martha.MacLean@HorizonNB.ca
(please include name, phone number, and pickup location).

Money is due on the second Friday of the month; pick up your order on the following Friday between 12 p.m. and 4 p.m.*

*If there are five weeks in a month, money is due on the third Friday and pick-up is the following Friday between 12 p.m. and 4 p.m.

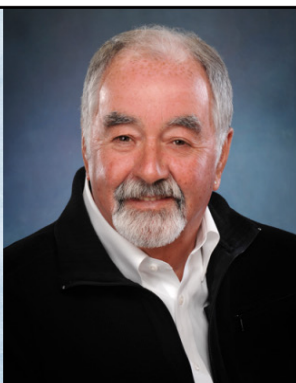
Internet Access - PULSE has a tablet and laptop available at no cost for residents' use for accessing appointments, job searches, and printing resumes or forms. Please call ahead to schedule: (506) 632-6807. Limited to 30 minutes.

Our nurse is available upon request as always! Call us at (506) 632-6807 to schedule.



Gerry Lowe
Ward 3 City Councillor

Email: Gerry.Lowe@saintjohn.ca
Phone: 639-0969



PULSE - we've got a (true!) friend



Home base for kind people (Photo: Ben Gillcrist)

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

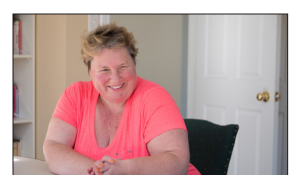
The pandemic has tested so much of what society is built upon, to the very foundation. If ever there was a time to see who "has our back," it is surely now. For SJBKE, the proof has come from the incredible network of partners we are blessed with, all of whom have taken the pandemic in stride and risen to the occasion for us and our children. In this article I would like to take a moment to celebrate one of these, our neighbourhood friends "down Wentworth" at PULSE.

PULSE (People United in the Lower South End) advocates for - and assists - those in need in our community. More than this, they add such a personal touch to their work, turning no one away and making each interaction special. This commitment is never better illustrated than through the long-standing relationship fostered with SJBKE School. It's of the greatest comfort to know that when our own outreach needs a stretch or a helping hand, Mary LeSage and her amazing crew are but a phone call away. They surely have our "pulse," and, after many blessed years of association, I think we have theirs, too.

**Thank you, dear friends,
for all you do and who you are.**

**South
Neighbourhood Contact**

Mary LeSage
pulseinc@bellaliant.com
251 Wentworth Street
632-6807



Healthy breakfast at CVRC



A healthy and delicious breakfast (Photo: Olivia Clancy)

By Olivia Clancy, Food Security Coordinator, Crescent Valley Resource Centre

Do you like breakfast as much as we do? On Wednesday and Friday mornings, the Crescent Valley Resource Centre offers a free healthy breakfast to go. The breakfasts contain various items, including muffins, cheese, yogurt, fruit, and of course you can't forget the coffee! If you are nearby and looking for a hot beverage in the morning, come and say hello between 9 and 10 a.m.

This takeout-style breakfast began in September 2020 as a response to the COVID-19 restrictions and will continue in this format for a while yet. If you are interested in more information about the food programs at the Crescent Valley Resource Centre, please visit our website (<https://crescentvalleyresourcecentre.ca/>) or our Facebook page (@cvrcsj). We always have lots going on! Thank you to Second Harvest for funding our breakfast program.

Youth Enhancement Program (YEP) supports wellness at HWSF



HWSF students receive a donation (Photo: submitted by YEP)

By Ann Barrett, Secretary/Treasurer, YEP

The Youth Enhancement Program Inc. (YEP) is a charitable organization that seeks funding to help supplement the Hazen White-St. Francis School (HWSF) nutritional programs. We have been very fortunate this year to receive three wonderful contributions. The NB Children's Foundation granted us \$14,000 to help supplement their nutritious breakfast, to provide two lunches a week, healthy snacks, and emergency food. We also received \$2600 from the SJ Greater Community Foundation to run an after-school healthy cooking program. Also, a former art teacher, Octavio Ribeiro, donated \$5000 to the nutrition programs. Thank you all for your wonderful support.

Crescent Valley needle box



Needle box on the CVRC, MacLaren Boulevard (Photo: CVRC)

By Rachel Milne, Neighbourhood Developer, Crescent Valley Resource Centre (CVRC)

Did you know? New Brunswick has the second-highest rate of intravenous drug use in Canada.

Crescent Valley now has a safe needle disposal box located outside of the CVRC building at 130 MacLaren Boulevard. You can find it by going in the driveway across from the Splash Pad. This box allows people to safely dispose of needles they have used or found outside.

PLEASE, be very careful if you choose to dispose of a found needle on your own. Do not touch them with your bare hand. If you would rather not dispose of it on your own, you can call 648-4455 and a representative from the City will come and dispose of them.

In the interest of safety, talk to your children, grandchildren, etc., to warn them to stay away from any needles they may find and to immediately tell an adult they trust if they see one.

Crescent Valley Neighbourhood Contact

Anne Driscoll
CVRC.driscoll@gmail.com
130 MacLaren Blvd.
693-8513



Food pantry at the Carleton



Tim at the pantry (Photo: Kate Worden)

**By Tim Chaffey, Neighbourhood Developer,
Carleton Community Centre (CCC)**

Have you had an unexpected event causing you to be short on food? Do you need help making food last until next payday or your next available foodbank day? Here at the Carleton, we can help! With our emergency food pantry available by appointment, we can bridge the gap.

**Reach out to Tim for assistance:
call (506) 658-2920
or email tim@carletoncommunitycentre.ca**



Terry Fox Walk at Seaside Park Elementary School

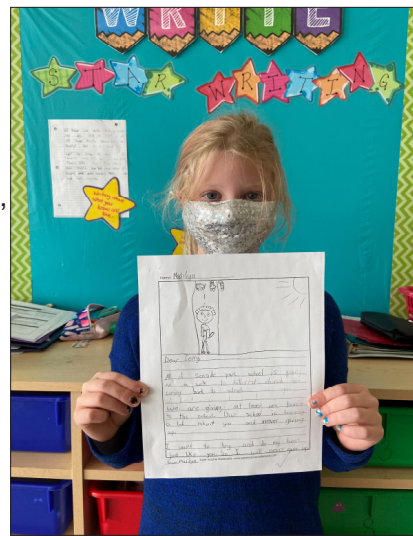
Dear Terry,

All of Seaside Park School is going on a walk to Hillcrest Church and coming back to school. We are giving at least one toonie to the school. Our school is learning a lot about you and never giving up. I want to try and do my best, just like you. So I will never give up.

From Madilyn

Letter by: Madilyn, grade 4 student at
Seaside Park Elementary School

Photo of Madilyn provided by:
K. Springthorpe



Memorial trees at Seaside Park



Mrs. Lee's Grade 2 class by the Vimy Oak tree (Photo: Krista Turnbull)

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

We are so fortunate at our school to have developed a wonderful partnership with Jim Landry, the Executive Director of Landscape New Brunswick. Jim is fondly referred to as "our tree guy." He has led the planting of many memorial trees at our school, and has been no stranger to our outdoor classroom over the past few years. Recently Jim did some work on our memorial trees, along with some enthusiastic student helpers. In our outdoor classroom, we have a Ginkgo tree, dedicated to the memory of Constable Michael Hebert. At our school sign we have a beautiful Vimy Oak, which we planted the month our school opened with our dear friends at Ridgewood Veterans' Wing. In our playground we have a lovely flowering crab, dedicated to the memory of our dear friend, Gerry Mabey. It has been wonderful to be outside learning about our trees, and taking care of them with Jim. Mrs. Lee's Grade 2 class recently planted perennial geraniums by our Vimy Oak tree.



West Side Neighbourhood Contact

Dustin Leclerc
director@carletoncommunitycentre.ca
120 Market Place, Saint John NB
E2M0E1
506 658-2920



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

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at side of building facing Church

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Fax: (506) 643-2999
Dorothy.Shephard@gnb.ca
www.gnb.ca



The PCAP team (Photo: submitted)

Happy Anniversary

By PCAP

The Parent-Child Assistance Program (PCAP) is celebrating three years since launching in Waterloo Village! Since then, we have become immersed in the community, regularly meeting with clients, other service providers, and residents. Our office, in the Wheelhouse at 105 Prince Edward Street, has become known for our windows full of plants and our friendly waves.

Over the last three years, we have received over 110 referrals and 65 women have enrolled in the program. Currently, we have 51 mothers actively engaged and those women collectively have 90 beautiful children and babies. This November we celebrated our first five PCAP graduates!

PCAP Advocates work with women to help them identify their personal goals for a positive and healthy family environment. We continue to take referrals – if you are interested call us at 214-1186.

Allies amongst us



Josh Redburn at the Teen Resource Centre on Richmond Street, where he provides mental health outreach services to young adults expressing a need for support (Photo: Corey Haines)

By Callie Mackenzie, Project Manager,
Human Development Council

Between COVID-19, winter's onset, school closures, scarce resources and long waitlists, the demand for mental health support far outweighs the supply. However, with coaches at the Saint John Learning Exchange, case managers at the Teen Resource Centre, and our network's newest addition, social worker Josh Redburn, young adults (aged 15-30) can connect with a system of support that helps keep them afloat.

Josh began as a Mental Health Outreach Coordinator in January 2021 with the Urban Youth Education and Employment Service and both the men's and women's shelters, and soon offered outreach to any youth who came through the TRC and expressed a need for counselling.

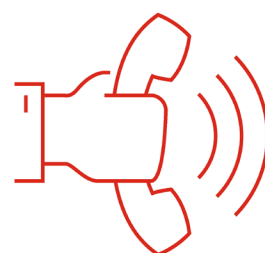
Josh meets people where they are, without judgement, and with a focus on solutions. Josh creates an atmosphere where "I help individuals heal from past pains so they can live in the present and strive for tomorrow, [to] navigate away from strictly surviving to being able to thrive." The struggles continue, but with people like Josh in our community there is light amidst the darkness.



Holiday Countdown



www.sjbgclub.com



Expanding service to be
there for everyone in Canada.

Dial 2-1-1 or visit 211.ca



HELP STARTS HERE



The Honorable Arlene Dunn
MLA Saint John Harbour

Constituency Office: Mercantile Centre
55 Union Street, Suite 140
Saint John, NB E2L 5B7

Phone: (506) 643-6138
Email: arlene.dunn@gnb.ca



Waterloo-Village
Neighbourhood Contact

Penni Eisenhauer
commorg.penni@gmail.com
Saint John Learning Exchange
139 Prince Edward Street
647-8047



PALS En Route to Success update

By Michael Whelton, PALS En Route to Success Lead

PALS En Route to Success welcomes Atlantic Wallboard, Limited as partners for a second time by providing a work experience placement for high school student Tim Beck who is in grade 12 at St. Malachy’s Memorial High School, Anglophone South School District (ASD-S).



Under the watchful eye of his Workplace Mentors, Josiah Wilcox and Alan Pizzey, Tim has been exposed to the state-of-the-art “green” gypsum wallboard manufacturing facility. He is gaining valuable work experience while learning some job-specific skills.

As one of several workplaces participating in the PALS En Route to Success program, Atlantic Wallboard is a great example of how a worksite, partnering with a student from PALS En Route to Success, can make a positive difference in the life of a student.
Above: Tim and Josiah troubleshooting a plumbing issue at the Atlantic Wallboard facility (Photo: PALS)

It takes a village - and in this case Waterloo Village!

By Lori Doyle, Principal, Prince Charles School

It certainly does take a village to raise a child and, in our case, support a school community. We are so fortunate to have the PALS Partners that we have at Prince Charles.



Just this past month we have been the recipient of 50 bags of groceries for families from Patrick Gordon and his team from Operation Feed SJ! Each week our friends at the Boys & Girls Club provide 10 backpacks of nonperishables for families, as well as lunch each day for almost 100 children!! Throughout the year our community provides so much for us and our children and we are so thankful for their continued support!
(Photo: Feed SJ)

PES school garden

By Stephen Huxter, Community School Coordinator, Princess Elizabeth School (PES)



Princess Elizabeth School would like first to announce that our school has new leadership as Mr. Greg Norton has taken on the role of principal.

As summer ended and school began, we harvested our school garden that produced a variety of vegetables and herbs. We were able to educate our students on the process and necessary steps it takes to have a successful school garden. The students who planted got to experience and see the tremendous growth of the seeds they planted just months before the end of the school year.

This year we have built a raised garden bed to help with some indoor planting experiments and educational opportunities.

Above: Our Grade 8 students participating in the harvest. (Photo: Sandra Watt)

Learning opportunities at Centennial



One of our Grade 5 classes attending a day of learning at the Huntsman Marine Science Centre (Photo: Kate MacDonald)

By Kate MacDonald, Community Schools Coordinator, Centennial School

Our students have had some amazing opportunities including attending PALS in the Park, several field trips, and having Bailey from Rugby NB come for two days of outdoor learning with all of our students. We also have a class that is taking part in an intergenerational project between seniors in our area, University of New Brunswick, Government of New Brunswick, Elizabeth Fry Society, and Centennial School students. We have been able to explore what makes us unique and what unites us through generational differences. This has been a wonderful opportunity for students to be able to connect with community members to provide experiential learning virtually. Stay tuned for more exciting updates of the wonderful learning that has been taking place at Centennial!



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

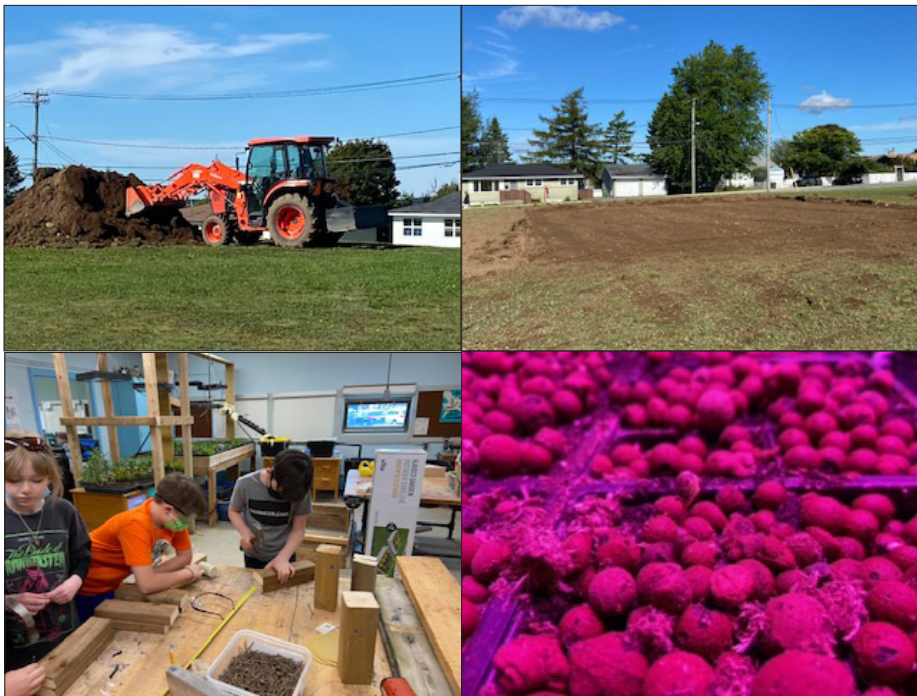
We ALL have something to offer!



Deborah Fisher
fisher.deborah@jdirving.com

Susan Tipper
tipper.susan@jdirving.com

Outdoor classroom at Forest Hills



Clockwise from top left: breaking ground on the outdoor classroom; ready for use; seedlings for apple trees; Grade 8 students build raised garden beds.

Pat Halford, Technology Teacher, Forest Hills School

At Forest Hills we have been working on creating an outdoor green space for our students to use. This will include an outdoor classroom and raised garden beds. This is phase one of a large project that focuses on sustainable living practices. Our students will be collaborating with different grade levels and teachers that will create an inclusive environment for our students. We will also be engaging the outside community of Forest Hills where we will work with the East Saint John Food Bank to give back to our community and provide fresh produce to some of our community members. As this project develops, we look forward to establishing a greenhouse, amphitheater, and additional classroom spaces, and to providing our students the opportunity to be successful 21st-century citizens.

Leading, learning, and listening



A collaborative project for reconciliation (Photo: submitted Jennifer Carhart)

By Jennifer Carhart, Principal, Simonds High School

Simonds High School was proud and honoured to have completed a collective and collaborative project that was unveiled on September 30th, Truth and Reconciliation Day. As a school we were able to engage our Gender Sexuality and Alliance (GSA), Student Representative Council (SRC), Alumni, Essential Skills and school to come together to create a beautiful student-created mural, a significant crosswalk, and a full school-wide activity. This exercise of leadership, learning and listening brought our school community together with pride. Simonds High School sits on a strong community foundation that was beautiful to see manifest in the school. Focusing on our school culture, community and environment is important to us and we look forward to projects and initiatives to come! Simonds pride continues!

Lots happening at HWSF



HWSF band students (Photos: Victoria Lawrence)

By Victoria Lawrence, Community Schools Coordinator, Hazen White-St. Francis (HWSF)

HWSF students have been so excited to use all of the brand-new instruments that our school received through the MusiCounts Band Aid Program grant. Among the instruments received were ukuleles, a xylophone, headphones for students, bongos, hand drums, and so much more! Huge “thank you” to MusiCounts for enabling our students to learn and play with these beautiful instruments!!

HWSF would like to say “thank you” to Legion Branch 64 for their generous donation. We really appreciate their support and will put these funds towards a fun and diverse family game night opportunity for our families.

In September preparations were underway for the installation of a brand-new playground structure for our students at HWSF. The structure is now secure, and students are absolutely loving the new addition to our outdoor space. This playground was awarded to us through the Canadian Tire Jumpstart Sport Relief Fund grant. Two huge “thank yous” to the facilities staff at the district for the installation as well as to the folks at Canadian Tire Jumpstart for allowing our students the opportunity to play, slide, climb, explore, and have fun!



Left: Principal Megan Donovan and Mr. Driscoll from Legion Branch 64

Right: HWSF Grade 4 students enjoying the new play structure



Al-Anon meetings in Saint John

The Al-Anon Family Groups (AFGs) are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength and hope, in order to solve their common problems. We believe alcoholism is a family illness and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization, or institution; does not engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership. Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions.

Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to the families of alcoholics, and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic.

Meeting days, times and locations:

Monday, 7 p.m.

Alateen Meetings

Download Al-Anon app to mobile devices, create your own personal account which will let you sign in to the meeting.

Tuesday, 7 p.m.

Silver Falls AFG & Waterloo AFG
87 Carleton St. Stone Church
(Wheelchair access)

Wednesday, 7 p.m.

Woolastook AFG
St. Mark's United Church (Wheelchair access)
50 Dexter Dr. (rear of building)

Thursday, 7 p.m.

Portland AFG
Zoom only at this time
See Sunday for access instructions. Indicate that you want to attend the Thursday meeting.

Sunday, 7 p.m.

District 15 Zoom Meeting
To attend, please send your request by email to:
district15provinces@yahoo.com
Please leave your email address so you can be added to the Meeting List.

To attend a meeting during COVID-19, masks and proof of double vaccinations are a must!

For further information on meeting times in case of changes or of meetings in other communities, please visit www.al-anonmaritimes. Please refer to District 15.

Tenants Advocate for New Brunswick



**By Randy Hatfield, Executive Director,
Human Development Council**

Jael Duarte is the new Tenants Advocate for New Brunswick. She is based in Fredericton and employed by the Human Development Council.

Jael brings a highly skilled background in Human Rights Law to her work listening to tenancy struggles and advocating at the provincial level for rent control, security of tenure, and addressing renovations across the region.

With many years living across the globe - practicing Human Rights Law in Colombia, living as a caregiver in France and attending school in Switzerland - Jael is fluent in Spanish, French, and English.

For legal Information you can call (506) 910-0293 on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday between 2 and 4 p.m. Jael's email address is: advocate@nbtenants.ca. (Photo: submitted)

Hope Café is re-opening in January – and is outdoors now!

By Michael Crate, The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is excited to be re-opening the Hope Café on Monday, January 10th at 27A Prince Edward Street. Hope Café for many years has been a place of friendship and welcome where everyone is invited to come in for a coffee and light breakfast. A new addition to Hope Café is being introduced – an internet café! Guests will be welcome to use a computer for research, reading the news and learning how to use a computer.

Hope Café will be open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, beginning January 10th.

An outdoor version of Hope Café will be open at The Salvation Army at 36 Waterloo Street from November 29th - December 24th, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Coffee and a light breakfast will be served in The Salvation Army parking lot.

For more information, or to volunteer, please email Michael at michael.crate@salvationarmy.ca or call at 608-4539.



Giving Hope Today



Black Community Member? Aged 11-15 or 16-24? Youth Outreach Program

By Black Lives Matter NB

Main Purpose

- To promote the welfare and well-being of Black community members and their families within New Brunswick
- To promote equal opportunities for Black community members among their peers.
- To oversee the performances and improvement of Black community members in our educational system.
- To assist Black community members in gaining employment.
- To build future leadership in the youth of today.**

Objective

- To provide youth with the resources and tools in addressing the systemic inequalities that criminalize Black community members
- To assess and identify opportunities, resources, and materials that provide youth resilience and enhance key decision-making skills through positive experiences and outcomes

What we offer

- Enroll youths that are interested in film productions and creative arts into our Film Productions and Creative Media Arts programs (Located in Miramichi, New Brunswick)
- Assist youth in gaining employment that matches their skillset
- Provide strong school supports, resources and connections to school activities
- Liaise with teachers to assist youth in meeting educational requirements
- Provide basic tutoring and refer youth for advanced tutoring needs
- Provide opportunities to portray a more favourable image of youth like them
- Provide mentorships and assist in coping with harassment and racism

Contact: blmnb@blmnb.org

**Wishing everyone in our community a safe
Christmas that is merry and bright!**



**We're proud to provide our community
with lighting to make Saint John
sparkle and shine bright during the
festive season**



Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Contest

***By Juanita Black, HDC and
Mary LeSage, PULSE***

We are happy to partner with Saint John Energy for the seventh year! We offer two \$25 fresh fruit and produce orders for this December issue, one each to two winners. Throughout *Around the Block* there are three Saint John Energy logos that you cannot use for this contest: one in this article (see right), one in the ad below left, and one in the sponsor section on page 1.



To enter the draw you need to locate the other two Saint John Energy logos, hidden somewhere in the paper!



Send your answer to
juanita@sjhdc.ca

or call 651-3044 to speak to Juanita Black or leave a message.

You need to:

- identify the pages and locations of the two hidden logos;
- tell us your name, address, and phone number.

Only one entry per household. Your name will go into a draw for one of the two orders. The contest will end at noon on December 21st and orders, if possible, will be delivered on December 22nd (or you might be asked to pick up your order). We will also list the winners on the Human Development Council Facebook page.

**The Issue 79 winners were:
Mary Anne Farren and Gordon Hooper**

St. Luke's update



***By The Rev. Dr. Cole Hartin, Rector
St. Luke's Anglican Church, Parish of Portland***

Most readers might know about St. Luke's because of our regular meal programs, which we are continuing to offer on Mondays from 12-12:30 p.m. with hearty take-out lunches. You can reach out to us for details at stlukesportland@gmail.com. Recently we completed a project to install a new elevator lift in our facility. This makes our space accessible and allows those experiencing mobility issues full access to our building. While we are still waiting a final inspection, we expect our lift to be operational by December 2021.

While caring for our community remains deeply important to us at St. Luke's, all that we do is rooted in our love for Jesus Christ. We do our best to love our neighbours because Christ first loved us. We meet each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. as a vibrant, small-but-growing community to worship. Throughout the week we offer various programs in addition to our free meals!



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Your money matters: Christmas vs “Supply and Demand”



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

Christmas is the #1 spending season of the year. This year retailers are telling us that there may be delays in actually getting products to the stores. The supply chain is slow as an aftermath of the pandemic.

Economics 101: supply vs demand

One thing we must keep in mind is that when there is a shortage of supplies, the price will go up. Think of the price of Lysol wipes and cleaning products at the first of the pandemic. I know that your kids may be disappointed that you are unable to buy that doll or toy or video game that they really want. Sticking to your budget means that you avoid paying high interest on a credit card or taking out a loan that you need to pay back after the holidays. You don't want to be paying off purchases long after the item has lost its shine.

This year more than ever I would suggest you talk to your family about Christmas presents. Let them know that Santa has been affected by COVID as well and will do his best to bring a special surprise. Christmas should create memories that last a lifetime, not stress and anxiety about how to pay for it.

Happy holidays from the Money Matters team. If you need help with your budget or any other financial matters please reach out to darlene@loanfund.ca.

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

LIFE CAN BE HARD.
FINDING HELP
CAN BE EASY.

Dial 2-1-1
to find help
for all of life's
challenges.

**Other ways
to reach 211:**

Visit nb.211.ca
***NEW* Online chat!**

Toll-free line (VRS):
1-855-258-4126

TTY/text-based number:
1-855-405-7446

E-mail:
211nb@findhelp.ca

#HelpStartsHere

211 Helpline celebrates one year of service in New Brunswick!

**By Randy Hatfield, Executive Director,
Human Development Council**

211 was launched in New Brunswick on October 15th, 2020. It's been a successful year for the long-awaited service.

The purpose of 211 is to quickly connect New Brunswickers to essential community, social, and government programs and services. These services are designed to assist with a range of life's challenges.

As of October 31st, 2021, close to 12,000 calls (approximately 2,900 in French) were placed to 211. Call volumes exceeded launch targets by approximately 25%.

The largest number of callers wanted information on housing – residential housing options, housing expense and utilities assistance, emergency shelter options, and information about the new Canada-NB Housing Benefit. Housing inquiries made up over 16% of total provincial calls.

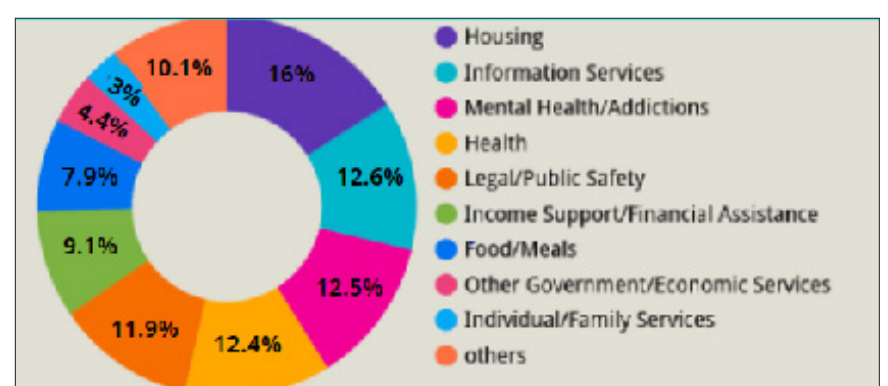
The other top reasons for calls to 211 were for: information requests on government programs and services (12.6%), mental health and addictions referrals (12.5%), health-related concerns (12.4%), and public safety information related to COVID advisories and regulations (11.9%).

Callers from Saint John were most concerned about emergency food services. More than 12% of calls from the city related to food services - food banks; formula/baby food; community gardening; low-cost meals; home-delivered meals; school breakfasts/lunches. Other needs identified were residential housing options (8.3%), housing expense assistance (4.7%) and information sources (6%).

A bilingual searchable database was launched in July. Like the telephone service, the online database - 211nb.ca - offers residents, frontline workers, and community leaders access to services and programs in their region.

We can learn from 211. Already, calls to the service from New Brunswickers offer valuable statistics that highlight the most pressing needs in each community and where there are gaps in services.

Happy birthday to 211!



In November the 211 service was enhanced to help connect callers who are experiencing family, intimate partner, and sexual violence with the appropriate community and social resources.

Call 211 for help!



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Green resilience in Saint John



<<<< **BEFORE**

AFTER>>>>



(Photos: ACAP)

By **Jamylynn McDonald, ACAP Saint John**

We have been very fortunate to have had amazing support to achieve many successes this past field season! Beyond our water quality and harbour monitoring, this year we have taken on projects to revitalize and restore Saint John's green spaces. This included planting a humongous rain garden in the North End at Montgomery Crescent Park, depaving a section of the under-utilized pavement at Seaside Park on the West Side, as well as planting 10,000 trees all over Greater Saint John. Yes, that's right, 10,000 trees!! We would not be able to do it without our dedicated volunteers and are so thankful to you all! Have a safe and healthy winter season and stay tuned to see what ACAP will be up to in spring 2022!

ACAP green Christmas



Image: <https://residentialwastesystems.com/blog/celebrate-an-eco-friendly-holiday-season/>

By **Alexis Harvey, Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP)**

With Christmas soon approaching one might be concerned with how to make Christmas sustainable in 2021. Well, here are some ideas from ACAP!

- Buy experiences - like a wine tour, skiing trip, spa day, etc.
- Buy a potted Christmas tree and plant it afterwards
- Shop Local!!! Some great local sustainable shops include: the Feel Good Store, Corn Crib, and Juniper!
- Wrap non-traditionally using a scarf (the Japanese art of furoshiki), or use a reusable sack or a box
- Buy reusable or a zero-waste starter kit
- Buy a plant for the plant-lover in your life
- Donate to a sustainable charity
- Switch to LEDs for your Christmas lights
- Check out some cool sustainable makeup brands

And occasionally remember, less can be better and at the end of the day Christmas is about more than gifts.

Community Clothing Closet



COMMUNITY CLOTHING CLOSET @ THE HUB

Be part of the community clothing exchange coming up in January 2022!

We are accepting gently used donations* in December 2021.

*See details for select items only!

For more info contact: hubgreenteam@gmail.com

By **The HUB Green Team**

Call for donations! The HUB Green Team will be hosting a Community Clothing Exchange in January 2022. This is an opportunity for members of our community to come out and share items that they no longer use or need. We are accepting donations of gently used winter clothing items and footwear. Please note that we are NOT accepting any household items including electronics and appliances. Drop off your donations in the lobby of the HUB on Tuesdays and Thursdays in December 12-4 p.m. These items will be cleaned and showcased during the exchange at the end of January 2022. We will be looking for volunteers to help at the event so if you are interested, or if you have any questions or comments, please reach out to hubgreenteam@gmail.com! We hope to see you around the HUB!

Your neighbours since 1854

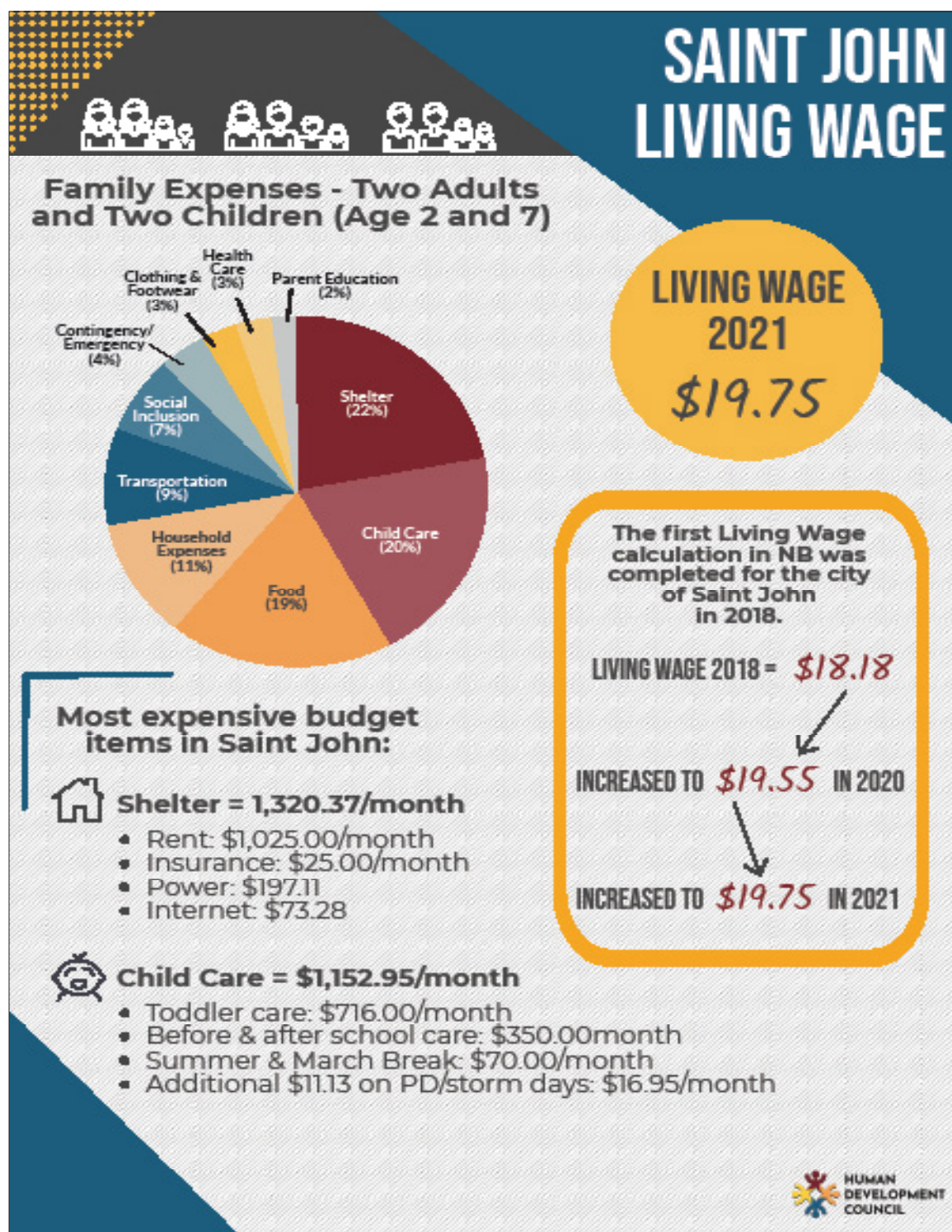


Sisters of Charity
of the Immaculate Conception
www.sistersofcharityic.com



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Living Wages in New Brunswick 2021



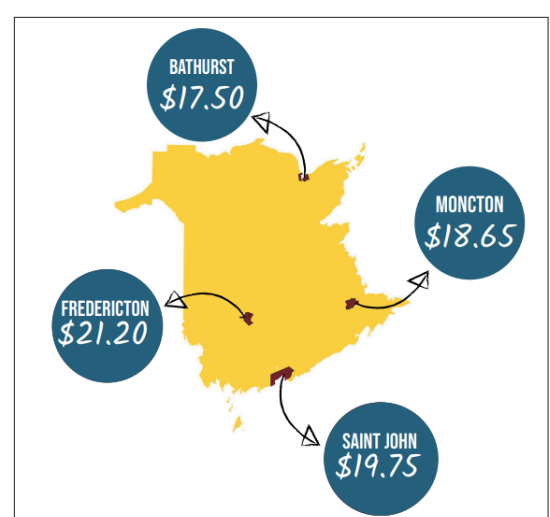
By Heather Atcheson, Researcher, Human Development Council

Costs of living in New Brunswick are rising. The Human Development Council's report, *Living Wages in New Brunswick 2021*, speaks to the current costs of living in different communities and calls on employers to pay their employees a living wage.

A living wage is the hourly rate a household requires to cover basic needs and live with dignity while enjoying a decent quality of life. Our latest report shows that living wages increased across the province over the last year. Fredericton's living wage is \$21.20 (up 45 cents since last year), Saint John's living wage is \$19.75 (up 20 cents), Moncton's living wage is \$18.65 (up 30 cents), and Bathurst's living wage is \$17.50 (up 5 cents).

The 2021 report reveals that shelter, food, and child care are the largest costs for New Brunswick families. "Many families in the province earn less than a living wage and struggle to make ends meet," said Randy Hatfield, Executive Director of the Human Development Council. Paying a living wage helps individuals, families, and communities not only to survive, but thrive.

To read the full report, visit: <https://sjhdc.ca/>.



In from the Cold

By Cathy Boyce, Affordable Housing Specialist, Human Development Council

Each year partners in the homeless-serving sector in Saint John come together to discuss the plan for the winter months. Often, the idea of an Out of the Cold shelter arises. While this seems like a clear plan to address homelessness, we know that these temporary solutions can be costly and ineffective.

Instead, we're working together to house 30 people before the holidays. We're planning to move people into permanent housing before Christmas using rental supplements, community housing programs, and available market-rental units.

With over 100 people actively homeless in Saint John, some may wonder why the community chose 30 people as a goal. The hope is that by housing people, we can create room and capacity at our existing shelters so that they can avoid turning people away during the cold winter months.

The In from the Cold campaign focuses on recruiting willing landlords with available units who want to work with us towards our goal.

To solve a complex problem like chronic homelessness, we need a new approach – and our entire community working together.



Some people come "In from the Cold" into buildings owned by local landlord Gordon Ferris (Photo: Donna Gates, Bonfire Communications)

Long-term solutions like permanent housing with support are needed to end homelessness. We cannot rely on quick fixes. There is a dedicated team of people in Saint John working on addressing homelessness through Coordinated Access. Saint John has an excellent, dedicated, and caring network of professionals in organizations such as Coverdale Centre for Women, Outflow Ministry, Housing Alternatives, Fresh Start Services for Women and the Teen Resource Centre. We are fortunate to partner with organizations like First Steps, John Howard Society, Elizabeth Fry Society, Parent-Child Assistance Program, Hestia House, New Brunswick Association of Community Living, and Youth Unbound in this effort.

Une Semaine nationale de l'immigration francophone 2021 soulignée en grand cette année

Par Jonathan Poirier, Agent des communications de l'ARCf de Saint-Jean

Du 7 au 13 novembre, l'ARCf de Saint-Jean a célébré l'importance de l'immigration francophone pour la communauté de la région. Comptant 25% de ses employés provenant des quatre coins du monde, l'organisme a reconnu leur contribution essentielle à la francophonie saint-jeannoise.

L'immigration francophone a été célébrée de nombreuses façons: diffusion de portraits d'employés nouveaux arrivants de l'ARCf, capsules radio avec la station CHQC et un menu spécial pour les enfants des Centres de la Petite Enfance (CPE) de l'ARCf. Chaque jour, un ou une employé a fait découvrir son pays à ses collègues de travail et aux enfants.

«Notre communauté francophone est en pleine croissance depuis de nombreuses années, et l'apport des nouveaux arrivants est incontournable. Nous avons des employés provenant de sept pays et c'est formidable de les voir se joindre à notre communauté avec leurs familles.» a affirmé Michel Côté, directeur général de l'ARCf.

Des photos des activités ont été diffusées toute la semaine sur les médias sociaux de l'ARCf.



(Montage. Crédit photos: Gracieuseté / Montage: submitted)

National Francophone Immigration Week 2021 highlighted this year

By Jonathan Poirier, Communications Officer, ARCf de Saint-Jean

From November 7th to 13th, the Association Régionale de la Communauté francophone de Saint-Jean (ARCf) celebrated the importance of Francophone immigration to the region's community. With 25% of its employees coming from all over the world, the organization has recognized their essential contribution to Saint John's Francophonie.

Francophone immigration was celebrated in many ways: portraits of newcomer ARCf employees were posted; radio spots on CHQC; and a special menu for the children in ARCf's Early Learning Centres. Every day, an employee introduced co-workers and the children to his or her country.

"Our Francophone community has been growing for many years, and the contribution of newcomers is essential. We have staff from seven countries and it's great to see them join our community with their families," said Michel Côté, Director General of ARCf.

Photos of the activities were shared throughout the week on ARCf social media.

Holiday safety tips



Santa with a tuxedo cat

(Photo: Manada West Photography – Pet Pics with Santa 2019)

By Nicole Parcon, Admin Support, Saint John SPCA Animal Rescue

Holiday decorations such as tinsel, ornaments and garlands can cause serious gastrointestinal blockages if swallowed. These blockages are very dangerous and can cause serious illness or even death to our pets - not to mention the expensive vet bills. Popular holiday plants like mistletoe, holly and poinsettia are also very dangerous; they can be poisonous to pets if ingested. Curious cats and dogs often explore the Christmas tree, which usually will be a variety of spruce, fir, or pine. Ingestion of tree needles can irritate the mouth and stomach, resulting in drooling, vomiting, and diarrhea. Many pets, especially dogs, are drawn to the water at the base of a real Christmas trees. This water can be hazardous if treated with preservatives.

Keep your pets safe with supervision and keep dangerous items out of reach.



*Season's Greetings and
Best Wishes for a Happy New Year!*

Wayne Long

**MP/Député • Saint John-Rothsay
1 Market Square • 657-2500**

Engage4Change

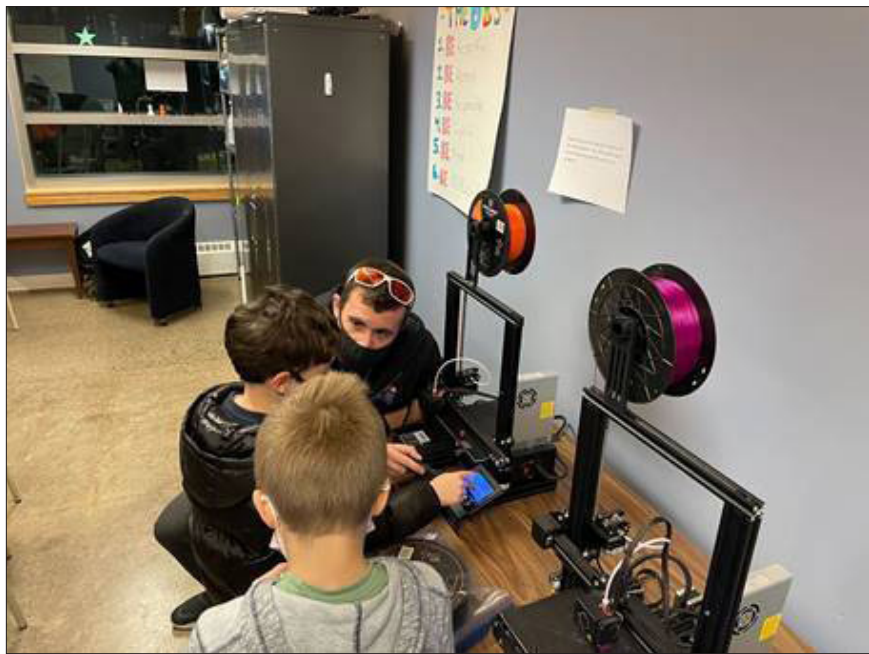
By Brilliant Labs

Brilliant Labs and New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) joined forces this fall to develop and deliver Engage4Change: a community-based project supporting children's socioemotional and educational development through STEAM-based, afterschool learning activities and projects in partnership with ONE Change at the Nick Nicolle Community Centre, and Teen Resource Centre/Pathways to Education Saint John. (STEAM = Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math.)

Utilizing such activities as coding, 3D printing and other technology-based programs in the makerspaces in each location, Engage4Change combines hands-on, experiential learning with students volunteering from NBCC's Robertson Institute for Community Leadership to study the impact of peer-to-peer mentoring and support to help engage children and develop their creativity and learning right in the community with their friends.

Thanks to funding from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada's College and Community Social Innovation Fund, and the Greater Saint John Community Foundation,

Engage4Change aims to pilot new approaches to develop life-changing learning and leadership opportunities, relationships, and youth empowerment.



Tech Mentors Jonathan Driscoll of ONE Change at the Nick Nicolle Community Centre (above) and Will Ferris at Teen Resource Centre/Pathways to Education Saint John (below) in evening programs with community youth. (Photos: Noah Ritcey)



The Saint John Newcomers Centre podcast about anti-racism

By Lorne Daltrop, Saint John Newcomers Centre

A second season of our anti-racism podcast series, "Racialized 506," was launched Monday, October 25th on Zoom. Racism & Political Leadership was the theme of the first episode. It featured Saint John Mayor Donna Reardon, Wayne Long, local Member of Parliament; and Neil Clements, a lawyer and social activist.

Also taking part was former Edmonton city councillor, Scott McKeen. McKeen sponsored changes to that city's Public Spaces Bylaw to include harassment based on race and gender. Edmonton became the first city in Canada to take such a step.

As a city with a growing multi-cultural population, many newcomers in Saint John have experienced racism and discrimination in different forms, both directly and indirectly.

The six-part podcast will be available on our YouTube channel and social media once the series is complete in April 2022.



Balado du Centre des nouveaux arrivants de Saint-Jean sur l'antiracisme

Par Lorne Daltrop, Centre des nouveaux arrivants de Saint-Jean

Une deuxième saison de notre série de podcasts contre le racisme, "Racialized 506," a été lancée le lundi 25 octobre sur Zoom. Racisme et leadership politique était le thème du premier épisode. Il mettait en vedette la mairesse de Saint John Donna Reardon; Wayne Long, député local; et Neil Clements, avocat et militant social.

L'ancien conseiller municipal d'Edmonton, Scott McKeen, était également présent. McKeen a parrainé des modifications au « règlement sur les espaces publics » de cette ville, pour inclure le harcèlement fondé sur la race et le sexe. Edmonton est devenue la première ville au Canada à franchir une telle étape.

En tant que ville avec une population multiculturelle croissante, de nombreux nouveaux arrivants à Saint John ont été victimes de racisme et de discrimination sous différentes formes, à la fois directement et indirectement.

Le podcast en six parties sera disponible sur notre chaîne YouTube et sur les réseaux sociaux une fois la série terminée en avril 2022.

Fishing for your help!

By SHARE Activity Center

SHARE Activity Center is looking for new or used basic fishing gear to jumpstart a fishing activity for spring 2022. You can donate by calling (506) 658-9830 or emailing nb.share@bellaliant.net to arrange a drop-off!

SHARE Activity Center is a non-profit agency that provides social activities for individuals over the age of 19, who are or have been clients of Mental Health & Addiction - Horizon Health Network.

c/o Share Activity Center
168 Queen Street, Apt 1
Saint John NB
Canada E2L 1S7

Let's support our community!

Bee Me Kidz update



By Kerri Brooks

Bee Me Kidz is back! We are so excited to announce we’ve expanded and we have a new hive that opened in St. Stephen this fall! We now have three hives: North at the Nick Nicolle Centre, East at Glen Falls School, and St. Stephen at Milltown Elementary.

Our program is for Grades one to five and their families. Any child can attend any of our hives! We offer a nutritious take-home brunch and community parent group, along with super fun activities for kids. Mad Science Day, Super Hero Day, and Pajama Party are just a few of the upcoming fun-themed Saturdays! There is no charge for Bee Me Kidz. We would love for you to buzz on in and join the fun!

Call or text 654-1395 for more information or to sign up.

Meet our new Children’s Librarian

By S.D. Thompson

There’s a new librarian at the Saint John Free Public Library.

Ruth Cox began working in the Children’s Department this summer but has been around the library for most of her life, having worked there as an assistant, clerk, and secretary before getting her masters at Western University.

She wants today’s children to feel the same way about the library as she did growing up in the North End.

“The library was a safe place to come with my family – a place to come with my family that had something for each of us to do,” she said.

“I remember a gingerbread house decorating contest at the library when I was nine. It was a lot of fun and my whole family participated.”

Ruth’s looking forward to bringing her own skill set and personal interest to the Children’s Department, from pop culture to martial arts – she is a practicing kickboxer. She’s also started developing and improving the children’s collection.

Most of all, however, she wants Saint Johners to use the library and keep learning and growing.

“It would be great,” Ruth said, “if a little kid could find a safe place and a comfortable place to be whatever they wanted to be.”

Above: the city’s newest children’s librarian, Ruth Cox
(Photo: Sean Thompson)



PRUDE’s Diversity Champion Awards



Left to right: Robel Beserat, Feyrouss Beserat, and Mary Kelay of FAR Away Kitchen receive the Youth Leaders Award from Her Worship Mayor Donna Reardon (Photos: PRUDE Inc.)

By Lin Zhang, Community Engagement Officer, PRUDE

PRUDE Inc. (Pride of Race, Unity & Dignity through Education) held its fifth annual awards event on November 19th at the Hilton Trade and Convention Centre uptown to recognize Saint John employers, organizations, and individuals for their best practices in promoting Diversity, Inclusion and Equality. We know diversity matters! A key role of our organization is to promote multiculturalism and strengthen welcoming, cohesive communities through public education and awareness activities.

This year is extremely important as we are also celebrating PRUDE Inc.’s 40th anniversary! The keynote speaker was the Vice-President of UNB Saint John, Dr. Petra Hauf, who focused on the challenges of living with acceptance and inclusion in our daily life. It was attended by all four female local Mayors (Saint John, Grand-Bay Westfield, Quispamsis, and Rothesay) who helped give the awards. We also had the Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick, the Honourable Brenda Murphy. A few local Members of the Legislative Assembly - Trevor Holder, Gary Crossman, Bill Oliver and Glenn Savoie - also attended. Our winners were:

- Small Business: ERB Builders Ltd.
- Education & Heritage: Christine Roy
- Immigrant Entrepreneur: Door2Door Pickup Couriers
- Corporate Business: Wyndham Hotels and Resort
- Youth Leaders: FAR Away Kitchen
- Community Leader: Don Darling
- Honorary Award :Sheila Croteau (posthumous)



Olaitan Roseline Onyebuoha (left) accepts the Immigrant Entrepreneur Award on behalf of Seun Richards from Door2Door Pickup Couriers, presented by Brittany Merrifield, Mayor of Grand Bay-Westfield (right).

Civic Tech Saint John



Conversation at Civic Tech Saint John's inaugural meeting, January 2020 (Photo: CTSJ)

By Volunteer Co-organizers

Civic Tech Saint John (CTSJ) is a special project of the Human Development Council to foster social cohesion in the region, in partnership with Brilliant Labs, ConnexionWorks, New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) and the community newspaper, *Around the Block*, as co-founders.

CTSJ is an all-volunteer group of passionate citizens who believe in increasing civic engagement and community participation by applying technology, data, and design for the betterment of Saint John. They achieve this by creating “spaces” for people to self-organize and address individual, collective, and communal needs. In practice, volunteers and community stakeholders come together to identify and solve social-related issues as a group.

This fall, CTSJ has embarked upon a new project to refurbish used computers from NBCC and University of New Brunswick (Saint John) by the College’s Information Technology (IT) students for use in the neighbourhoods, in collaboration with representatives from the communities.

CTSJ meets every Tuesday evening at 7 p.m.

For more information, go to www.facebook.com/groups/civictechsja about.

 **CIVIC TECH SAINT JOHN**
Technology + Social Good

The Gathering Space



EFryNB staff and volunteers starting to use the space - food delivery (Photo: Judy Murphy)

By Melissa Whiting, Elizabeth Fry New Brunswick (EFryNB)

EFryNB is delighted to share exciting news. We are renovating our main level on Adelaide Street in collaboration with Judith Mackin of Tuck Studio. We are introducing a Gathering Space that will offer an expanded area to craft, create, connect, ground, trust, and grow where humanity and grace surpass all.

At EFryNB, we believe every person, given a chance, can make a positive change for themselves and their families through connection, creativity, and collaboration. Throughout COVID, we know firsthand the benefits of community and the value of connection to combat isolation. The feeling of isolation is much harsher for criminalized people who already feel socially excluded and alone.

The walls are down, the room is painted, electrical and flooring replaced, now we look forward to watching our vision bloom into reality. We hope you follow our journey as we create the Gathering Space.

Chroma creates new resource

By Ashley Lynn MacLean

Over the summer, I was given the opportunity to work alongside the folks at Chroma NB under an internship position through my studies at the University of New Brunswick (UNB). As a Research Assistant, I completed an environmental scan (a style of research that assesses external information) of Saint John that consisted of using grey literature (information that’s published outside of traditional distribution channels such as newsletters and government documents) to explore what 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations currently exist, have existed in the past, along with what sort of initiatives have been done for the rainbow community. I also begun a New Brunswick-wide environmental scan that searched for the same information as our Saint John scan, but it is not yet complete as my time quickly and unfortunately came to an end in August as their intern. With these results, Chroma is hoping to use the environmental scan information to create a new easy-access resource for rainbow individuals in the community. Aside from my main role with Chroma, I was able to explore myself on a personal level as I had recently come out as bisexual at the time. Being involved with the Chroma team allowed me to learn so much about who I want to be in a safe and empowering environment, all while creating a closer bond with a community that I am proud to identify with. Their contribution to the queer community in Saint John is vital. (Photo of Ashley: submitted)



The *Around the Block* interview: Elizabeth Weir



Elizabeth Weir (front row, third from left) at the Regional Women's Leadership Conference - Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Parliament of Malaysia, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (Photo: E. Weir)

Elizabeth Weir became Leader of the New Brunswick New Democratic Party (NDP) in 1998 and was the only NDP Member of the Legislative Assembly from 1991-2005. In recent years she has travelled the world, training parliamentarians and activists alike in democratic governance. Ms Weir's outstanding work for community and society has garnered her the honour of being named to the Order of New Brunswick. We sat down to check in on key issues of interest to you, our readers.

When you're looking at poverty in New Brunswick and in Saint John specifically, what's changed from when you were in office?

In terms of tools for community activists there of course is social media for being able to engage citizens in discussions. Facebook such an important platform right around the world; it permitted direct engagement that in the past would have either been just face to face or distributing flyers. So terms of citizens' needs in those working communities, but also elected members, it was a seismic shift.

Civic Tech Saint John and Around the Block and HDC did a Facebook live Mayoralty forum with questions only from the priority neighborhoods; it had 4400 views afterwards. The question that came up repeatedly was the housing crisis. Randy Hatfield's tour of the city, including the South End, shows out-of-town guests the conditions in which we're expecting other human beings to live. What's your take on the state of housing?

When I was first elected here in the South End, in our community many of those buildings were filled with families, many on income assistance or working at minimum wage jobs, or seniors. Early in the pandemic I walked over to visit a friend who lives at Pitt and Duke and I was just devastated by the buildings that used to have families and people in them. Many were empty or in really poor repair. I recognize that the increases in the rental market are driving migration out of the South End. I see affordable housing as a much higher need for citizens in our community than even when I was elected - the cooperative movement was strong, the federal funding was more secure, so it has gone through many challenges since I was an MLA. I've seen many things in the world and been in many challenging situations but I was really shaken by what I saw. Part of it was with working away; I wasn't doing the normal walking around the neighbourhood. So it was just one of those moments where you stop in your tracks and it hits you, that there are profound challenges for so many people.

You mentioned Facebook. What do you think is the impact of the 24-hour news cycle and of social media on trust?

Huge. HUGE. The erosion of belief in the truth has been clearly accelerated by the pandemic and the fact that these anti-vax groups can use Facebook as a mobilizing tool...But this isn't the first time I've seen it. I worked in Myanmar. I saw how Facebook contributed to a platform for genocide. And this has been repeated in how many

places? There is the devastation of the Trump regime. The platform is long overdue in being hauled into having a regulatory framework that makes it a tool that citizens can use for reliable information. There's an international committee with parliamentarians from a number of countries who are trying to develop a more effective regulatory regime for Facebook. One of the things I love is they have a seat with Mark Zuckerberg's name on it. [LOL] He has consistently refused to come.

What advice would you give about how we can better engage our readers to participate in the political process, to see themselves in it, when for many of them so much of their energy goes just to survival?

Well, that's the constant dilemma and again it's aggravated by the isolation of the pandemic. So many of our public discussions are going online. A lot of civil society organisations are trying to develop more online tools for engagement but it's not easy; many people are not comfortable was having those kinds of conversations on online platforms.

Given your work on engaging women in democracy around the world: what can we do to engage more young women here?

The municipal election was a bright light not only in terms of the number of women elected around the province but also the number of groups that came together: Femocracy (Moncton), See Jane Run (Saint John), quite an effective organization in Fredericton. I would like to think that maybe more of a profound shift has taken place here, but just knowing fragile things are...we elected the most women to the NB Legislature in the last election despite the pandemic but we have to take more concrete steps to anchor women's participation.

What makes you optimistic? What gives you hope?

Well hope has really been the ethos of my life in politics because as a social democrat, if you don't have hope, I'm not sure why you would be making this effort.

There are so many examples around the world of people who have been extraordinarily brave in the most difficult circumstances, so I guess for me that's the essence of what making political change is all about.

ATB – tell us what it means to you, and win a chance at a gift card!



Around the Block is Saint John's community newspaper - YOUR newspaper. We think of it as a voice for those who might otherwise not be heard. In fact we have a principal of minimal changes to the stories we receive, so you can write in your own voice, the news from your own experience and neighbourhood.

What do YOU think about *Around the Block*? Write in and tell us! You will go into a draw for a \$25 gift card and may have your thoughts printed in the next issue. Don't forget to tell us your name and phone number or email or mailing address so we can contact you if you win the draw! Contact us:

- by email: sjcommunitynewspaper@gmail.com
- by mail: **The Editor, Around the Block
Saint John Human Development Council
139 Prince Edward Street
Saint John NB E2L 3S3**
- via HDC website: <https://sjhdc.ca/contact>

The Purse Project collects over 1,300 purses



Left to right: Denielle Poirier, President, Kelly Cotter; Jennifer Leblanc, Secretary; Karen Stears, Treasurer; Stacey Hamdan; Angela Melanson; Pam Thomas; and Heather O'Keefe (Photo: Ignite)

By Pam Thomas, Chair, Purse Project 2021
Canadian Progress Club Ignite

The Canadian Progress Club Ignite held the 6th Annual Purse Project on Saturday, November 6th at 100 Station Street; due to COVID, the event transitioned to a COVID-friendly, drive-through drop-off. With tremendous community support there were over 1,300 purses collected. New or gently used purses were filled with various personal care items for women. Some included personal notes of encouragement.

Following COVID protocol, the purses were donated to community partners who are direct resources for women facing unfortunate life circumstances from homelessness, poverty, domestic violence or other emergency situations. Community partners distribute the purses as needed. Our community partners include First Steps/Second Steps, Fresh Start Services for Women/YWCA, Elizabeth Fry Society, Avenue B, Coverdale Centre for Women Inc., and Hestia House, among others.

Canadian Progress Club Ignite is a volunteer not-for-profit service club chartered April 2012. Our mandate is to strive to assist women and children in need within our community through fundraising efforts and volunteering. Ignite is part of the Canadian Progress Club (<http://www.progressclub.ca>) founded in Toronto in 1922.

<https://www.facebook.com/CanadianProgressClubIgnite>



Around The Block Team (Issue 80)

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Christmas at Romero House



By Evelyn McNulty

We, as a province, are now experiencing our fourth wave of COVID-19 – a wave that is proving to be much more difficult.

Here at Romero House, consistency in our service delivery has always played a big role in providing a sense of security to the folks we serve. Change, even when necessary, can be disruptive to us all but even more so if your daily life is cloaked in instability.

COVID-19 has presented all of us with challenges. Our priority is to serve one hot nutritious meal, seven days a week, to anyone in need in our community, ensuring no one goes hungry. We intend to do all we can to continue to do just that; ensuring our mandate is met and everyone remains safe.

To this end, we will remain “out the window” until the New Year. Our building will remain closed to the public including our clothing room/ household items and we will stay masked at the window. Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

Now over 200,000 meals served out the window

Little miracles



Left: Big Sister Char & Little Sister Josie; middle: Big Sister Nicole & Little Sister Shaylin; right: Big Sister Christena & Little Sister Lauren

By Rhoda Welshman, BBBS

At Big Brothers Big Sisters, we see little miracles taking place every day - like when a child recognizes that her mentor makes her feel special and she's able to express “my mentor makes me feel like myself” and “she lets me do art how I want instead of telling me how to create my own projects.” This is an example of the magic and potential our volunteers are ensuring in their matches. When parents share with us “it's really the only time she really talks about her day at school” is when she's seen her mentor, then we know we're on the right track. Some things don't seem very “Big” until there's consistency over time; we see them as “Little” miracles taking place in our mentoring programs every day.

To all of our friends, families, volunteers and supporters: we wish you a very happy and healthy holiday season.

We are #BiggerTogether!

Councillors' Corner

Waterloo Village – rebuilding a unique and dynamic neighbourhood



David Hickey in the Waterloo Village (Photo: submitted)

It's truly the place to be

***By David Hickey (he/him), Ward 3 City Councillor,
City of Saint John***

Waterloo Village was always a vibrant middle-class neighbourhood filled with shops and well-maintained homes. While the past few decades have not been kind to most of the homes, the residents are still as dynamic and wide-ranging as ever. As one of those residents, it's exciting to see the socioeconomic, cultural, and generational differences coming together to define this community. It means neighbours look out for one another, lend a hand to those in need, and stick up for our gritty community.

The challenges in the Village, however, are increasing - while rents soar and the quality of housing decreases, our shelters are overflowing and our food bank is lined up. With the leadership of organizations at the HUB, like the Saint John Community Loan Fund (now known as Kaleidoscope), new housing is starting to be built. The new proposed developments across from the Cathedral and at Cliff Street and Waterloo Street are creating safe, quality housing while protecting affordability. Projects like these and the proposed redevelopment of St. Vincent's are going to ripple through the neighbourhood. We're already seeing more and more scaffolding go up around homes in need of a new paint job or new windows. Even my home is scheduled to be done before the snow flies. Focused on quality affordable housing, the growth in Waterloo Village is welcome and long overdue.

As your representative on City Council, I want to continue to stick up for this neighbourhood while making sure this growth is supporting everyone in the community.

I'm proud to call this neighbourhood home, and excited for what's to come! It's truly the place to be.

**Focused on quality
affordable housing, the
growth in Waterloo Village is
welcome and long overdue**

On living In Saint John since 1984

***By Joanna Killen (she/her), Ward 1 City Councillor,
City of Saint John***

I remember being a kid at St. Patrick's Elementary on the city's West Side and dreaming about what kind of house I would someday have as my own. It was always the fairy-tale of the 90s kids and the generations before. Grow up, find your person or people, buy your dream house and live in it until you someday retire after many an evening spent on your front porch surrounded by the people you love. Reality soon unfolded and that fairy-tale, I soon learned, was one that very few get to experience overall. After all, life is a lot more complicated than that.



Joanna Killen (Photo: submitted)

I remember my Dad living in one of the Queen Street Co-op buildings. He would have to attend meetings and discuss any issues or upcoming opportunities for tenants of that co-op. It really seemed like another way for everyone to be involved in their own living situation. Everyone knew each other and supported each other. He rented for a while and saved and saved to eventually get the place he would live in for decades on Orange Street. A single dad on a teacher's salary managed to make it work back then.

These are my own first-hand accounts of growing up and thinking about what kinds of options would be available to me in my solidly middle-class life that was afforded to me. I have been very open about my current 2021 housing situation. I am wildly fortunate enough to have the means to be able to be told my building had been sold and I would need to relocate suddenly.

I have been renting apartments in Saint John for the majority of my adult life. I actually have come to love the look and feel of a new-to-me place and the process of making it my own. What struck me about having to do this in 2021 is just how difficult and expensive it had become. My previous place had been an easy and affordable find we had found in 2017 in our ideal neighbourhood. In 2021 we had a hard time finding anyone that didn't have a list on the go for people in need of a place. We had to rely on our network of friends to eventually land on somewhere to live, which I completely know is not the privilege that everyone has at their disposal.

Everyone deserves a safe, affordable, clean space to call their own. We all work hard to provide for ourselves and our people. The City of Saint John at the will of Council has begun creating the Affordable Housing Action Plan. This issue is grand and complex. Although we don't have much capacity as a city to face this housing affordability crisis ourselves, I believe that by connecting the people and organizations with the problem, that we will develop an inspirational plan that we can then take to our partners at the provincial and federal level for investment. This council believes this plan should be a top priority for citizens.

The opportunity for coordination is imperative to our success. We have a role to play in planning what we want this city to look like in 5, 10, 30 years and beyond. The dreams of the generations growing up behind us need to be realized instead of dashed.

**Everyone deserves a safe, affordable, clean space
to call their own**