



Around *the* Block



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New Red Cross program for seniors



Canadian Red Cross volunteer greets Connection NB program participant (Photo: Canadian Red Cross)

By Wanda Wilson (she/her), Community Coordinator - Connection NB, Canadian Red Cross | Croix-Rouge Canadienne

The Red Cross Connection NB program is a pilot project currently launching in New Brunswick. The aim of the program is to ensure that older adults in our area are able to remain living at home safely, and remain visible, active, contributing members of our community.

A trained Red Cross volunteer will be paired with a participant who is 65 or older and living at home. The volunteer will work with them 1:1, either at the senior's home, in community or over the phone, to help get them connected to local community supports (services, programs, activities and events), that will help keep them healthy and safe, and remain at home for longer.

The Red Cross is actively recruiting both volunteers and participants in Saint John. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer for Connection NB, or know someone who is, visit connectionnb.redcross.ca/volunteer to apply, or contact Coordinator Wanda Wilson at (506) 343-4339. You may also get in touch by email at connectionNB@redcross.ca.

Individuals who would like to become participants in the program can: sign themselves up; be referred by family members or healthcare providers; or be referred by community partners such as social services, religious leaders, or a seniors' club/group. Referrals can be made through the Connection NB website at connectionnb.redcross.ca, by sending an email to connectionNB@redcross.ca, or by phone at (506) 343-4339.

Proud Sponsors of Around The Block



SAINT JOHN



Celebrating Juanita Black



Juanita Black outside her home in Crescent Valley (Photo: Jordan Mattie)

By Human Development Council (HDC)

Juanita Black is a long-time advocate for building a more caring community - and the former Coordinator of *Around the Block*. Her powerful message is captured in an inspiring new, locally-produced documentary film launched on January 26th.

Perseverance: The Juanita Black Story charts more than 40 years she's spent as a volunteer, poverty advocate, mentor, philanthropist and neighbourhood leader. As someone who has lived in poverty, Juanita has a fierce determination for fairness and justice that she has demonstrated at the local, provincial, and national levels.

The 13-minute film celebrates her volunteerism and inspires us to give back. You can see the film by going to the HDC website at: <https://sjhdc.ca/perseverance-the-juanita-black-story/> (Continued on page 18)

From the Editor's desk:

Juanita Black - a champion to cherish
Lorna Brown, sjcommunitynewspaper@gmail.com

I was delighted to see the documentary about Juanita Black come out (see article above and continued on page 18). As many of you know, Juanita was the Coordinator (and heart and soul) of this very newspaper for a decade and more. It was a privilege to have Juanita mentor me as I took on the job of Editor; I literally could not have done it without her.

But what matters more has been her friendship. In the film, Her Honour the Honourable Brenda Murphy, Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick, refers to Juanita as "a force to be reckoned with." I have always said she is a force of nature! When Juanita tackles an issue with all her might and expertise in community development, she is about as unstoppable as a tsunami. She has a strong moral compass, immense wisdom, an irresistible laugh you can always recognise from way down the hall - and she makes the best pickled beets this side of heaven. What's more, she gets things done. Most of the people whose lives she has improved will never know her. It is up to us who do, to say: thank you, Juanita. Forever in your debt.

On to other heroes. I had the pleasure and privilege of interviewing a few friends from the front lines (and one not far behind them) in the Waterloo Village. The paper could not hold more than a sprinkling of the great insights they shared, but you will find how they and their clients are coping with COVID two years in, on page 6. Check out CVRC on page 4. And on the back page our Councillors tell us their hopes for 2022. If you want to tell them your own hopes, their contact details are right there. Are there people in our community whom you would like to see us interview? Always happy to hear from readers. You can leave a message at 647-4850 or email sjcommunitynewspaper@gmail.com. Meanwhile, go to the HDC website and watch the film about Juanita! Peace and joy, all. You get them by giving them.

“The best thing to ever happen to me”



(Photo: Lorraine Brown)

By Lorraine Brown

Hi, my name is Lorraine Brown and I work at the ONE Change. Before having the opportunity, I took a course that they offered, which I was told about by my friend. It was the best thing to ever happen to me. I feel like a different person now than I was before taking that course. I made lots of amazing friends, came more out of my bubble and also learned lots of great skills. Workplace Essential Skills was probably the most helpful thing I learned, especially before going into the working life. I’m so grateful for being able to take that course because they paid you to go, which seemed too good to be true.

I have now been working here since August 2021 and I absolutely love it. I’ve got to work with some very nice individuals and got to do a lot of interesting projects such as Facebook Live, and other engaging videos. I probably had the most fun making a video for why people should vote. I enjoyed doing it the most because I got to get people’s word across and let them be heard, which was nice.

I’m from the North End so I know most of the people that come in, and I just love making a difference in the area I grew up in. We do a lot for people here such as food programs, programs for kids to attend, adults, sports, and so much more. Even though after all the years the North End is changing, the ONE Change helps bring everyone together, because

we are all ONE!

Barry Ogden

Ward 2 City Councillor

Email: barry.ogden@saintjohn.ca

Phone: 639-1334

Online activities for youth

By Jonathan Driscoll,
ONE Change

For 2022, the ONE Change has expanded its learning and direction for youth to online by offering free online kits for all youth to take part in and stay engaged with some familiar faces they know from ONE Change. The question we asked ourselves was: how can we stay engaged with youth, have fun, and keep them active in a time where everyone is encouraged to stay home? Typically, ONE Change offers countless programs to youth throughout the week, so all the mentors came up with an idea to do a Virtual Creation Station online every Tuesday and Wednesday. Each video has crafts, word of the day, and some fun fitness to get their brains and bodies moving! With three lives already up on our Facebook we have seen countless engagements with not only the youth but their parents as well. This project has even sparked new members in our community to get involved. The ONE Change staff are hard at work making new fun and exciting content for youth, and even a cool new project coming that will reach out to all ages. Be sure to follow us on Facebook at The ONE Change INC to see all the new and innovative projects coming to light this year! And if you or anyone you know can benefit from an online activity kit, give us a call to register while supplies last at (506) 658-2980. Together we will stay engaged so that together we are ONE.



Youth activity materials (Photo: Christa Petts)

ONE Change Afterschool program



Afterschool children at ONE Change (Photo: Jonathan Driscoll)

By Latoya Grant, ONE Change

Our Afterschool program is where children from Grades K to 5 join us to learn new things, make crafts, and play games. As we wrap up another year of programs. I would like to say “thank you” to the children and parents who have continued to show their support during these difficult times. From September to December the children have been hard at work on special projects at the Nick Nicolle Centre. Our afterschool kids were busy making turkeys, penguins, snowman, and Santa to help decorate our Centre, which they really enjoy doing. They also have been learning about different cultures and holidays. They love hanging around with their peers, learning and exploring new things. The children always enjoy their time at the Centre. We can’t wait until the children are able to come again.

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.-4 p.m. and Thursdays 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Vaccination Lamination

Do you need your vaccination record laminated and made to fit into your wallet? Call and make an appointment with Lisa in the office and she can do this for you at no charge. Donations are appreciated.

Tax season

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 them up in two to three business days.

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 vegetables? 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 your name, phone number, and pickup location.) Money is the due the second Friday of the month with pick-up the following Friday, 12-4 p.m.

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

Internet Access

PULSE has a tablet available at no cost for residents' use to access health appointments. Please call ahead to schedule at 632-6807.

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



Raise the Roof a success!

By Lisa Morris, PULSE

If you're driving by PULSE, you may notice the new addition in the driveway: a brand-new shed! Thanks to Simonds High and the Framing & Sheathing 110 & Residential Finish 120 classes for the amazing work, and "thank you" to Loyalist City Towing for fitting it perfectly in our parking lot. And, of course, "thank you" to the community for helping raise the needed funds for this wonderful project!



(Photo: Lisa Morris)

The Honorable Arlene Dunn
MLA Saint John Harbour

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PULSE pantry hours



PULSE PANTRY

PLEASE CALL AHEAD IF POSSIBLE 632-6807

February	10 th & 24 th	10am to 2pm
March	10 th & 24 th	10am to 2pm
April	7 th & 21 st	10am to 2pm

251 Wentworth St
Ph: 632-6807

Please bring your own bag if you can.
We are always looking for donations of reusable & plastic bags!

The PULSE Pantry Mission is to work together both residents and community partners to create a friendly, nonjudgmental environment where South End residents in need can receive food and personal items once per month, to help create 1-2 days' worth of meals and connect with programs and services in the community.



Thank
YOU

Thank-you everyone for the overwhelming support PULSE received this holiday season. With your support we provided with 50 Christmas Food Hampers & Stockings filled with goodies and will be able to offer much needed weekly food programs to our residents over the next few winter months.

Fundy Regional Service Commission
The Port St
St Police Association
Chipman Hill Suites
Wayne Long-Personal
TD Canada Trust
Cathy Lutz Delaquis Grant
Thomas Murphy
Loblaws
Cora's Breakfast
Dr. Brown & Associates
SH-Rothesay Conservative CDA
Cloud 5
Saint John Bakery
Erin's Extraordinary Epicure
Grannan's
UNB Nursing Students
The Feel Good Store
Ami Tea
Shoppers Drug Mart
Mahogany Manor
Graybar
Steve Deaver Agency Ltd
Private Donations

South Neighbourhood Contact

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



Working through COVID in Crescent Valley



(Photo: Brady Rimes)

By Joy Comeau, Community Liaison,
Crescent Valley Resource Centre (CVRC)

At the CVRC, we have been hopeful and committed to our community during these trying times. Through creativity and a little bit of revamping we continue to offer food programs, literacy support, resume writing, clothing and essential items while continuing to fax, print, and offer practical help whenever possible.

When we can offer in-person programs our numbers may be lower but there is much enthusiasm from those attending. Smaller numbers have proven to provide opportunity for openness in dialogue and a genuine sense of camaraderie as well.

We have increased our ways to reach people by word of mouth or check-in phone calls for those without access to social media. Although social media remains our number one tool, the one-on-one contact has resulted in amazing conversations and developing relationships we were not expecting. The ongoing support from our partners throughout these times has been flexible and unwavering and we are grateful.

As the new year unfolds with all its uncertainty, we will focus on remaining just as hopeful and just as committed as always.

Creative Commons at Hazen White–St. Francis (HWSF)



HWSF students (above) at the Lego wall; (below left) playing Jenga; and (below right) playing with the puppet show theatre
(Photos: Victoria Lawrence)

By Victoria Lawrence, Community Schools Coordinator, HWSF

As part of our journey to enrich students' learning and give them the opportunities to learn and create in different ways, HWSF School has created a Creative Commons room for all classes to use. The Creative Commons houses different stations where students can play, create, learn, and explore. Inside there is: an art station where students can be creative; a Lego wall where students can work on fine motor skills and problem solving; a Playdough station and puppet show station where students can be imaginative; and a puzzle and games station where students can play but also work on shape recognition, concentration, patience, team building, and a slew of other skills. We even have a sewing station where students can learn to sew! The Creative Commons also houses our iPads, Bee-Bots, and other technology that students use to play educational games, work on skills, and learn coding. The Creative Commons room has been such a beneficial addition to our school, and we are excited to develop and improve it as time goes on.



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

It's traditional...

The oldest have been with us for centuries, the newest - they're being created everyday. It is 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.

There are many traditions surrounding funerals.

Kodie Holmes

Kate Lavhey

Doug Ells

Lethe Kerr

Karen Belyea

Nancy Matthews

Gabe White

The Honourable Trevor Holder

MLA Portland - Simonds

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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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693-8513



This lovely poster created by Madelynn Ryan, Youth Program Coordinator, Carleton Community Centre



LETS EAT

Carleton Community Centre and Hillcrest Baptist Church have partnered to provide grab and go meals to the West Side!

MONDAYS
Come down to Carleton Community Centre (120 Market Place) from 3:30pm-5:00pm and take a meal to go.

WEDNESDAYS
Come down to Carleton Community Centre (120 Market Place) from 3:30pm-5:00pm and take a meal to go.

FRIDAYS
Head up to Hillcrest Church (476 Lancaster Ave) at 11:30am and take a meal to go.

*Serving while supplies last



Sledding at Seaside Park



Olivia, Meadow, and Callie are going down the hill on sleds while Elena is waving in the back. (Photo: David MacDonald)

By David MacDonald (He/Him), Team Leader, Seaside Elementary School, Youth Programming / BGC Greater Saint John


At BGC Seaside Park, we have been able to take advantage of the weather and snow to have as much fun outside as possible. We are always bundled up and ready for the winter weather.


The kids have been busy on the hills outside using the sleds while also building lots of snow men and forts in the snow mounds. Once the snow starts at Seaside Park, the sleds don't stop.


Our kids are staying upbeat and spreading positive messages to each other to maintain a creative and encouraging atmosphere.





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

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Constituency Office is located
at side of building facing Church

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**West Side
Neighbourhood Contact**

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Coping with COVID, two years in: the *Around the Block* interview

ATB checked in with four people working on front-line issues in the Waterloo Village, to see how their clients, staff, and volunteers were doing, and to hear their hopes for 2022. Their resilience and laughter as they serve the most vulnerable in the face of constant stress, frustration, and fatigue are admirable beyond words.

Evelyn McNulty, Romero House

The biggest change is that we've gone to take-out instead of a dine-in service. That's impacted the people we serve because they can no longer come inside, they just get a meal and move on, which means they don't get the service above and beyond that we can provide. It was very commonplace for our volunteers to sit down to talk with folks in the dining room. Now people don't have the ability to say when they need something. If we couldn't help the person ourselves we'd be able to source help from someone else, or at least make them feel better about their situation even if we couldn't do anything physically. That's lacking because it's so quick at the window.



(Photo: Romero House)

A worst case scenario: what will we do if everything shuts down? What do we do if COVID gets one of us? So far we've dodged that bullet but it's always been my concern since we've started, that something would happen and we couldn't serve. To me that would be devastating. What would the people eat? A lot of people rely on us for their food. A lot of people. What could government do? A universal living wage for everybody. What we pay people through social networks is always below what they need to survive, so they're still struggling. [Editor's note: see page 10.] And universal health care that includes prescriptions. There are people who need cancer medicine that don't get it. I know people that come to the window who ration their insulin. Not everybody is on assistance and has a health card, and even the health card is limited in what it provides. There are all kinds of issues that we as a society have dropped the ball on - 100%. I'm a firm believer unless it impacts you directly in some way you don't realize it.

Melanie Vautour, Fresh Start

We did a big survey. The ideas of isolation didn't really change for our clients. They are reporting mental health struggles with COVID like those of us with privilege – but nothing changed for them that way. They weren't welcome places; they didn't feel comfortable going places; they don't go out to restaurants, they don't go to the gym, because they're poor! So none of that changed for



Kim Brooks - Peer Support; Melanie Vautour - Executive Director; Kelly Dow - Housing Support (Photo: Fresh Start)

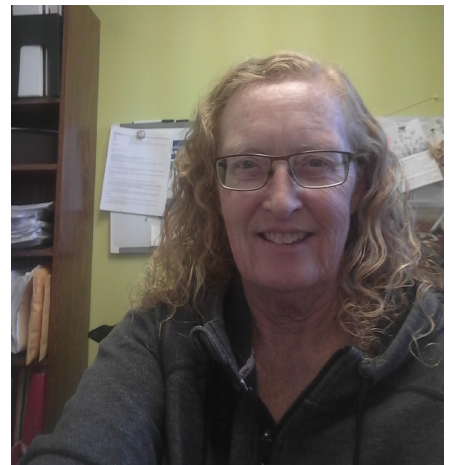
them. The only thing that changed is, the few resources they did have became harder to access. The rest of us still struggle with feelings of isolation and loss, and yet we have this subsection of our society that live with that every day - and have for years. And we forget that.

There are so many things government could be doing, coming from a lens of homelessness: more support for housing, whether it's subsidized or affordable rent. If we want people to reduce their risk of spreading COVID and other illnesses and even the social complications that come with homelessness and the precariously housed, government could be doing a lot more to ensure that everyone

can access housing. But on a very low level, easy to do, is making sure everyone has access to N95 masks. Government could be making sure every postal code in the province is receiving a mail package of face masks. If you're living in poverty and you're struggling, it's an added expense that people just can't afford.

Diane Kerns, Avenue B

I don't think we're going to see an end of COVID in 2022, but I hope that our systems actively attempt to make changes to accommodate the people who most need them – such as a space for people to gather, to get cool in the summer and warm in the winter, and a washroom so they can go to the bathroom with dignity and wash their hands. We need to look at the individuals and say, "What can we be doing there within our own systems?" Whether that's at urgent care, emergency, or Social Development or whatever, it's always about statistics. We need all of those systems to be client-focused rather than systems-focused.



(Photo: Diane Kerns)

People want to help. We couldn't have our volunteers doing the things they usually did, so they found other things to do - treat bags for Christmas, getting us things we needed, or picking up supplies. Way back at the beginning do you remember there was a shortage of toilet paper? A lady dropped by with one of the huge packages of toilet paper and said, "I was allowed to buy two, so I bought one for us and I thought you guys should have one." How many people who were only allowed two packs, not knowing when they might get another, is going to give away that second packet? It doesn't seem so crazy now but at that moment in time every paper product was cleared off the shelves, and they chose to give us one of their two packs. That's a pretty amazing volunteer.

Cathy Foote (Boyce), Human Development Council

It's been really difficult for individuals experiencing homelessness - and even people who are housed, because their support people can't see them as frequently. They can't go to drop-in centres [during Level 3], they aren't able to go places to use the bathroom or wash their hands. There have been a lot of impacts on the most vulnerable sector that has really increased the strain both on them and on the frontline agencies. There is a level of resiliency, but I think compounded with all the other barriers that they already experience, it's really challenging for folks right now. It's one thing to give someone an apartment, but it's another thing to help them sustain that. It's up to us as a community, as well as government, to look at the supports that people need - and the individualized supports that people need - to be able to be successful in their unit once they are housed. There is a serious gap in services. COVID seems to have really impacted those who are most vulnerable, with addictions and mental health issues; they just continue to fall through the gaps. And the gaps are becoming wider.



(Photo: Cathy Foote)

Waterloo-Village Neighbourhood Contact

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647-8047



Operation Feed SJ comes to HWSF!



By Victoria Lawrence, Community Schools Coordinator, HWSF

On December 13th 2021, Hazen White–St. Francis (HWSF) School received a generous donation of 70 non-perishable food bags from Operation Feed SJ. This donation enabled us to support 70 of our families’ nutritional needs at such an important time. Each of these bags was hand-delivered to our families.

Big thanks go out to many folks in our community; a big “thank you” to Operation Feed SJ for considering our school for this donation and for delivering the 70 bags to us. “Thank you” to our staff for the help with calling families and distribution of bags, and “thank you” to Erica Lane and a few folks from Anglophone South School District (ASDS) for the help with distribution and delivery. It takes a village!

(Right) Operation Feed SJ trucks and (above) the 70 food bags that were donated (Photos: Victoria Lawrence)



PES students create artwork uptown



PES Grade 7 students (Photo: Stephen Huxter)

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

Princess Elizabeth School, in conjunction with our PALS partners, were excited to team up with Delta Hotels. Selected students from our school participated in an art enrichment project at the Delta Hotel located in beautiful Uptown Saint John. Our student artists helped add festive energy to the property by painting the windows on King Street. Even though our school year has looked different this year, the holiday spirit of the season was alive and well in PES. Our students were excited to participate and have the opportunity to showcase their artistic abilities for the City of Saint John residents and Delta Hotel.

Welcome to the Den!



Two views of the Den (Photos: Prince Charles School)

By Lori Doyle, Prince Charles School

Prince Charles School has some exciting news to share! We are creating a Monarch Den at the Home of the Monarchs.

This spot will offer some fun activities for students in each middle school class. Some of the activities include air hockey, drawing, puzzles, or just hanging out during nutrition break and noon. Students are loving this new space that our middle school team is creating; special thanks to Ms. Doucette for leading the project!

If you think you might have something that might fit - a ping pong table (delivered) if it’s not too much to ask, or a coffee table (well, a juice box table in our case!) -

please give us a call!
(506) 658-5355





Supporting our Neighbourhood Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12

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- Volunteers
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- Coaches
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- Breakfast/Lunch Programs
- Enrichment Opportunities
- After School Programs
- Career Explorations
- PALS En Route to Success
- ... and so much more!

Help Make a Difference!



Deborah Fisher
Susan Tipper
Michael Whelton
info@PALS.com



Celebrating our staff this New Year



“Storm clouds will in time pass away, the sun again will shine bright and clear.” Carter Family, “Keep on the Sunny Side” (Photo: Ben Gillcrist)

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

2022 has certainly challenged us, out of the gate. With concerns swirling around the Omicron variant and classes shifted over to online learning (at the time of writing), this year has begun like no other for our school system. Mindful of that reality, I want to celebrate the incredible staff at SJBKE School for going above and beyond to make sure that this building continues to function through these unprecedented times. Be they teachers or administration, Education Assistants or specialists, custodians, tech support or facilities, everyone is putting their best foot forward to maintain virtual relationships with students and ensure we are ready to welcome everyone back with open arms when the time comes, hopefully soon! As I sit in my office writing this, rays of morning sun shining through my window, I know that, while we may have a way to go yet, a brighter tomorrow is coming for all of us. May it be sooner rather than later.

Centennial students helping seniors



Our inter-generational project with grade 3 students connecting with our seniors in a safe way (Photo: Kate MacDonald)

By Kate MacDonald, Community Schools Coordinator, Centennial School

Centennial has had a very busy season with our students. We have had several wonderful field trips, including finishing up our intergenerational project done in conjunction with UNB, GNB, Elizabeth Fry, and InterAction Theatre. We have had the opportunity to brighten some seniors' day by providing cards with student art and messages of encouragement.

Our holiday season was made so very special by our amazing partners and supporters who have provided such heartfelt donations and meaningful gestures of giving to our students. We are so thankful to all of those who contribute to the well-being of our school and students in every season. In the coming months we are looking forward to expanding the ways in which we give back to our neighbourhood.

Outdoor Phys Ed at Forest Hills



Forest Hills students doing snowga – yoga in the snow! (Photo: Chris MacLean)

By Chris MacLean, Elementary Phys Ed Specialist, Forest Hills School

Since in-person learning has returned during the pandemic, we at Forest Hills have been conducting our Physical Education (PE) classes outdoors almost exclusively. At first it was a recommendation from the Province to hold PE classes outside, but once we started to do so, it became a preference. The benefits of outdoor learning are many, but the most important of all is the positive effects it has on our students. They seem to be happier, engaged in activities, and more cooperative. Spending the extra time outside also helps create individual resiliency showing our students that just because the weather may not be ideal, does not mean that we cannot go out and enjoy it. If anything positive can be taken away from this pandemic experience, it is that it has proven to us that spending more time outside in the fresh air is the best way to move and learn!

Lots happening at Simonds!

By Jennifer Carhart, Principal, Simonds High School

Simonds High School had a proud and spirit-filled end of first semester in spite of the interruptions to in-person learning. As a school we were able to offer a special holiday breakfast surprise at break to our students, which served to further engage our students in community-building. Our Student Representative Council (SRC) visited our local fire station to surprise them with a treat to thank them for their continued community support. Virtually, our SRC was able to attend the Provincial Leadership conference, which proved to be a tremendous learning and sharing opportunity for our youth. Our student leadership team has been continuing the work on theme weeks, opening a Seabee Merchandise Store, and working with the administration to build and enhance student life. 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! Below: Our lovely SRC just before they logged into their provincial meeting. (Photo: Jennifer Carhart)



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



RELEVANCE

SUPPORT

VALUE

In Partnership with



Saint John Region: blmnb@blmnb.org Moncton Region: president@ncanb.org Fredericton Region: president_yusuf@nbba.ca Miramichi Region: info@aeara.org

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

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.

At this time are still no face-to-face meetings in the Saint John region, due to COVID. However, we continue to do our Thursday and Sunday Zoom meetings at 7 p.m. If anyone is interested in attending, please send your request to:

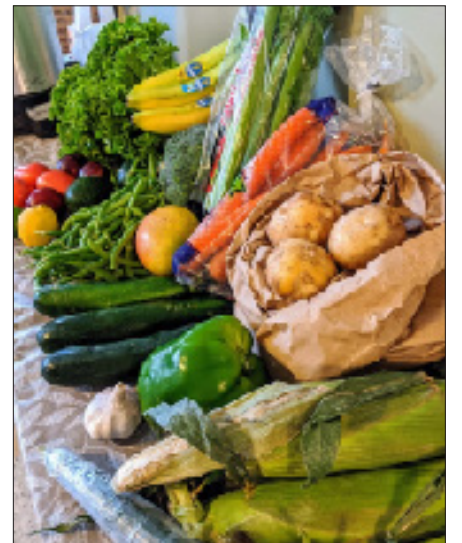
district15mprovinces@yahoo.com

You will receive an invitation from Ann Wilson approximately 15-20 minutes prior to the meeting.

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 February 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 on page 5, 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 February 17th and orders, if possible, will be delivered on February 18th (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 80 winners were:
Donnie Davis and Daryl Barton.**

PRUDE Inc. REAL Women Project

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

Our REAL Women Project is looking for stories from women in an effort to address the challenges, issues, and trends that have been impediments to female advancement in the Saint John area over the past few years. The project's recommendations will eventually be presented to the governing councils of various area municipalities.

Maybe you have challenges at work or daycare or maybe you are going through domestic violence or any uncomfortable experiences. You can tell us your story at any time with any format. It's anonymous. You can upload your video/voice recording/written narrative to our website. Or you can contact Brenda at brenda@prudeinc.org or call (506) 634-3088.

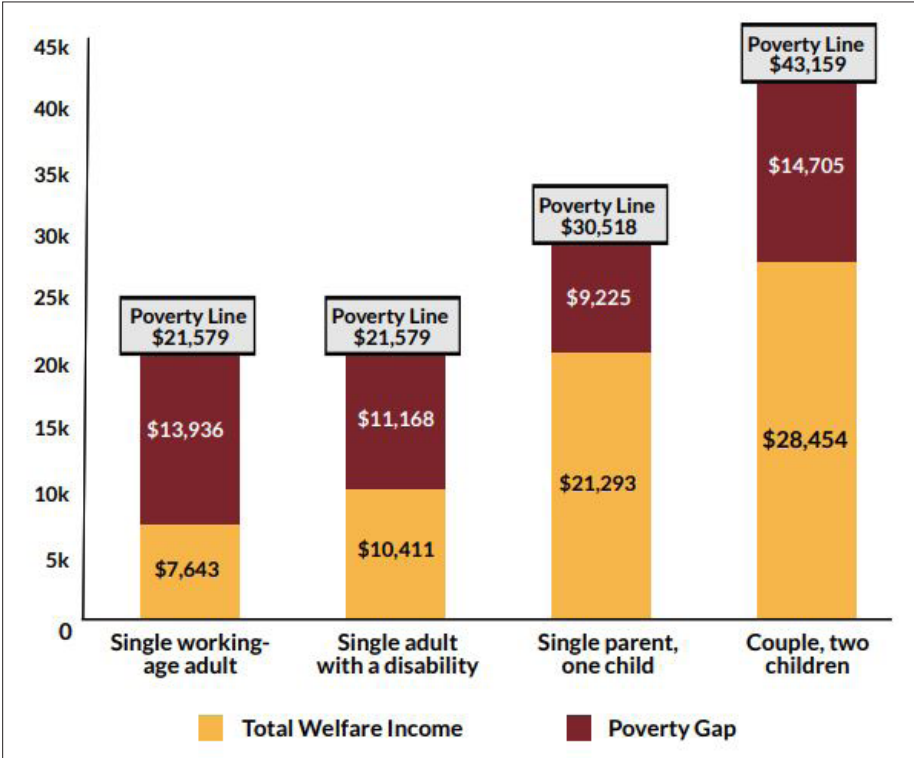
Our REAL Women Project has a 23-member committee made up of politicians, stakeholders, academics, community leaders, law enforcement representatives, and multicultural associations.





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Welfare incomes:
keeping people in poverty



Total welfare incomes in New Brunswick and poverty gaps.
Data source: Maytree, Welfare in Canada, 2020

By Heather Atcheson, Researcher, Human Development Council

More than 28,000 New Brunswickers are Social Assistance recipients. They are living in poverty.

Canada has an official poverty line called the Market Basket Measure. It is based on a basket of goods and services that represent a basic standard of living. A single working-age adult in Saint John would need an income of \$21,579 to be over the poverty line. A single parent with one child would need \$30,518.

The chart above shows that the amount of money total welfare incomes provide is far below the poverty line. A single working-age adult would need to receive almost \$14,000 more than their welfare amount just to get above the poverty level!

Last October, the provincial government announced plans for Social Assistance reform. The wage exemption – the amount that could be earned before benefits would be clawed back – was increased and Social Assistance rates were indexed to inflation. But rates remain too low. They need to be increased!

In from the Cold campaign a success

By Cathy Foote (Boyce), Affordable Housing Specialist, Human Development Council

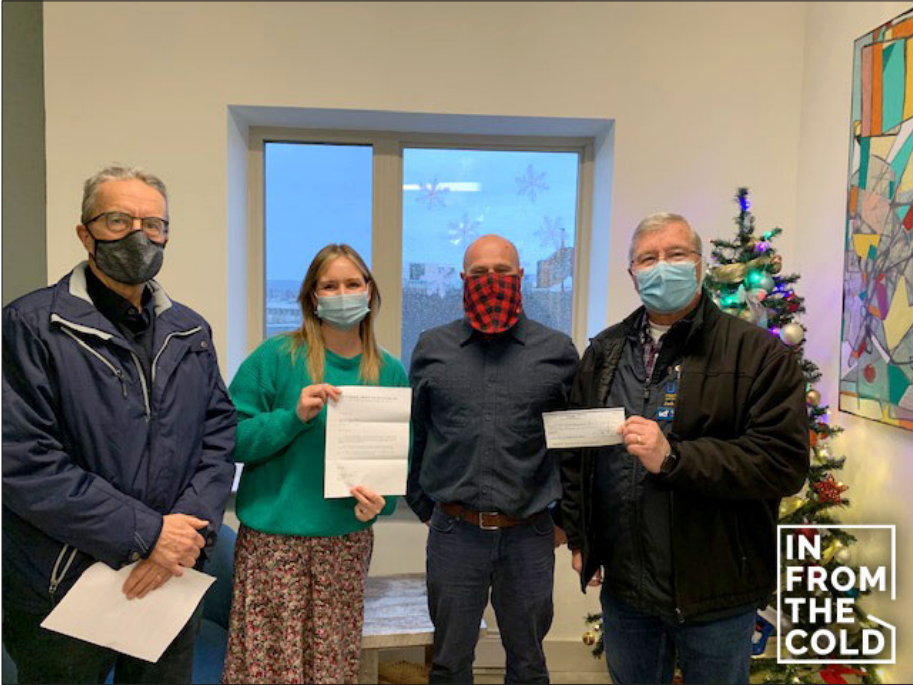
The last issue of *Around the Block* reported that Saint John's homeless-serving sector (HIPSJ) was working hard to get 30 people "In from the Cold" before the holidays.

HIPSJ is proud to announce that the campaign was a success - approximately 23 people were in their own apartments before the holidays and seven more will be transitioned into new units within the next couple of months. Housing offers will continue throughout the year, part of the effort to end chronic homelessness.

Working together is the name of the game for the HIPSJ – housing and homeless serving agencies in the city, including Coverdale, Outflow, Housing Alternatives, Fresh Start, Social Development, TRC, First Steps, John Howard Society, Elizabeth Fry Society, PCAP, Hestia House, NBACL, Youth Unbound, and the HDC.

- Generous Saint Johners also showed up in support:
- UCT donated funds for furniture.
 - Foghorn Brewing's patrons donated money and material items.
 - Community members made financial donations.
 - Habitat for Humanity offered furniture, tents, and sleeping bags.
 - Members of the business community, headed up by Canada Homes for Rent, made over \$20,000 in donations which will go toward subsidizing new tenancies in the New Year.

While the work to end chronic homelessness continues, the campaign made a big difference in the lives of 23 folks before the holidays. Thanks to everyone involved and those who supported the effort in such a big way!



Two members of the United Commercial Travellers Jack Kidd Council flank Cathy and her HDC colleague Chris Gorman receiving a donation that will go toward furnishings (Photo: HDC)



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Your money matters: Judi Chisholm Bursary winners



By Darlene Jones, Money Matters Coordinator, Kaleidoscope Social Impact (formerly Saint John Community Loan Fund)

As we ride out the sub-tundra temperatures let's take a moment to look back on the winners from the Judi Chisholm Memorial Bursary. November was Financial Literacy Month and we awarded two people with the bursary.

Amanda Smith took the Money Matters course twice, through Power Up and Power Up to Employment. She was able to improve her credit score and bought a car last December. She is now enrolled in New Brunswick Community College's (NBCC) Human Services program.

Shelly Theissen is an Indigenous social worker who is striving to re-enter the workforce and "get back to her life." She took Money Matters through the Workplace Essential Skills (WES) program at the Learning Exchange.

Before the ceremony we had a guest speaker, Hallie Wedge, who spoke brilliantly. Hallie is a St Mary's University student on path to graduate debt-free. The interview with Hallie is posted on our FB page: @loanfund

**Despite a pandemic we are encouraged
by all our clients who strive to make
better financial decisions daily.**

**If you need help with your budget or
any other financial matters, please
reach out to me. Darlene@loanfund.ca
or at 652-5626 Ext 4.**



Left to right: Shelly Theissen and Amanda Smith with our guest speaker, Hallie Wedge. (Photo: Guillermo Marroquin)

ACAP thanks our volunteers



By Shauna Sands, Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP)

Volunteers and community partners are critical to the success of ACAP Saint John. We would like to thank every single one of our volunteers that took the time to help us this year. We couldn't have done it without you!

During the 2021 field season, we had over 900 volunteers help us remove 2,500 kg of debris from the environment and our waterways, and plant over 4,000 native trees throughout Greater Saint John.

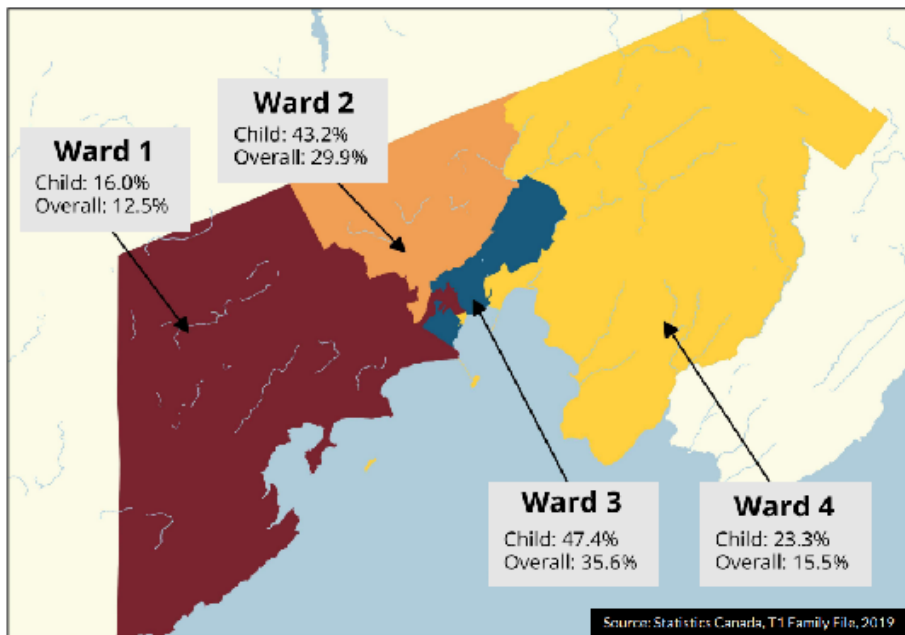
If you'd like to sign up to be a volunteer for the upcoming field season, check out our website: www.acapsj.org/volunteers





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One in five New Brunswick children living in poverty prior to pandemic



Child and overall poverty rates in Saint John's Municipal Wards

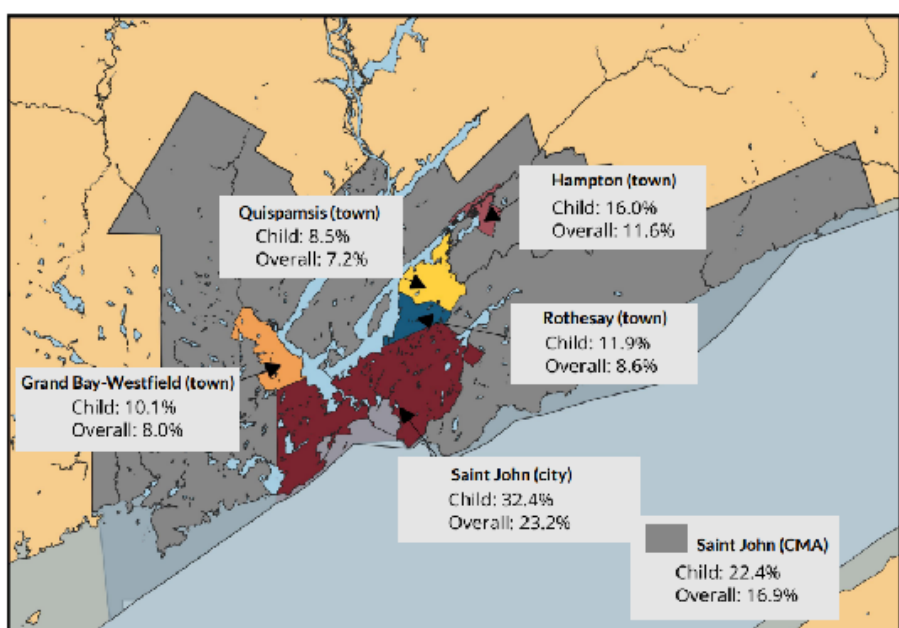
By Heather Atcheson, Researcher, Human Development Council

New Brunswick's 2021 Child Poverty Report Card—released by the Human Development Council—shows that New Brunswick has the fourth-highest provincial rate of child poverty in Canada: 21.7%. This report uses the latest tax filer data. It indicates that the child poverty rate decreased by 0.1% in 2019, leaving 30,190 children in poverty in the province.

Child poverty is unevenly distributed across New Brunswick. Rates range from over 30% in Campbellton, Bathurst and Saint John to 12.2% in Dieppe. Child poverty rates also vary between Saint John and its neighbouring municipalities. For example, the Saint John child poverty rate is 32.4%, while it is 8.5% in Quispamsis. Within Saint John city limits, child poverty is highest in Ward 2 (North End) and Ward 3 (Lower West Side, South End, Silver Falls and Morland Park), with rates above 40%.

Current child poverty rates could be higher than the rates reported here as a consequence of COVID-19. The effects of the pandemic on child poverty will be explored in future report cards. To read the full report, visit <https://sjhdc.ca/>.

Our findings are discouraging. They reveal that child poverty reduction in New Brunswick has stalled. All levels of government must prioritize ending child poverty - starting now. Young lives are at stake.



Child and overall poverty rates in the Saint John Census Metropolitan Area



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Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) celebrates 50 years of service

EVOLVING TO SERVE YOUTH BETTER-50 YEARS OF MENTORING



Big Brothers
Big Sisters

1972

2022

By Rhoda Welshman, BBBS

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saint John is proud to announce that in 2022 we'll be celebrating our 50th anniversary! BBBS has served youth ages 6-16 in Saint John, Kings, and Charlotte Counties since 1972.

Over the years, we have provided mentoring programs for children and youth in our community that promote strong and healthy relationships, while building confidence and resiliency. BBBS Mentoring Programs include our Traditional Matches (Bigs & Littles), In-School Matches, Group Programs, and now Virtual Mentoring. We'd like to thank all our supporters, volunteers, families, sponsors, and partners for making all of this possible. With your support, we are making our community a better place by igniting the potential in our youth and providing them with a life-changing experience for many more years to come.

Stay tuned and follow us on our social media channels to learn more about how we'll be celebrating this significant milestone all year long! We are #BiggerTogether.

Bee Me Kidz update



By Kerri Brooks, Program Coordinator and Teacher, Bee Me Kidz

Happy 2022! Did you know with all the levels, phases, and plans always changing, Bee Me Kidz is still helping our families continue to "be the best me they can bee"? When our Saturday program is not able to operate, our team members are busy at the Hive creating fun and interactive lessons for everyone to see.

With kids at home learning away from their teachers and peers, this could cause them to become anxious and worry. Our focus during this time is to give kids and parents some strategies to work through these challenging times. We are helping build the resiliency skills that are needed today and, of course, later in life. Our Bee Me Kidz team has developed strong bonds with our families and we will not let a break in our Saturday program stop that! One mom put on the Bee Me Kidz video and the kids were so excited to see a familiar Bee Me Kidz face that they all jumped up yelling and waving "hello" at the television.

It's the small things like this that keep us smiling and doing what we love to do: helping families to "be the best me they can bee."

If you would like to see some of our fun activities check out our Facebook page at Bee Me Kidz.

RBC Raise the Grade



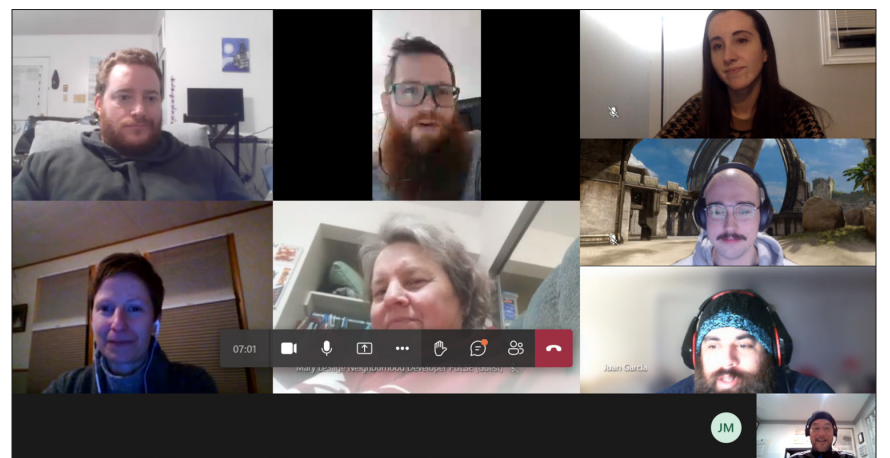
Teachers Patrick Macintyre (bottom left) and Rob Vesna (bottom right) mentoring and playing games with students Gabe Orme (blue sweater) and Zoe Harper (striped shirt). (Photo: Anna Merrithew)

By Anna Merrithew, Education Coordinator, BGC

BGC Greater Saint John is offering a multifaceted free educational evening program equipped with certified teachers and mentors called "RBC Raise the Grade." The program is based out of their Education Centre in Saint John at 37 Hanover St. They are guiding high school students to identify and meet their personal and educational goals during the evenings, Monday through Friday.

RBC Raise the Grade thrives on the one-on-one support that students don't typically get in a traditional classroom, and they have access to a tech lab with everything they need to achieve educational success. Current students have expressed how RBC Raise the Grade has been essential for their learning and mental wellness during this pandemic, especially during Level 3. Having mentors and peers available, whether it be virtually or in person, has been essential for their motivation to stay on track educationally. To learn more or sign up for Raise the Grade, visit our website: www.sjbgclub.com/raise-the-grade/.

Civic Tech Saint John



CTSJ meeting online with Community and Neighbourhood Developers (Photo: CTSJ)

By Volunteer Co-organizers

Civic Tech Saint John (CTSJ) is a special project of the Human Development Council to foster social cohesion and high-impact volunteer opportunities for people interested in using technology for social good in the region. They have joined forces with University of New Brunswick Saint John (UNBSJ) to refurbish used computers donated by New Brunswick Community College and UNBSJ by the college's Information Technology (IT) students for use in the neighbourhoods. The use and deployment of the equipment is conducted in consultation with the newly appointed Neighborhood Developers serving the community. CTSJ meets (virtually) every Tuesday evening at 7 p.m. For more information, go to www.facebook.com/groups/civictechsja/about.

St Luke’s update



(Photo: St. Luke’s)

By The Rev. Dr. Cole Hartin, Rector
St. Luke’s Anglican Church, Parish of Portland
369 Main St. N.

It’s been a tough season for our community at St. Luke’s, just as it has been for many people. While January left us transitioning most of our programming to online, we continue to offer our hearty (and free!) Monday take-out lunches from 12-12:30 p.m. This year we are stepping up our game, and trying to ensure that we make the best meals possible for whoever is hungry.

We’d love to have you stop by for a meal, or if, you are interested in volunteering, we’d love to have you as well. You can reach out to us for details at stlukesportland@gmail.com

Caring for our community remains deeply important to us at St. Luke’s and 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. During the lockdown, our Sunday worship streams on our Facebook page at 10:30 a.m. We are looking forward to welcoming folks back into our building as soon as we can.

**We continue to offer our hearty
(and free!) Monday take-out lunches
from 12-12:30 p.m.**

The Saint John Community Christmas Exchange

By Beth Roy, President, Saint John Christmas Exchange

The Saint John Christmas Exchange has wrapped up another successful year. We thought we would give you a little insight into how we operate.

A few stats for you... we were pleased to have been able to help 3361 adults this year of whom 2185 had families. Over 600 people used our Facebook page. We cover the area from Hampton to Welsford and service over 35 churches.

The Exchange coordinates all the people who register at the churches / agencies. The churches themselves not only register people but give out either gift cards or Christmas boxes. The Exchange checks to see that everyone is being looked after and checks for duplication. The churches provide for people from their own funds and once they run out of that money, look to the Exchange for additional funding. The Exchange contacts previous donors and new sponsors willing to help. We get our funding from individuals, businesses, schools, service groups, sports teams, etc.

We are lucky enough to have continuous donors. There is an establishment on the West Side that starts collecting donations in January of each year and uses that money to support families looking for help. This year they looked after 43 families through one of the churches. Amazing community support!

Hope this gives you an idea of what our program is about. The volunteers who operate the Exchange are very dedicated and look forward to serving you again in the future.

Stay safe!

**We were pleased to have been able to help
3361 adults this year, of whom 2185 had families**

BGC news: Hip Hop program



The Hip Hop group doing a dance circle. Everyone stands in a circle and claps for whoever wants to take a turn and dance in the middle!
(Photo: Rachel Murphy)

By Rachel Murphy, BGC

We have an awesome program we want to share with the South End community. We have partnered with The Studio Dance School to offer a free Hip Hop program to children in grades three and up. We have been so grateful to them for offering this program to our youth in the South End. It has given a lot of our kids a place to go and be active and creative at the same time. It’s been great to see the kids learn something new and love it! We’ve seen some shy kids come out of their shells while participating in Hip Hop, which is just the cherry on top of how great this program is. Hip Hop runs every Monday from 6:30-7:30 p.m. at The Studio, St. James street location. If you’re interested in joining, please reach out to us at (506) 653-7368 or by email at rachel.murphy@sjclub.ca.

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Profile of a volunteer: Kate Frego

By Lorne Daltrop, Saint John Newcomers Centre

Kate Frego has been a dedicated volunteer at the Saint John Newcomers Centre for the past six years.

The first idea that Kate had was to create a space where newcomer women could find community and share their stories. That became the Craft & Conversation group, where women could come and feel at home. It was a refuge where they could meet other women like themselves.

“At first, the newcomer women were very anxious, not knowing exactly what these Canadian women were up to. But soon they realized we were genuine and really just wanted to help.”

Kate says it was really about integration, helping families to become part of the community. It was a huge change at first for many people, but coming to a spot in the Crescent Valley Resource Centre every Friday provided a social environment that made it easier.

The weekly Craft & Conversation group quickly expanded from a few to sometimes more than 30 women. Quite a success story.

“At first, the newcomer women were very anxious... But soon they realized we were genuine and really just wanted to help.”



(Photo: submitted by Kate Frego)

Profil d’une bénévole : Kate Frego

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

Kate Frego est une bénévole dévouée au Centre des nouveaux arrivants de Saint-Jean depuis six ans.

La première idée de Kate était de créer un espace où les nouvelles arrivantes pourraient trouver une communauté et partager leurs histoires. C’est devenu le groupe Craft & Conversation, où les femmes pouvaient venir se sentir chez elles. C’était un refuge où elles pouvaient rencontrer d’autres femmes comme elles.

« Au début, les nouvelles arrivantes étaient très anxieuses, ne sachant pas exactement ce que ces femmes canadiennes faisaient. Mais bientôt, elles ont réalisé que nous étions authentiques et que nous voulions vraiment aider. »

Kate dit qu’il s’agissait vraiment d’intégration, d’aider les familles à faire partie de la communauté. C’était un énorme changement au début pour beaucoup de gens, mais venir tous les vendredis au Crescent Valley Resource Centre offrait un environnement social qui facilitait les choses.

Le groupe hebdomadaire Craft & Conversation est rapidement passé de quelques femmes à parfois plus de 30 femmes. Tout un succès.

A safe and accessible space for women in recovery - online!



By Julie Atkinson BA (Hons) MA, Executive Director (she/her), Sophia Recovery Centre

The COVID pandemic has sparked many conversations about what services are essential in our community. We know that ongoing connection is essential for sustained recovery from addiction. Sophia Recovery Centre has continued to provide recovery support for women throughout the pandemic. Currently, our programs are being delivered mainly via phone and online. We have all learned to use Zoom and other tools so that we can continue to check in with each other weekly or more often as needed.

If you need support, please reach out by phone or by messaging us on our Facebook page. We are still here for you - just a few clicks away on your phone or computer.

Central office line: 633-8783
Saint John Peer Support line: 271-0385 (Nicole)

Chroma inclusion workshop

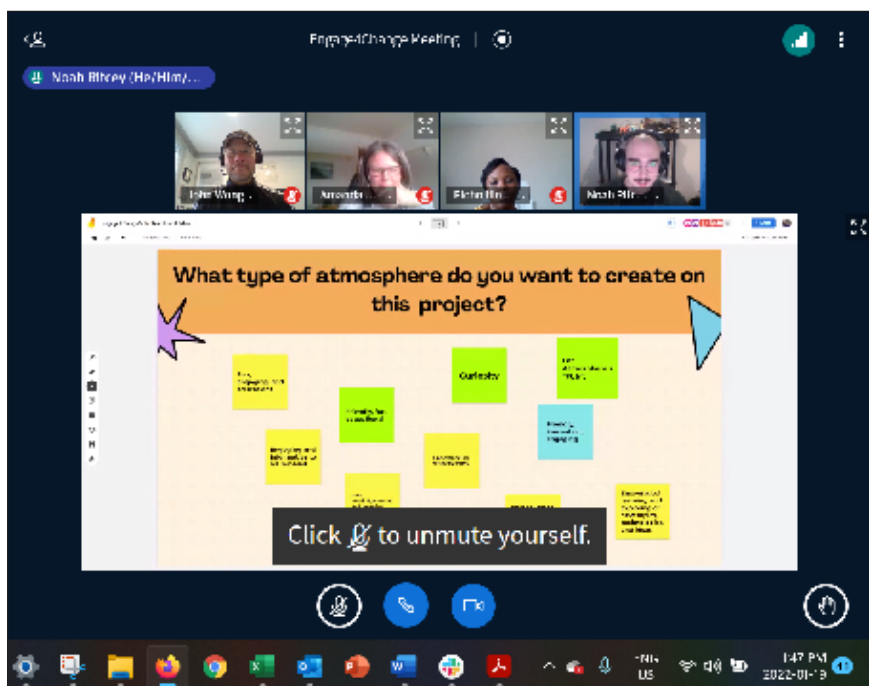
By Claire Hunter and Kieran Pridgeon, Chroma NB

Chroma is launching an educational workshop on Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual Plus (2SLGBTQIA+) inclusion for local businesses and organizations. Kieran Pridgeon, Chroma board member and cofounder (*seen right*), has developed this meaningful workshop to help organizations better support and serve the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, including clients, customers, and employees. With a significant focus on using inclusive language, this training highlights actions and words, both verbally and on signage, that play a crucial role in creating welcoming environments. A unique benefit of the workshop goes beyond the training itself. Chroma offers continued support to participants, maintaining open conversations that aren't cut off when the workshop is finished. Chroma hopes to spark discussion in those around us and together work as a community to make spaces accessible and safe. Email query@chromanb.ca for more information.



(Photo: Kieran Pridgeon)

Engage4Change



Engage4Change planning meeting via Zoom (Photo: Brilliant Labs)

By Brilliant Labs

Brilliant Labs, New Brunswick Community College (NBCC), and students volunteering from the college's Robertson Institute for Community Leadership meet online to discuss Engage4Change, and support children's socioemotional and educational development through afterschool, STEAM-based, experiential learning activities and programs. (STEAM = Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math.) This community-based project is a partnership between NBCC, Brilliant Labs, and ONE Change at the Nick Nicolle Community Centre and Teen Resource Centre/Pathways to Education Saint John. While the Omicron COVID-19 variant has temporarily prevented the NBCC students from meeting in-person with the community youth, the project organizers and students are planning for when everyone can finally meet and help support the youth's creativity and learning.

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

Child care spaces available at new Childhood Hub in Saint John



Children from the Early Childhood Hub-South sitting around the table for a mealtime (Photo: Jordan Mattie)

By Shelagh Murphy, Child Care/Camps Communications Coordinator, Saint John Y

Families have a new child care option in Saint John.

Located on Sandy Point Road, close to the Saint John Regional Hospital and UNBSJ, the Early Childhood Hub – North End is a licensed child care facility through the YMCA of Greater Saint John. Utilizing a national play-based curriculum, the Early Childhood Hub is a place for children, ages two to five, to learn and grow through creative play in a nurturing environment. What is unique about the Early Childhood Hub is its development through community partnerships as part of the Saint John Early Childhood Development Coalition to help better serve the needs in the community with access to early learning.

Take a virtual tour of the Early Childhood Hub and learn more at www.saintjohnny.ca. Secure your child's space today by contacting Avril Wood-Toner at 349-6225 or awoodtoner@saintjohnny.ca.

Early Childhood Hub | North
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for ages 2 - 5

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Bunnies are ear-resistible



(Photo: Nicole Parcon)

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

Did you know rabbits are very fragile? They also live for many years. The oldest rabbit on record was 18 years old.

As of 2017, there are 305 breeds of tame rabbits in 70 countries around the world.

Rabbits have been bred since ancient times to get characteristics that we humans like. These include size and body shape, long or short hair, floppy or upright ears, and even ear length.

Rabbits are known for hopping, but they can also jump. In fact, rabbits can jump to great heights and distances; a little over three feet high and a whopping 10 feet long.

Rabbits need special diets, large living areas, exercise, and love to remain happy and healthy. Many rabbits like to live in homes with other rabbits as they form strong emotional bonds.

Saint John SPCA Animal Rescue
285 Bayside Drive
Saint John,NB
E2J 1B1
(506) 642-0920

Cedar Hill - Greenwood Cemetery

Traditional and Cremation Lots Available in Cedar Hill Extension and Greenwood Cemeteries.

New Columbarium at Greenwood Cemetery

*"Because Families Do Want
a Place to Remember..."*

– Please contact our office: 9 am - 4:30 pm weekdays for more details –
1650 Manawagonish Rd. Saint John, NB – 672-4309

Des dons pour aider les familles dans le besoin

Par Dominique Daigle, Agente de développement communautaire, Réseau de santé Horizon

Grâce à un excellent partenariat entre Famille et petite enfance Francophone Suc Inc, l'ARCf de Saint-Jean et le Réseau de santé Horizon, un plan d'action a été mis en place afin d'identifier les familles dans le besoin dans la communauté et de trouver des moyens de leur venir en aide.

Une trentaine de familles ont été aidées grâce à 500\$ en dons. Le Centre de ressource de famille a pu fournir des vêtements d'hiver, des jouets, des cartes-cadeaux et des articles d'hygiène personnelle. La campagne de collecte de dons de Noël des pompiers, «Ways and Means», a permis d'offrir des cartes cadeaux.

Nos petits lutins ont pu faire la livraison de toutes ces choses et voir les yeux des enfants et des parents briller de joie et d'appréciation. Nous ne pourrions pas réussir à donner autant sans la contribution de la communauté. Nous tenons donc à vous remercier d'avoir aidé!

Une trentaine de familles ont été aidées



Photo: De gauche à droite: Nicole Robichaud (Famille et petite enfance Francophone Suc Inc), Dominique Daigle (Réseau de santé Horizon) et Christine (ARCf de Saint-Jean). Crédit: Gracieuseté.

From left to right: Nicole Robichaud (Famille et petite enfance Francophone Suc Inc), Dominique Daigle (Horizon Health Network) and Christine (ARCf de Saint-Jean). Photo: submitted.

Donations to help families in need

By Dominique Daigle, Community Development Officer, Horizon Health Network

Through an excellent partnership among Famille et petite enfance Francophone Suc Inc, ARCf de Saint-Jean, and the Horizon Health Network, an action plan has been put in place to identify families in need in the community and to find ways to help them.

Some 30 families were helped thanks to \$500 in donations. The Family Resource Centre was able to provide winter clothing, toys, gift cards and personal hygiene items. The firefighters' Christmas fundraising campaign, "Ways and Means," allowed provision of gift cards.

Our little elves were able to deliver all these things and see the eyes of children and parents shining with joy and appreciation. We couldn't give so much without the community's contribution, so we want to thank you for helping!

Some 30 families were helped

Celebrating Juanita Black



Above: Juanita in her beloved garden in Crescent Valley; below: Juanita warmly greets Crescent Valley youth (Photos: Jordan Mattie)

Continued from page 1

“We hope this film will serve as powerful learning tool for inspiring students, front-line workers, non-profits, businesses, government and individuals struggling to leave poverty behind,” says committee member Randy Hatfield, Executive Director of the HDC. “We hope people across our city see it and are inspired to give back.”

Juanita’s community involvement began in girlhood. In Grade 12, she was President of the Student Council at Simonds High School. In 1974, the year she graduated, she discovered she was pregnant. Her experience as a young single mother living in poverty has been a big inspiration to give back.

“I don’t like people having inadequate housing; I don’t like people feeling bad about themselves,” she says. “When you feel good about yourself, you can help yourself and your family and your community.”

Her community activism has taken various forms, from committee work to volunteering, advocacy, letter writing, and public speaking. A few notable contributions include:

- Advocating for the extension of health coverage for people who leave Social Assistance
- Founding board member of the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation
- Crescent Valley Community Garden volunteer, 25-plus years
- Founding Editor, *Around the Block* community newspaper

Juanita Black is the recipient of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal, the YMCA Peace Medal and the Innovation Award from Vibrant Communities Canada, among many other awards and honours. When she retired in 2017, she created the Juanita Black Bursary to help youth from her neighbourhood pursue post-secondary education. Ms. Black still resides in Crescent Valley, New Brunswick’s oldest and largest public housing neighbourhood, where she has lived since 1979.

As Juanita shows us, it takes everyone working together to make meaningful change, and there are many ways to contribute: volunteer, make a donation, write a letter, join a committee, etc. Juanita illustrates the power of one working with the power of many to bring about change!



Fresh Start: a community partner to create forever homes



By Melanie Vautour, Executive Director, Fresh Start

Chronic homelessness. Tent cities and people huddled in doorways. We are seeing more of our most vulnerable on the street and we want to house them. We also want them to stay housed. It’s why, as a community of agencies, we came together in 2018-19 to ensure our work created lasting impact on homeless numbers and reduced homelessness. It’s not enough to build more units or create affordable housing; we need specially trained staff to support people where they are, to stay housed. The founder of Fresh Start, Lois Merritt, said it best: “It’s not about a bed tonight or a house for a month; everyone deserves a forever home.” Fresh Start is doing just that through our prevention work, creating the spaces and places that lead to forever homes. (Photo: Melanie Vautour)

ATB: what it means to you



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. Daryl Barton, a winner of the Issue 80 Fruit and Vegetable Contest sponsored by Saint John Energy in every issue, wrote to Juanita Black, Head of the *ATB* delivery team and (with Mary LeSage) the co-organizer of the contest.

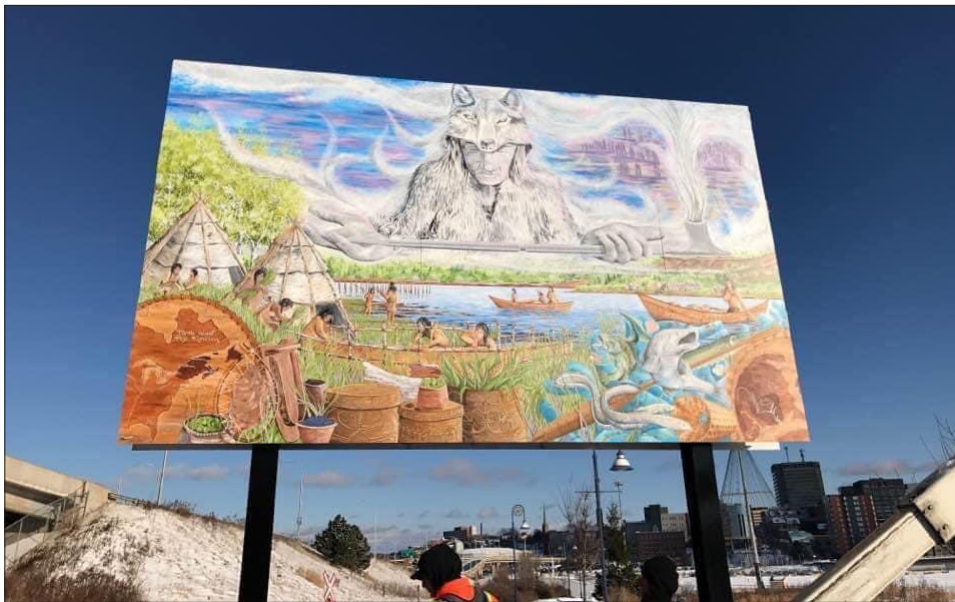
“Until recently I was working at Prince Edward Square, and during breaks I would always go walking, normally up Richmond St. From October onward, as you may already know, one and sometimes both of the two benches in front of the church on Waterloo St were being used overnight for sleeping. As the temperatures dropped, I was thinking that surely one or more of Saint John’s community organizations would find an accommodation solution for these persons. Now having personal internet access for the first time, I was able to learn ... from the HDC website that Cathy Boyce and other concerned members of Coordinated Access have been working on solutions for those lacking housing, and I was pleased to see today that the benches are unoccupied. It is pleasing to see that the Human Development Council is staffed with highly qualified and caring people like you.”

Further, when Juanita wrote to Daryl to request his permission to print, he added: “Please be advised that I absolutely approve of *Around the Block* using my previously emailed comments. *Around the Block* provides indispensably robust coverage of community events, quality-of-life-improving initiatives, and general interest stories that are especially important to lower-income citizens. And it does so with an admirably high level of linguistic and organizational professionalism.”

Daryl is the winner of the final \$25 gift card for “*ATB*: What it means to you.” And a bonus for us: we are pleased to welcome Daryl as the latest addition to our team of intrepid volunteer proofreaders!

What do YOU think about *ATB*? Write in and tell us at:
sjcommunitynewspaper@gmail.com

Marigolds and Murals - 25 years!



By Barry Ogden

Marigolds and Murals will be celebrating our 25th year in 2022!

We have involved 80,000 citizens, sponsors, and schools. We order the seeds, soil, and trays in February. The children start growing in their classrooms in March and plant at the end of May.

We use cross-curriculum teaching methods as the marigolds become a central theme that creates pride, is inclusive, and gives meaning to the child's learning. We use: math skills for germination rates, poetry, art, science, music (yes, there is a marigold song), and we discuss community pride. We have never had a marigold or mural vandalized.

We have painted 156 murals and planted hundreds of spruce trees, painted hundreds of homes, and cleaned hundreds of vacant lots and promoted anti-littering.

For nine years in a row we've set a Guinness World Record, at 50 gardens a year (total over five million marigolds). We continue to empower our community.

Our Marigolds and Murals have been copied all over the world. Our story has become one of our most popular tourist attractions and sources of pride. We have won several beautification and environmental awards. Tour guides love to tell our story to our visitors.

Involving children in our community, getting outside with lots of exercise, hands-on pride, and practical learning with a sense of accomplishment benefits everyone.

Clockwise from top left: artwork by the community for the community; cleaning a vacant lot; painting a home; more busy community painters; and children planting the ever-popular marigolds! (Photos: Barry Ogden)



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Councillors' Corner: What are your hopes for 2022?

John MacKenzie, Deputy Mayor

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My hopes for 2022 would be accelerated population growth, retention, and tax base growth for Saint John. For ourselves and the people we want to attract to the city, we need a lower tax rate; more jobs; affordable housing; newer schools; entertainment; hospitality amenities; quality of life services, parks, beaches...well, I think you get my point. To provide these things, the city must get its fair share of taxes from the Province. We pay the Province about \$47 million in taxes annually but only get about \$17 million back. The remaining \$30 million goes to the rest of the province. Back in the 1960s when Saint John had more than it needed, this may have made sense - but no longer. The Province has promised to bring in fair taxation and we look forward to seeing this happen. Looking ahead in 2022, Saint John will have an affordable housing plan this summer. Saint John Transit will soon be making significant changes to improve its service and increase ridership, and we will be concentrating on more quality-of-life issues to make Saint John a more livable and inclusive city.

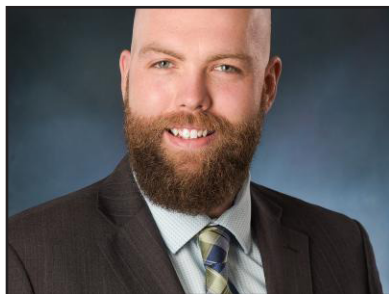


Brent Harris, Councillor At Large

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My hope for 2022 is that our city is able to build a more productive and accountable relationship with our Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). With over five major issues currently requiring Provincial action like rental controls, making Main Street work for cyclists/pedestrians, the Stanley Street bridge repair, Reversing Falls Bridge cross walk, and an end to blocking Saint John Energy's wind power project, the future of our city depends on MLAs with the courage to stand up for our city's needs.



David Hickey, Councillor, Ward 3

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There's lots in store for our community over the next year and I'm excited to keep working for Ward 3. It's important 2022 reflects the changing demands of our city. I want to see more investment in affordable housing, a focus on active transportation and transit access, as well as steps to regionalize more services. I'm excited for what's in store this year!



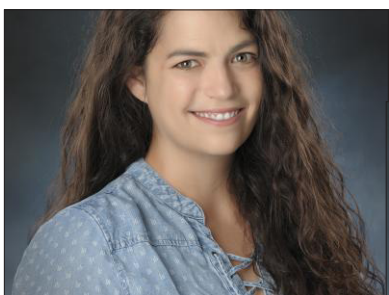
Joanna Killen, Ward 1

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I hope we come out of this pandemic really strong, ready to build Saint John back again - make it a place where everybody feels supported and that we have great quality of life. There's so much on the horizon.

Recently we formed an ad hoc committee to work with the Province, to strongly advocate for a comprehensive tax reform plan. I'm hoping this relationship we're trying to build with the Provincial government will get results for us around healthcare and housing. The new Move SJ plan will deeply look at how we're going to make a more walkable, bikeable, transit-friendly city. And there's the reinvention of transit - how we're going to create a system that will hopefully serve us all a lot better. We welcome everyone's perspectives on transit.



Barry Ogden, Councillor, Ward 2

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My hope for 2022 is that the City of Saint John will get to keep the provincial taxes we send to the Province. For 56 years Saint John has sent the most taxes to the Province without getting our fair share back.

We have not grown like other cities have. I want us to be proud, cut down our high poverty rates. We need new schools and more housing. We have the lowest number of university students and courses in Atlantic Canada and this is controlled by the Province. I want more courses and more opportunities so our young people can stay in Saint John and grow. I hope we get more Federal Government jobs, as we have lost 5,000 federal jobs in Saint John.



Gary Sullivan, Councillor At Large

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My number one hope for this year is that we survive and thrive despite COVID. We need to follow medical and scientific advice while supporting each other and being kind to one another. In Saint John it will

be an exciting spring of construction on outdoor spaces in the city and I encourage all Saint Johners to get outside and enjoy them. Whether they are splash pads, swing sets, parks and beaches, or the new improvements to Harbour Passage and the uptown Boardwalk spaces - lets get outside for our physical and mental health!



Gerry Lowe, Councillor, Ward 3

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I was happy that we got the money from the Province to buy the land for the new school but very disappointed that it will be 3 ½ years before we can get shovels in the ground. We have to continue to work with

local MLAs - Ministers Dunn, Holder, and Shephard - to shrink that time. I'm worried that if it's that long, some emergency might come up, and we might be shoved down the list again. Poverty is a priority; the poverty rate in the South End in children is 46-47%! This hub will not be just a school, it's a community centre with the school inside it - it's both. I think that will do wonders for the South End.



Greg Stewart, Councillor, Ward 4

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I firmly believe this Council and our city are on a path of growth and prosperity, so I hope that we continue to push forward with smart development that grows our tax base and offers new and exciting opportunities for

all. We are a Council that welcomes diversity from its developers and we want the world to know "Saint John is open for business." Secondly, I would always hope that our residents continue to find ways to be kind and welcoming to each other and all newcomers. In a society that sometimes doesn't read the full story, it is important to take time and understand other points of view.