



Around *the* Block



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Romero House: 40 years!



Evelyn McNulty and volunteers at work on a busy Saturday morning
(Photo: Lorna Brown)

By Lorna Brown, *Around the Block*

The actual date of Romero House's 40th anniversary, Evelyn McNulty told me, was about six months ago, but the anniversary date that they chose long ago was March 24th. That's the day on which Oscar Romero - archbishop, martyr, saint, advocate for those in poverty, and namesake of this organization that feeds the hungry - was assassinated.

In those 40 years Romero House has served more than two and half MILLION meals. They run their operation solely on freewill donations. People donate funds, food, their services or expertise. Romero House does not solicit, apart from keeping a list of the things they regularly need for their usual menu.

Evelyn explains: "My job particularly is to tell the story of Romero House and move people's hearts to help however they can. In my time here there was a woman who used to come in faithfully, once a month for years, and give us \$5 through the window. That was important because that \$5 was more dear to her than \$1000 was to another person who dropped it in. This place is very, very different from other places. We are serving 58% more meals than we did before COVID – and yet we have never run out of food. How is that even possible, when it's all by donations and word of mouth? There's no sexy advertising, we don't solicit, I didn't call a bunch of people and say "Help me, give me food." So this place really is amazing. It's definitely a community place, run by the community for the community, and everybody knows it. The people who come for help know that this is *their* place."

Proud Sponsors of *Around The Block*



SAINT JOHN



The Gathering Space is now open



Residents and staff participating in the weekly Scrabble game in the Gathering Space (Photo: Judy Murphy)

By Elizabeth Clark, *EFryNB*

The Elizabeth Fry Society New Brunswick (EFryNB) recently put the finishing touches on our Gathering Space! This beautiful room in our office building on Adelaide Street was a true community effort.
(Read the full story on page 15)

From the Editor's desk: Empathy

Lorna Brown, sjcommunitynewspaper@gmail.com



Above is a photo (thanks to Patrick Halford) of Forest Hills School Grade 1 students spending some time in wheelchairs from Para NB, to get a sense of the challenges facing those who can't get out of them at the end of an hour and walk away. Although we can never fully know how things feel until we are in that situation, these children are least moving beyond sympathy (sorrow for another person's misfortunes) towards empathy: the ability to understand and share another's feelings. Sympathy is me + you. Empathy creates US. (See Chris MacLean's Forest Hills story, page 8.)

Another way to see through someone else's eyes and develop empathy is by reading a book. Crescent Valley Resource Centre now has adults' and children's libraries (see page 4). Imagine being able to walk into a room full of books and just take one! You don't have to imagine it - you can now do it! You can enter into the author's or characters' world and see it from a new perspective. I am grateful for all libraries, "walk in and take" like CVRC's and the usual ones where you check books out. The Saint John Free Public Library changed my life when it opened a branch in East Saint John. My late father was President of the Home and School that year, and he worked with the Library's wonderful Eileen Travis and others to ensure that East Saint John kids would have the world at their fingertips, within walking distance. Libraries rock our world!

We celebrate our world on Earth Day, Friday April 22nd. Let's all do something, that day and every day, to make the difference we can. See details on the Clean-up and BBQ at Chown Field on page 10.

Peace and joy to all. You get them by giving them.

Tinker Tuesdays



Youth enjoying Tinker Tuesdays (Photo: John Driscoll)

By John Driscoll, ONE Change

Tinker Tuesdays was designed by youth for youth in the Old North End. Prior to starting this program, the staff here at ONE Change did a small feedback survey with the youth and teens.

We took their thoughts and ideas and made it a reality. Each week, Tinker Tuesdays continues to inspire youth of all ages from our community.

Recently the kids learned how to power on their own fans and learned how to work a microscope all on their own. For our teen program they have leaped into so much more and even inspired our staff with ideas. Some teens worked on their own school projects and did everything with a 3D printer. One project was building a working, moveable hand.

Each program we offer here at ONE Change is designed to inspire and expand all who participate in their wonderful programs



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

Weekly chess program

By John Driscoll, ONE Change

Chess is a game of strategy and fast moves, and all this wouldn't be possible if it wasn't for one community member who strives each day to inspire the minds of our community.

John Torrie leads our weekly chess programs here at ONE Change. Adults and youth who attend want to say "thank you" for all he does. John has lived in the North End for many years and everyone from all ages continue to show their gratitude for how outstanding his programs are. The atmosphere of the room is always inviting and fun. Staff members at ONE Change even find the youth at times asking to play and practice their chess games.



Adults and youth want to say "thank you" for all John does

Above: weekly chess at ONE Change (Photo: John Driscoll)

LEARN
DIGITAL
MEDIA

Get Paid to Learn: Photography, Videography, & Motion Graphics!

The ONE Future program pays minium wage to people aged 18 to 30 to Learn Digital Media over a 12 week period, followed by 22 weeks of paid on the job training.

Course Starts May 30
Don't Wait, Apply Today
Limited Seats Available!

Call/Text (506) 566-9303 or
Email jill.onefuture@gmail.com
to determine if you are eligible.

New Brunswick
Canada

North Neighbourhood Contact

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

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

By Lisa Morris, PULSE

PULSE Inc. Hours of Operation

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 in full swing! We are open year-round to complete your taxes. Drop off your taxes anytime we are open and pick 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. We've been busy!

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

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

SJ Food Purchasing Order - Looking for affordable veggies? Money can be dropped off to PULSE or e-transferred to Martha.MacLean@HorizonNB.ca. Please include your name, phone number, order size (\$15 or \$25), and pickup location.

April - Money due April 15th; pick up April 22nd

May - Money due May 12th; pick up May 19th

June - Money due June 10th; pick up June 17th



A \$25 Food Purchasing order (Photo: PULSE)

From Pantry Day to Help Yourself

By Lisa Morris, PULSE

Created by both residents and PULSE Inc. over three years ago, the pantry opened its doors just months prior to the pandemic. It's a safe and friendly, non-judgmental environment where South End residents in need could receive food items once or twice per month to help create one-two days' worth of meals and connect with other programs and services in the building and surrounding community.

When the province first went into lockdown, neighbourhood organizations came together forming the Greater Saint John Emergency Food Program which delivered food hampers to those in need throughout the city. In the summer of 2020, we transitioned back into the Pulse Pantry providing pantry bags twice per month to those in need in the South End. In 2021 we served over 156 families and provided over 1500 meals to families.

In May as the pandemic restrictions end, we are excited to transition to a Help Yourself Community Pantry which will allow residents to choose what items they need.

Residents will be able to access the Help Yourself Pantry during our open hours Monday to Friday. If you would like to donate to this wonderful initiative call or email us at 632-6807 or info@pulsesj.ca.



Free Tax Clinics: Saint John



Free Tax Clinics
Get your benefits and credits



If you have a modest income and a simple tax situation, volunteers can do your tax return for you!

Here are just **SOME** of the free tax clinics being held in the City of Saint John. Please call ahead to learn more about how you can get your tax returns done.

NOTE: Please bring government-issued ID and your tax documentation.

WHERE	WHEN	TYPE	RETURNS PREPARED
NORTH END ONE Change Inc. / Nick Nicolle Centre - 85 Durham St, 658-2980 Crescent Valley Resource Centre - 130 MacLaren Blvd, 693-8513	Year- Round March 1st, 2022 - April 22nd, 2022	Drop-Off Drop-Off	Current & Prior Years Current & Prior Years
WEST SIDE Carleton Community Centre - 120 Market Pl, 658-2920 West Branch Library - 621 Fairville Blvd, 643-7260	Starting February 28th, 2022 Starting February 28th, 2022	Drop-Off Drop-Off	Current & Prior Years Current & Prior Years
SOUTH END/UPTOWN P.U.L.S.E - 251 Wentworth St, 632-6807 Salvation Army - 27 Prince Edward St, 634-7166	Year-Round March 1st, 2022 - April 29th, 2022	Drop-Off Drop-Off	Current & Prior Years Current & Prior Years
EAST SIDE East Branch Library - 55 MacDonald St, 643-7250	Please call 643-7250 to learn more	Drop-Off	Current & Prior Years

Created by Your Saint John Neighbourhood Developers

South Neighbourhood Contact

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Gerry Lowe
Ward 3 City Councillor

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Phone: 639-0969



Crescent Valley Library – a book for everyone!



Above, the children's library; below, the adult library
(Photos: Justin Shepard)

By Justin Shepard, BA, BEd, Community Engagement Coordinator, Crescent Valley Resource Centre

The Crescent Valley Resource Centre (CVRC) located at 130 MacLaren Boulevard, has two libraries - a children's/youth library and an adult library. Both are stocked with hundreds of new and gently used books! Library services operate Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and are open to all. Children and youth can come pick out books for themselves or parents/guardians/adults can come by to borrow a few for the young people in their care or just grab a few books for themselves. You don't need a card or any identification to borrow books and there is no time limit for borrowing. Just bring them back whenever you're finished!

Thank you to The Turnbull Home for their generous donation that helps stock our libraries and bring fun literacy-based activities to Crescent Valley!



Kindness Week at Hazen White–St. Francis (HWSF)



Grade 3 student Abdullah with Juanita Black (Photo: Victoria Lawrence)

By Victoria Lawrence, Community Schools Coordinator, HWSF

In keeping with the theme of kindness, this year we asked Juanita Black to kick off our Kindness Week at HWSF School with a virtual assembly to our classes. Juanita Black, who was recently recognized for her decades-long contribution to the Crescent Valley neighborhood, has been featured in a documentary, *Perseverance: The Juanita Black Story*, that celebrates her volunteerism and inspires all to give back. Juanita sponsors an award at HWSF School for the grade 5 student who gives back to the community through volunteering. On Tuesday, March 1st our whole school watched the documentary based on Juanita's life and then students were given the opportunity to have a Question and Answer (Q&A) session with Juanita on how they can have a voice and help build a positive community. We are so thankful to Juanita for coming in and sharing her experiences with us as this action aligns with our focus on the Citizenship competence of the Global Competencies part of our curriculum. Juanita sure is an inspiration and serves as a positive role model for our students!!

Harm reduction supplies now available at CVRC!

By Rachel Milne, Neighbourhood Developer, CVRC

The Crescent Valley Resource Centre (CVRC) is excited to be able to offer harm reduction supplies to community members through a partnership with Avenue B Harm Reduction Inc. Harm reduction has many benefits for people who use substances, for their families, and for communities. Information shows harm reduction activities can reduce the spread of infection and disease, lower overdose deaths, and lower the number of used needles in public. The supplies offered through CVRC include sterile needles, crack kits, cookers, alcohol swabs, and other items normally offered at Avenue B.

Remember, a needle box is located outside CVRC, attached to the side of the building (130 MacLaren Boulevard). Stop into the centre or call Rachel (our Neighbourhood Developer) at 693-8513 for more information or to grab some supplies.

Barry Ogden

Ward 2 City Councillor

Email: barry.ogden@saintjohn.ca

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Crescent Valley

Neighbourhood Contact

Anne Driscoll

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130 MacLaren Blvd.

693-8513

Easter Egg Hunt, April 13th
at the Carleton!

WE'VE BEEN EGGED !!

EASTER EGG HUNT

WED 13TH APRIL

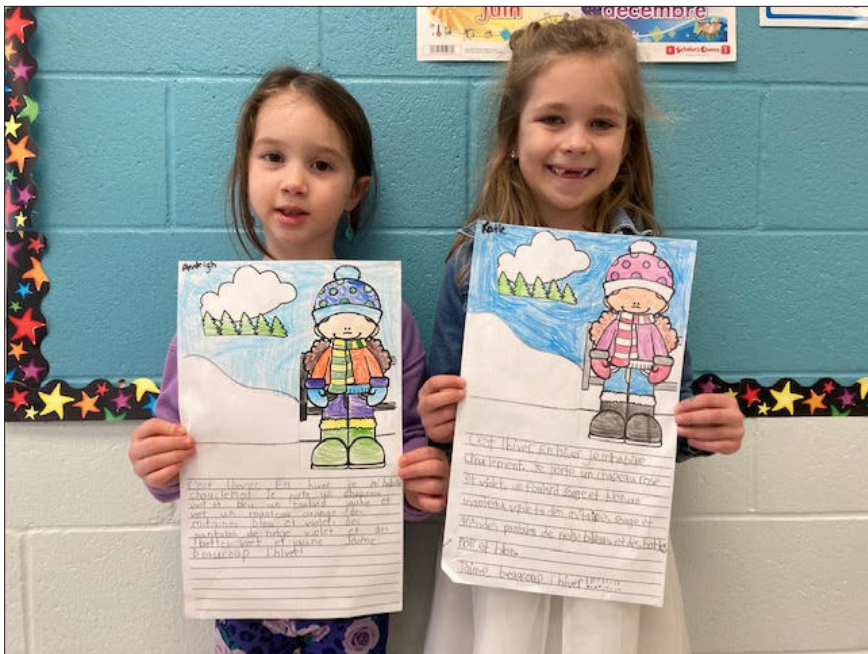
PLAYGROUND • TREES • SPLASHPAD

CARLETON COMMUNITY CENTRE
STARTS @6PM

please be mindful of others
when egg hunting



C'est l'hiver!



Writers Renleigh (left) and Katie (right) (Photo: Krista Turnbull, Community Schools Coordinator, Seaside Park Elementary School)

By Renleigh Lanigan, Grade 1-FI student

En hiver je m'habille chaudement. Je porte un chapeau vert et bleu, un foulard jaune et vert, un manteau orange, des mitaines bleues et violettes, des pantalons de neige violets et des bottes vert et jaune. J'aime beaucoup l'hiver !

By Catherine (Katie) Russell, Grade 1-FI student

En hiver je m'habille chaudement. Je porte un chapeau rose et violet, un foulard rouge et blanc, un manteau violet, des mitaines rouges et grises, des pantalons de neige bleus, et des bottes noir et blanc. J'aime beaucoup l'hiver !!!!



CARLETON COMMUNITY CENTRE


BEACH VOLLEYBALL

REGISTRATION STARTS MONDAY, APRIL 4

MEN'S 2s - Sunday Nights
WOMEN'S 2s - Monday Nights
REC COED 4s - Tuesday Nights
INTERMEDIATE 4s - Wednesday Nights
COMPETITIVE 4s - Thursday Nights

LEAGUE RUNS MAY 29 - AUG 4
PLAYOFFS TO FOLLOW

For more information:
Email tim@carletoncommunitycentre.ca



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Can churches double as homeless shelters? A response based on painful experience



The Stone Church shelter (Photo: Reverend Jasmine Chandra)

By Reverend Terence Chandra

The city of Saint John is at present mired in a mounting homelessness crisis. It was in response to this need that our church (Stone Church) was asked by our Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), The Honourable Arlene Dunn, to open a temporary overnight emergency shelter. Although our initial response was enthusiastic, every knowledgeable voice we consulted in the days that followed warned us against such an undertaking. It's too difficult and dangerous, we were told. You haven't made the necessary preparations and, by the time you do, the cold season will be over. But, thanks to Provincial resources freed up by the MLA and her office — not to mention a number of truly saintly staff and volunteers — we officially launched on Monday, January 24th and ran until February 28th.

In the days following our closure some have posed the reasonable question —“Why did you close your shelter at the end of February, with spring temperatures still a month away and so many people in need?” To put it bluntly, we closed our shelter because it would have been extremely dangerous for us to continue any longer than what our initial mandate entailed. The homeless population of Saint John consists largely of people experiencing extreme forms of mental illness. If the problem isn't mental illness, its addiction. In fact both

the problem of mental illness and drug abuse tend to feed into one another. Add to all of this the fact that a number of our guests were once imprisoned for violent offences and the result is this: a highly volatile and threatening environment, not only for our staff and volunteers, but for our guests as well. We also received clients who had been banned from other shelters.

We experienced several distressing situations over the five weeks we were open. Here are some examples.

- Our security guards had to several times convince potentially violent people to leave due to threatening behaviour.
- One volunteer watched as a man with severe frostbite collapsed to the floor, his foot finally giving way after months of severe infection brought about by untreated frostbite.
- An Afghanistan War vet experienced vivid and terrifying flashbacks.
- On a regular basis we found loose needles — despite the fact that there were medical grade sharp containers for guests to use.

Please bear in mind that our volunteers consisted of ordinary people — none of whom have been trained in conflict de-escalation, crisis intervention, or emergency medical care. None of them knew how to recognize signs of opiate overdose. None of them possessed any experience in talking desperate people out of committing suicide. None of them knew a thing about calming someone in the midst of a PTSD flashback. None of them were professionally trained in the handling and disposal of hazardous materials. The only resource we had in such situations was calling 911 and prayer (both of which we did repeatedly over the course of those five weeks).

In the month during which we operated our shelter, any manner of thing could have gone catastrophically wrong and not only our staff and volunteers, but our guests would have been the ones to pay the price. The fact that, in the end, no one was hurt is something that we credit entirely to the presence of Christ himself, filling and surrounding each and every one of the precious souls who came in and out of our building.

Hopefully, this answers the question of why we did not continue to run the shelter for a single day beyond the previously agreed-upon five weeks. Anyone who would fault us for closing our shelter when our allotted time came to an end — anyone who would demand that our staff and volunteers continue to expose themselves to such grave risk, night after night, indefinitely — harbours a near-pathological level of callousness impossible to comprehend.

It would be a mistake to perceive the homelessness crisis as a single, isolated problem. Rather, homelessness is the final problem in a long chain of interlocking problems, each of which feed one into the other. To name only a few examples, there is:

- the problem of untreated mental illness;
- the growing rates of addiction to new, stronger and more insidious drugs;
- the failure of our economic system to provide affordable housing;
- the exposure of small children to highly unstable home environments where they are likely to experience abuse and neglect;
- the unravelling of our social fabric, leaving the most vulnerable people alienated from the life-giving supports that would prevent them from falling through the cracks.

These problems are our collective responsibility. The homelessness crisis and all the crises that feed into it upstream must be dealt with collectively, with every sector of society, including the church, contributing to a solution.

The Honorable Arlene Dunn
MLA Saint John Harbour

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



Centennial students learn about Nigeria



(Photo: Kate MacDonald)

By Kate MacDonald, Community Schools Coordinator, Centennial School

Our Stingers enjoyed a jam-packed Winterfest week, with lots of exciting learning before having some time off for March break. (The Stinger is our school mascot, so we call ourselves the Centennial Stingers, or Stingers!) Some of the highlights of Winterfest according to our students were our Gingerbread Lane Walk as well as our Pancakes and Pajamas Day.

In March we were very excited to be highlighting the country of Nigeria as we continue to learn about more countries from around the world that represent our student population. Students representing Nigeria were able to share about customs and traditions while seeing their background celebrated in a variety of ways.

Giving students the opportunity to teach their peers about Nigeria's rich and diverse culture has been a fantastic way to engage all learners and embrace the one of the many backgrounds that helps to add to the tapestry of our Stinger family.

Winter apparel at SJBKE

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

The ongoing privations of COVID-19 have been exacerbated by the old-fashioned winter we experienced this year. To those ends, cold weather gear was in major demand. From boots to mitts to jackets and other items, the need was apparent.



We want to take this opportunity to thank all of our wonderful partners and friends who stepped up to make sure these items were available in sufficient quantity. Several different groups came together, some preparing in the fall, others making drop-offs during the coldest weather in mid-to-late winter. The collective efforts of all these wonderful people helped us make sure we could keep kids warm and ready to face the snow.

As winter ends and spring looms, we reflect on these days and offer a heartfelt "Thank you!" to all our wonderful and helpful friends!

Above: a pair of knit mittens (among many!) so kindly made and donated for our SJBKE kids! (Photo: Ben Gillcrist)

Kids on the Go at PES



Ms. McRae's Kindergarten class (Photos: Stephen Huxter)

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

With COVID-19 restrictions lifted we are so happy to be able to explore beautiful Saint John with our students via field trips and other means. We are happy to continue our Heart & Stroke cooking classes, after-school sports, our school clubs and our "Kids on the Go" field trips.

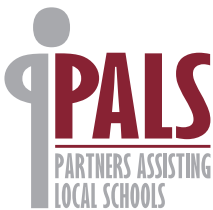
Princess Elizabeth's Kindergarten class just returned from an exciting bowling trip where the students practiced their counting while enjoying all the bowling alley has to offer.



Supporting our Neighbourhood Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12



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



Deborah Fisher
Susan Tipper
Michael Whelton
info@PALS.com



Help Make a Difference!

Fair play at Forest Hills



Kindergarten class try the wheelchairs (Photo: Patrick Halford)

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

Here at Forest Hills School, we encourage equal and fair play at all levels for everyone. That is why we like to expose to our K-8 students some of the challenges others may face while participating in sports/physical activities. This is our second time borrowing the wheelchairs from Para NB – Sport and Recreation. They are an organization based out of Fredericton that supports inclusive learning and encourages all schools to try out their equipment free of charge for weeks at a time! The students absolutely love experiencing what competing in a sport or physical activity would be like using the wheelchairs. Towards the end of every group’s first session, their perspectives have already shifted in recognizing the challenges and difficulties involved with using the wheelchairs in an active environment. We highly recommend other schools contacting Para NB and exposing our students to inclusive physical activity!



School pride and great games!



The big game (Photo: Jennifer Carhart)

By Jennifer Carhart, Principal, Simonds High School
 The Hive continues to be alive with school spirit, energy, and enthusiasm! As is tradition, the East versus West basketball game took place on February 25th at TD Station. This is a traditional basketball game of each the girls’ and boys’ basketball teams with Harbour View High School. The day started with the first pep rally in two years that had the bleachers alive, the gym floor full of school spirit activities, and the vibe contagious in the building! This was all thanks to an incredibly talented group of staff and students who came together to make this possible. Moving on to the night, we filled the seats with about 300 fans to watch these two games on the big court with all the fan fare one could wish for! The outcome of the games wasn’t what mattered by the end of the night. It was the celebration of the school pride, the talent of our athletes, and the dedication of our coaches that was on display with pride. Looking ahead to 2023, we hope to fill even more seats and win both games. There is always something “buzzing in the hive” and we are proud to share it with our community.

Black History Month at HWSF School: dreams and freedom quilts



Story and photos by Victoria Lawrence, Community Schools Coordinator, Hazen White - St. Francis School (HWSF)

In February, the K-5 classes at Hazen White-St. Francis participated in a cross-curricular Black History Month project, centred around the legend of Freedom Quilts and the Underground Railroad. The lesson was inspired by the children’s book, *The Patchwork Path: A Quilt Map to Freedom*, which tells the story of a family’s journey escaping slavery through the Underground Railroad, following the secret code woven into the quilt patterns of their people. Each pattern represented instructions or advice they could follow along the way to ensure their safe arrival to a better life. The story centres around the themes of courage, determination, and hope, igniting conversations about Black history, racism, and human rights.

The school-wide project not only allowed the kids to collaborate and learn about Black history, but also targeted many learning outcomes in Math, Art, Social Studies, and Literacy at all grade levels. Each student was able to create their own quilt square using paper and geometric shapes, as a reflection on this powerful story. These colourful patchwork quilts (above right) are on display through the school to remind members of our school community of the importance of creativity, diversity, and resilience as we grow together towards a more inclusive and unified world. In addition to the quilts, our Grade 2/3 students reflected on Martin Luther King’s “I have a dream” and wrote about their own hopes and dreams for the future of the world (above left).

The quilts remind our school community of the importance of creativity, diversity, and resilience as we grow together towards a more inclusive and unified world.

LIFE CAN BE HARD.

FINDING HELP CAN BE EASY.

HELP STARTS HERE

Call

TTY Line

Search & Chat

E-mail

Dial 2-1-1

1-855-258-4126 (VRS)

1-855-405-7446

nb.211.ca

211nb@findhelp.ca

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

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. There are no dues for membership. Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions. Face-to-face meetings have resumed. Masks are not required but feel free to wear one if you wish!

- Tuesday 7 p.m., Waterloo AFG
Stone Church, 87 Carleton Street

- Wednesday 7 p.m., Woolastook AFG
St. Mark's United Church, 50 Dexter Drive

- Thursday 7 p.m., Portland AFG
Sophia Recovery Centre, 83 Hazen Street

- Thursday and Sunday 7 p.m. Zoom Meetings
To attend, send an email to District15mprovinces@yahoo.com. You will receive an email from Ann Wilson with instructions approximately 15 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 \$15 fresh fruit and produce orders for this April 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 14, 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 April 21st and orders, if possible, will be delivered on April 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 81 winners were:
Rita Tyler and Douglas Ross.**

Spring cleanups!



By Shauna Sands, Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP)

Attention all teachers, educators, and nature enthusiasts! Spring has arrived and it's time to get things cleared up before summer hits. Are you interested in organizing a group cleanup but don't know where to start?

ACAP Saint John can provide you and your team with all the essential items needed to help run a successful cleanup in your neighbourhood. We will provide you with garbage bags, gloves, and a garbage pickup (courtesy of our wonderful partners at the City of Saint John).

Send us an email at office@acapsj.org to get started!



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

As winter ends, homelessness remains



Representatives from frontline service providers meet in November as part of the In From the Cold Campaign, an effort to rapidly house 30 individuals before Christmas. (Photo: Donna Gates)

By Chris Gorman, Human Development Council

With the start of spring and the closure of the Stone Church Out of the Cold shelter, it might be tempting to breathe a sigh of relief – another winter over, crisis averted ... or is it?

Despite homelessness being an issue year-round, it (perhaps understandably) gets more attention as the temperature drops and the snow flies. But the work of our frontline partners never stops. It doesn't slow down when the weather improves and, counter to what most people might assume, emergency shelters in New Brunswick often see their highest numbers in the summer.

As a community, we should be incredibly grateful for the ongoing work of these shelters. It's true that Stone Church played a valuable role during the weeks it was open, and its closure leaves a gap in the community being able to provide a safe and warm location for those individuals who are sleeping rough. It also highlights the incredible service that the staff at Outflow and Coverdale provide the community year-round. But just like in Fredericton and Moncton, there is a cohort of individuals who are experiencing such severe levels of mental health and substance use disorders that we don't currently have adequate resources to address their needs. These are very complex cases, and, for these individuals, more shelter beds are not the solution.

It's important to remember that emergency responses don't have to be temporary responses. Regardless of the time of year, in response to an emergency like homelessness, we can act quickly but with permanent solutions. While emergency shelters provide an incredibly valuable service for our community's most vulnerable, they are not the solution to homelessness. Supportive housing that is reflective of the needs of those experiencing homelessness is key to ending homelessness.

So as the weather warms and the snow melts, let's not lose sight of the fact that homelessness remains. Let's support the experts in the community who are quietly doing some of the hardest work imaginable every day.

Let's remember that housing is the solution.

And let's not wait until next winter to act.

Come out and clean up on Earth Day, April 22nd!

By the HUB Green Team

The HUB Green Team is challenging you to come out and clean up the neighbourhood on Earth Day!

Whatever your inspiration is, every act of kindness helps to take care of our earth that we call home. The Hub Green Team is inviting you to come join us in helping to build a more sustainable and mindful world.

We are so happy to be able to see the ground again now that the snow is gone and we celebrate the arrival of spring! So let's work together to remove some of the waste that has accumulated on our streets.

Recently the Green Team hosted the Community Closet event at the Social Enterprise Hub; it gave people an opportunity to recycle their gently used clothing items and then others to come and fill up a tote bag with items to take home. The event was a success, so keep an eye on the HUB Facebook page for another clothing exchange event in the near future!

See you on Earth Day, Friday, April 22nd at noon in Chown Field.

Whatever your inspiration is, every act of kindness helps to take care of our earth that we call home.



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HELP STARTS HERE





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Your money matters: April showers bring May flowers



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

Spring is in the air! Restrictions are lifted and we are excited for our future. A little spit and polish, some extra elbow grease can make our house look fresh and clean. The same can be said for our finances. As you embrace this new lease on life let's take a moment to discuss some spring cleaning we should apply to our financials.

Here are a few Financial Spring Cleaning items I would challenge you to look at:

- 1) Taxes – are they up to date? Make sure you are getting all the government benefits owed to you. The tax deadline for filing is April 30th, 2022. We offer a free tax clinic here at the HUB. Contact us for more information.
- 2) Bank Fees – how much are you paying for your monthly account? Is that fee going up? There are options, perhaps a no-fee account or setting up a PAC so that your benefits are safely deposited on time.

As we know cleaning once doesn't mean it will stay clean. Chores need to be completed daily to maintain a clean house. Same as our finances. It is important to take time every month to review your bank account and payments. Make sure they are right. Look ahead to the month coming up: do you have a special occasion, an event that will require extra money?

We have to look after our finances forever. Why not challenge yourself to put some spit and polish on your budget? You will be surprised at how shiny your bank account can get.

**If you need help with your budget or completing taxes, please reach out to me,
darlene@loanfund.ca or by calling (506) 721-7238.
Remember no matter how much or how little your income is, how you spend your money matters.**

Learning to cook at the Learning Exchange



*Justice preparing healthy food – looks delicious!
(Photo: Saint John Learning Exchange)*

**By Justice Miller, Learner, GOALS program,
Saint John Learning Exchange**

I was part of the Culinary Tech class at the Learning Exchange. I enjoyed cooking and learning new skills. My favourite thing that I learned to make was wonton dumplings. I also learned better knife skills. It's important to learn how to cook because when I'm older I don't just want to eat takeout; I want to eat healthy meals and cook for myself. I found out it was fun to learn to cook and I can teach other people how to do it as well. I also learned about health and safety, which is important so you don't get sick and so no one gets hurt.

We got to visit the Stone Soup Café, which was interesting because I had never seen behind the scenes of a restaurant.

Thank you to the Teen Resource Centre (TRC) for letting us use their kitchen space!

*Behind the scenes: a learner with Shelley from Stone Soup
(Photo: Saint John Learning Exchange)*



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

It's traditional...

There are many traditions surrounding funerals.

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



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FUNERAL HOME

Kennebecasis
COMMUNITY FUNERAL HOME

Saint John Energy

Cruise ships return to Saint John



Cruise ship at Marco Polo Cruise Terminal (Photo: Port Saint John)

By Port Saint John

This spring, Port Saint John will welcome back the first cruise ship to visit our community since October 2019.

Between April and November, Saint John is slated to receive over 70 ship calls and the waterfront's abuzz with activity in preparation for the sector's resumption.

Saint John has been lucky enough to welcome millions of passengers and crew over the last three decades thanks to the friendly locals, historical charm, and natural beauty we boast. There are lots of exciting initiatives underway like the AREA 506 Waterfront Container Village that both neighbours and guests can enjoy, right on the Saint John waterfront!

Over three quarters of visiting cruise vessels will arrive between Labour Day and early November for our popular fall foliage season. We hope you'll join us in welcoming them back with open arms.

Stay up to date on all things Cruise 2022 by connecting with us on social media or calling our Community Coordinator, Chisom Ezech, at 639-7825.



CALLING PASSIONATE SAINT JOHNNERS!!

GET INVOLVED WITH PORT SAINT JOHN

The Port Saint John Community Liaison Committee (PSJLC) is being created to promote ongoing communication and dialogue with groups that have a vested interest in port-related operations and development in New Brunswick. The committee will be comprised of individuals representing community, port industry, and local government interests. There will be one community representative each from residents of Uptown, East, West and North.

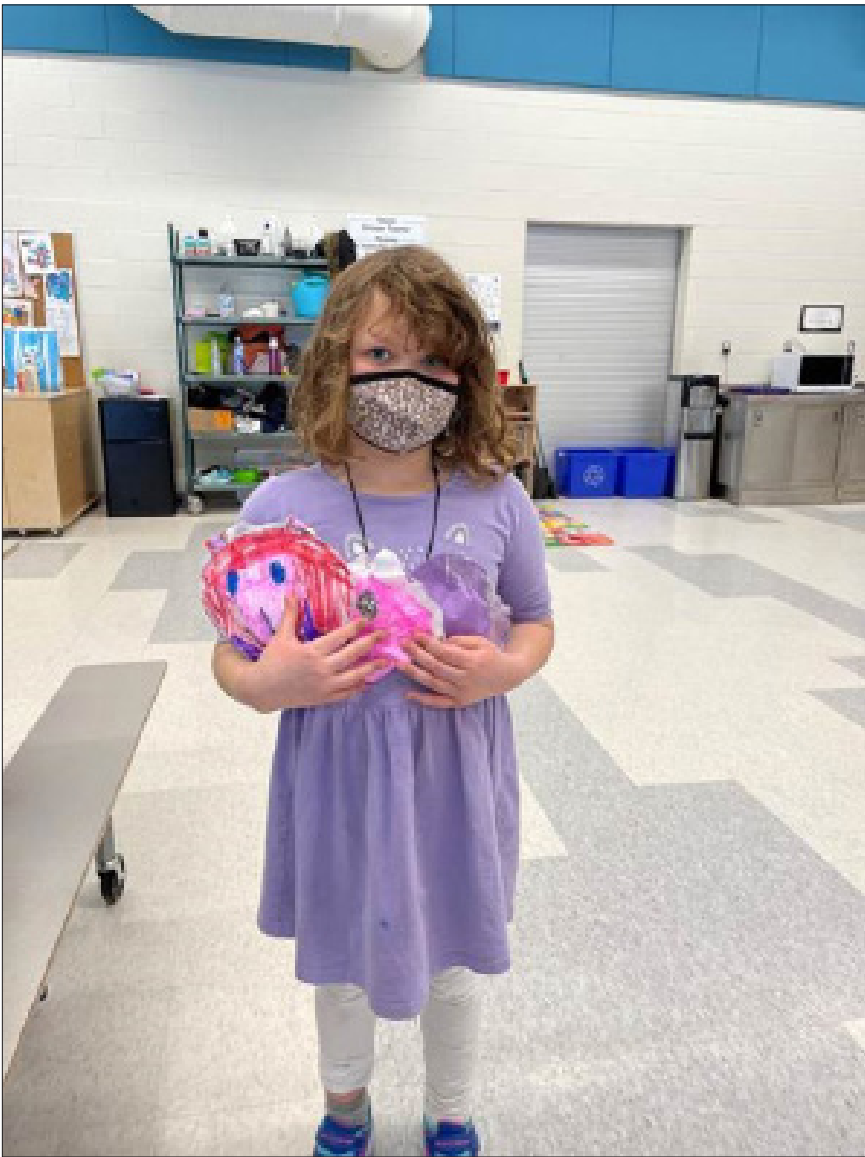
Interested Saint John community residents are invited to submit their application via email to communityLC@sjport.com.

Applicants must submit a resume and a PDF document describing their background, interests, experience, connection to their community and indicate their reasons for wishing to serve on the Committee. Each application should also include one reference letter.

All applications must be received by **April 30th**. Successful applicants will be notified as soon as the application process is completed. Please visit <https://www.sjport.com/community> for more information on the committee.



Crafting our own stuffed animals at BGC Seaside Park



Rachel with one of her creations (Photo: David MacDonald)

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

At the BGC Seaside Park After School, we keep busy with a variety of activities and crafts. One of the favourites over the past few weeks has been creating our own stuffed animals. These are made through a finely-measured combination of scotch tape, paper, markers, and cotton balls.

Rachel has created many animals ranging from sheep to hamsters. All are covered in her favourite colours and have been named to best describe their vibrant and exciting personalities. The collections are growing at a rapid rate.

March Break at the South End Community Centre



Two of our youth playing at Rainbow Park (Photo: Rachel Murphy)

By Rachel Murphy, BGC

The South End Community Centre had a great March Break this year. We had an art-themed day with painting and clay, a science-themed day with home-made puffy paint, a game-themed day with lots of gym time and some video games, and a cooking-themed day with mini-pizzas and safe-to-eat cookie dough, all made by the kids. We even got to hang out virtually with Indigo East Point and do some Pokemon activities. We were very thankful for the beautiful weather. We got to go on a walk every day, and even made it down to Rainbow Park a few times. Friday we had a PJ day, watched a movie, had some treats, and said goodbye to another fantastic March Break!

Evening Program is back at the BGC!

By BGC

Evening Program has started up again at the Main BGC Club location at 1 Paul Harris Street. We are running every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evening, 6:30–7:30 p.m. for youth ages 5-11, and 6:30–8:30 p.m. for youth ages 12-18. Activities offered include art, cooking, computer room, ball hockey, leadership clubs, and open gym time. Transportation is available from the South End, Crescent Valley, Wright Street area, and some other areas of the city. Email Jill at jill.farrar@sjclub.ca or call/text (506) 343-0809 for more information!

Some highlights:

Monday and Friday
6 -7:15 p.m. Rising Stars Basketball, Grades 3-5
7:30 - 9 p.m. Rising Stars Basketball, Grades 6-8

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
7:30 - 8:30 p.m. Teen Gym, ages 12+

Monday, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Art Club

TRC youth on field trips



TRC youth at The Shacks in Renforth. (Photo: Letti Eastwood)

By Letti Eastwood, TRC

The youth at the Teen Resource Centre (TRC) got to explore a bit over March Break with some much-deserved field trips. Several of our youth spent the day at Snider Mountain Ranch horseback riding, skating on a pond in the woods, and doing archery. For many it was the first time they rode a horse and it was everyone's favourite part of the day.

We also went ice fishing at "The Shacks" in the Renforth Ice Village. It was a cold day but each shack was kept cozy with a small woodstove and we came prepared with hot chocolate and treats. We caught a few fish and made some friends with the locals who were happy to share their knowledge and even some of their catch with us!

Big thank you to the staff at Snider Mountain, The Shacks, and the people of the ice village for giving us a March Break to remember!

Get your purge on for Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS)

By Rhoda Welshman, BBBS

Are you thinking about spring cleaning and not sure what to do with the items you no longer want? Items like clothing, bedding, linens, kid's toys, and footwear can now be donated to Big Brothers Big Sisters between April 1st and May 27th as part of our new FUNDrive partnership with Value Village.

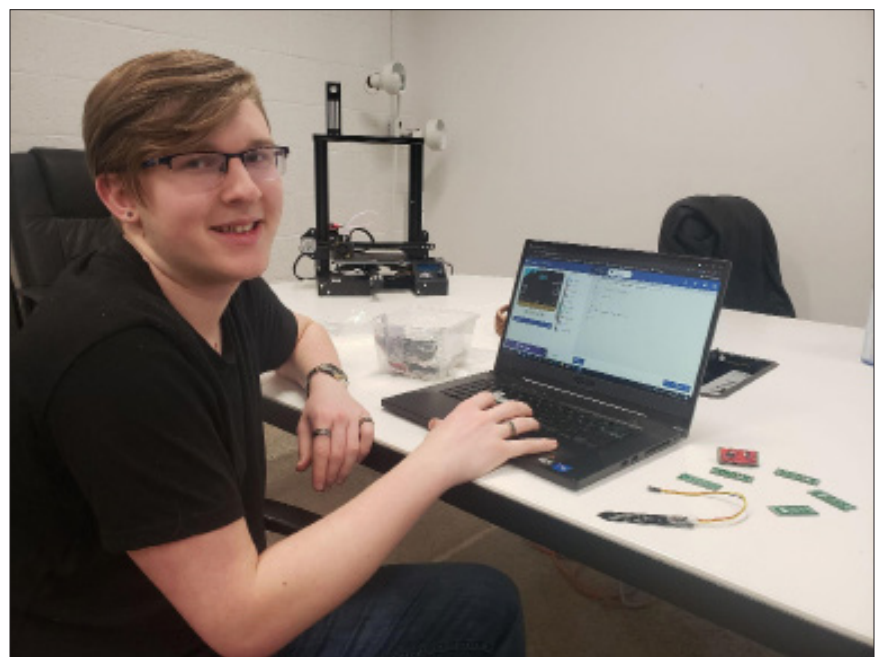
Drop your items off to BBBS office, located on the third level of Brunswick Square, just down the hall from Cora's and directly across from Print Three. To save time and hassle of parking uptown, call ahead and staff can meet you curbside at the Germain Street entrance. You can drop off your goods every other Friday starting April 1st until May 27th (with the exception of Good Friday, when the drop-off date will be Thursday, April 16th). Additionally, there will be multiple drop-off locations and dates around the Saint John area beginning April 9th. All goods must be in fair condition and bagged or boxed; we are unable to accept loose items. Save your books for our Big Book Sale collection beginning June 1st. For more information please call 635-1145 or email brother@nb.aibn.com. Thank you so much for your support!

GET YOUR PURGE ON!

CLEAN OUT YOUR CUPBOARDS & CLOSETS TO DONATE

  **April 1st until May 27th**

Engage4Change



Aidan London (Photo: William Ferris)

By Brilliant Labs

Engage4Change is happy to welcome Aidan London to the team! Aidan is a first-year Information Technology Programmer Analyst student at New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) who volunteered at the Teen Resource Centre in the fall to help support makerspace activities. Aidan is now working there part-time with Engage4Change to help guide students in selecting their projects, and with their planning processes. He's also creating special interests workshops for the makerspace.

Like the other NBCC students involved in the Engage4Change project, Aidan brings a unique blend of skills and passions to support the socioemotional and educational development of students participating in the project.

Over the fall, Engage4Change supported 30+ youth through STEAM-based (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) activities such as 3D printing and computer-aided design (CAD) to help them realize their projects and develop their computer skills. These activities were conducted in partnership with the Teen Resource Centre/ Pathways to Education Saint John and ONE Change at Nick Nicolle Community Centre.



SAVE ENERGY IN THE KITCHEN

Use a microwave instead of a conventional oven

Only use your dishwasher when it is full

Use lids when cooking to heat food quicker



 **100 YEARS**

The Gathering Space: a true community effort

Continued from page 1
By Elizabeth Clark, EFryNB

EFryNB recently put the finishing touches on our Gathering Space! This beautiful room in our office building on Adelaide Street was a true community effort.

Judith Mackin of Tuck Studio designed, furnished, and decorated the room. Many community members contributed to our GoFundMe campaign and allowed us to finish the project.

We installed a full kitchen for communal cooking, got a comfortable couch and a TV for movie nights, gathered arts and crafts supplies for workshops and activities, and added several large tables for games, shared meals, or community meetings.

Residents and community members join us to socialize over a cup of tea or coffee, express themselves through various activities, and reconnect with their community.

Stay tuned for news on our plans for a community garden in the area. We are excited to continue embracing community life in the Old North End of Saint John.



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Saint John - Rothesay
(506) 657-2500
Wayne.Long@parl.gc.ca

Saint John Y announces recipient of Red Triangle Award



Recipient Juanita Black at the announcement (Photo: Lorna Brown)

From Saint John Y media release

On March 17th, the YMCA of Greater Saint John announced the recipients of the Red Triangle and Leader to Watch Awards. The Red Triangle Award recognizes long and meritorious service, outstanding contributions and achievement in the community, while the Leader to Watch Award honours an individual who is a role model for other young adults in our community.

The Red Triangle volunteer review committee received numerous nominations and had a difficult choice but in the end were unanimous in their decision. This year's Red Triangle Award recipient is Juanita Black, and taking home the Leader to Watch Award is Nicole Vair.

Juanita has dedicated her life to being a volunteer leader in her neighbourhood, a mentor in her community and a champion at the provincial and federal level to promote fairness, justice and a better quality of life for all. "When I received the call that I would be the recipient of this year's Red Triangle Award, I was overwhelmed with pride and happiness," said Juanita. "First, just to have my name nominated was an honour in itself. Now, to have my name engraved beside other past recipients is another honour."

Nicole's desire to help people and make a difference in her community is evident in everything that she does. She has demonstrated her leadership skills through her work experiences and volunteer activities. "This means so much and I am very thankful for the opportunities the Y has provided me to grow and develop both personally and professionally," said Nicole.



Debbie MacLeod (left) and Juanita Black (Photo: Lorna Brown)

PRUDE Dive into YSJ



Dive into YSJ group (Photo: Maryjo Leiva)

By Maryjo Leiva, PRUDE

Dive into YSJ is a program that offers young newcomers an opportunity to be engaged with their community in Saint John. With weekly activities hosted for youth ages 16-30, the program encourages its members to grow in leadership, meet new people, and improve their language skills. YSJ stands for Youth Saint John and draws on the fact that it is the airport code for the city, so it inclusively embraces the Saint John region.

PRUDE Inc. (Pride of Race, Unity and Dignity through Education) creates a space for youth to feel welcome as they learn to adapt to a new country and its culture. It also helps them find mentorship and career opportunities, such as opening their local businesses and finding support. These young individuals volunteer in multiple areas within the city while learning and teaching others about their own culture and extending a helping hand to other newcomers.

If you would like to join, please contact Omar Morad at o.morad@prudeinc.org, or call 566-2576.

Civic Tech Saint John survey

By Volunteer Co-organizers

In an effort to help the neighbourhoods have greater access to technology, Civic Tech Saint John (CTSJ) is conducting a community-based survey to study residents' needs for computers, high-speed internet, and tech support. With guidance and input from the Neighbourhood Developers and in partnership with the Human Development Council, the survey is conducted by the developers. Survey results will then help guide CTSJ's understanding on how best to support families, students, and individuals to access technology that addresses their needs.

As part of this project, CTSJ has partnered 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 distribution to the neighbourhoods.

CTSJ is currently meeting virtually every Tuesday evening at 7 p.m. If you're interested in knowing more or would like to join CTSJ, go to www.facebook.com/groups/civictechsja/about.



A home for everyone: Hope Café



Weekday café at The Salvation Army is open again (Photo: Michael Crate)

By Michael Crate, Community Outreach Worker, The Salvation Army, Saint John

Since the beginning of February, we have had over 1,300 visits at the Hope Café - and that was only by the middle of March!

In this time, strangers have become known and people whose names we knew have become friends.

While many come for a free breakfast and connection, many of us have discovered that we have a real home here, whether we are in tears, laughing, or having a blah day.

In addition to offering a place of community, we have opened our internet café where guests can access the internet on our ten new computers, along with a computer course for beginners starting in April.

For more information about the Hope Café, check out our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/TSASaintJohn or come visit us from 9 a.m.-12 noon, Monday through Friday, at our Prince Edward Street entrance.

Cedar Hill - Greenwood Cemetery

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

New Columbarium at Greenwood Cemetery



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

Coverdale meets fundraising goal for Transitional Housing Project



By Chanelle Morgan, Coverdale

At the beginning of March, Coverdale learned that we would need to raise \$400,000 in a very short period of time in order to secure the future of our Transitional Housing Project. Thanks to our community and various other contributors, we were able to raise all of the funds required!

We look forward to seeing the vision come to life. The project includes 12 modular units with four barrier-free, accessible units. These units will enable women who experience housing barriers to have a stable place to live.

With individualized support plans in place, our aim is to help them reach their goals and in time, move on to permanent, independent living.

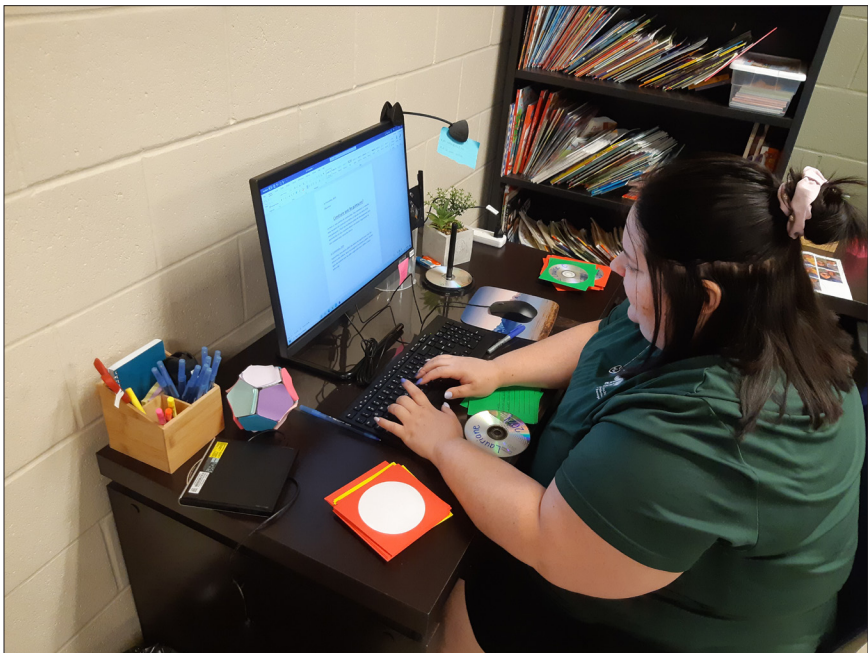
Editor's note: see also page 10, "As winter ends, homelessness remains" for more on supportive housing.

Your neighbours since 1854

The logo features a stylized cross with a plant growing from its center. The plant has three leaves and a flower. The words "Laus Des" are written in a script font across the plant.

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

Des éducatrices «francoformées»



(Crédit: Gracieuseté / Photo: supplied)

Par Jonathan Poirier, Agent des communications et relations publiques, ARCf de Saint-Jean

Depuis 2020, l'équipe de l'ARCf a travaillé sur le développement d'une plateforme de formation nommée «Francoformé» pour mieux outiller ses éducatrices. Celle-ci offre des formations accessibles et adaptées aux besoins spécifiques des employés travaillant dans le domaine de la petite enfance.

Francoformé est devenu un outil pouvant aider d'autres centres de la petite enfance francophones vivant dans le même contexte. Pour la prochaine année, un nouveau projet avec l'Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne consistera à offrir une journée de formations et de rencontres entre des éducatrices/éducateurs francophones de Saint-Jean, Miramichi et Fredericton.

«Nous sommes toujours à la recherche de solutions innovantes pour améliorer la qualité des services que nous offrons à nos enfants. Nous sommes fiers de pouvoir partager cet outil avec nos collègues de Fredericton et de Miramichi durant la prochaine année», affirme Michel Côté, le directeur général de l'ARCf.

“Franco-trained” teachers

By Jonathan Poirier, Communications and Public Relations Officer, ARCf de Saint-Jean

Since 2020, the ARCf team has been working on the development of a training platform called «Francoformé» [=Franco-trained] to better equip its educators. It offers accessible training adapted to the specific needs of employees working in the field of early childhood.

Francoformé has become a tool that can help other francophone early childhood centres living in the same context. For next year, a new project with the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne will offer a day of training and meetings between francophone educators in Saint John, Miramichi and Fredericton.

“We are always looking for innovative solutions to improve the quality of the services we provide to our children. We are proud to be able to share this tool with our colleagues in Fredericton and Miramichi over the next year,” said Michel Côté, Executive Director of the ARCf.

New logo rises like the sun at the Library



By S.D. Thompson, SJFPL

The Saint John Free Public Library (SJFPL) has a new look. It unveiled a new logo in February 2022, a symbol that nods to the institution’s past. “The graphic is based on our beautiful stained-glass window that came from the Carnegie Building,” said City Librarian Laura Corscadden. The new branding was created by local design company Bonfire Communications and uses the window, which moved with the Library to Market Square in 1983, to recognize the library’s status as the oldest free public library in Canada. The logo puts the semi-circular, sunburst-style window against a blue backdrop, reflecting Saint John’s seafaring heritage. Each of the three branches (Central, East, and West) uses a different shade of blue for their branding.

The symbolism of the window is more than a reflection on the past, though. “It can be a portal, it can be a door to new beginnings, could be a wardrobe,” said Corscadden at the logo’s launch. “It represents anything your imagination thinks it can be.” The new branding comes as the Library begins to resume in-person programming. For more information about what’s happening at the Library, follow us on Twitter or Instagram at @SaintJohnFPL, or on Facebook at Bibliothèque Publique de Saint John Free Public Library.

Ignite celebrates serving Saint John area for 10 years

By Pam Thomas, proud Founding Member, Canadian Progress Club Ignite

Canadian Progress Club Ignite is a registered not-for-profit volunteer community service women’s club. It was chartered on April 14th, 2012. Ignite’s mandate is to strive to assist women and children in need within our community and enhance their quality of life through fundraising and hands-on volunteering. We “Give Where We Live.” We have volunteered over 3,800 hours and have donated back to the community through fundraising efforts over \$165,000. The pandemic has hit everyone hard so we were unable to do a lot during the last couple of years. Nonetheless, in the last six years Ignite has been the presenter of The Purse Project, collecting more than 5,000 purses to support women facing unfortunate life circumstances.

We continue to seek like-minded women as members so we can increase our fundraising and volunteer efforts. Contact us (<https://www.facebook.com/CanadianProgressClubIgnite>). Ignite is the Saint John Chapter of the Canadian Progress Club (<http://www.progressclub.ca>) founded in Toronto in 1922. It is an all-Canadian service club. In addition to local community commitments, the Club, on a national level, proudly supports Special Olympics Canada through the Canadian Progress Charitable Foundation, which is their largest non-corporate sponsor.



Canadian Progress Club
Club Progrès du Canada
IGNITE – SAINT JOHN

Be there when help is needed the most!



By Wanda Wilson, Canadian Red Cross

Each year, the Canadian Red Cross helps over 100,000 people across Canada. This is only made possible because of people just like you. As you may have heard in the last issue, the Red Cross is launching a new program – Connection NB. This is an important program that relies on volunteers to be successful and have a lasting impact in our neighbourhood.

Becoming a volunteer is a great way to stay active, acquire and apply skills, meet new people, build your resume, and contribute to your community while making a difference in someone’s life and gaining new experiences. The Connection NB program is now recruiting volunteers in our community and surrounding areas. The goal is to connect community-dwelling older adults to local community support services and activities to prevent social isolation and loneliness and improve well-being.

You will be provided with all the training, guidance, and support you need to make sure you have an extremely rewarding experience, including CPR/First Aid training at no charge. To apply you must be 18 years of age and complete a satisfactory criminal record/vulnerable sector check.

For more information or to apply please call 343-4339, email wanda.wilson@redcross.ca, or apply online at <https://connectionnb.redcross.ca/>.

Our community is only as strong as our most vulnerable member. Thank you for helping make it stronger for everyone.

St Luke’s Monday lunch reminder



By St Luke’s

We continue to offer our hearty (and free!) Monday take-out lunches from 12-12:30 p.m. at St. Luke’s Anglican Church, 369 Main Street North. This year we are stepping up our game, and trying to ensure that we make the best meals possible!

(Photo: St Luke’s)

Affordable rooming houses



Crystal in one of the brightly-lit (former) Park Plaza rooms (Photo: Crystal Scott)

By Crystal Scott, Rooming House Coordinator, Housing Alternatives Inc.

Housing Alternatives operates five affordable rooming houses. Two of our rooming houses are operated in collaboration with the Teen Resource Centre (TRC) to house at-risk/homeless youth. Intensive case management for each youth is provided by TRC; they do an amazing job! We have three adult rooming houses, one of which is exclusively for males. All of our units are affordable for most budgets.

Most recently, a portion of the former Park Plaza motel was purchased and refurbished by a group of private developers, who approached us about using the rooms as affordable housing options. Rent is \$400-\$500 with heat and lights included. There is a microwave, fridge, and bed in each room. They are brightly lit by large windows. The accommodations are ideal for people who work, attend school, or are senior citizens. It will fill a critical gap in the housing market.

A rooming house coordinator is now on staff at Housing Alternatives. We can connect local residents with community resources and support, including food security, mental health and addictions, social inclusion and basic health care.

With a strong sense of community, we hope to create places where people can live and thrive.



Around The Block Team (Issue 82)

Publisher: Human Development Council
Editor: Lorna Brown

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Lower South End: Mary LeSage
Crescent Valley: Anne Driscoll
Waterloo Village: Penni Eisenhauer
Lower West Side: Dustin Leclerc
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Layout and design: Lorna Brown and Juanita Black

Khrystyna Voi – Notre nouvelle conseillère francophone en établissement des nouveaux arrivants



Khrystyna Voi (Photo: Lorna Daltrop)

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

Khrystyna est originaire de la ville de Dnipro, en Ukraine, et est arrivée à Saint John avec son mari et son jeune fils au début de 2022. Elle a travaillé neuf ans comme chef de projet en Ukraine pour une entreprise d'import/export après avoir obtenu sa maîtrise en relations internationales. Son rôle lui a permis de se rendre dans d'autres filiales à Singapour et à Hong Kong.

Khrystyna et son mari ont décidé de quitter leur pays il y a plus de trois ans. Ils ont choisi le Canada après avoir assisté à un événement Destination Canada à Paris, organisé par le gouvernement fédéral et plusieurs provinces. Après avoir parlé à des représentants du Nouveau-Brunswick, ils ont été acceptés par le programme des candidats de la province. Cependant, leurs plans ont été retardés par COVID-19.

Leur nouveau visa est arrivé au début de 2022 peu de temps avant le début de la guerre avec la Russie.

Khrystyna est heureuse de travailler pour le Centre des nouveaux arrivants de Saint-Jean car c'est dans sa nature d'aider les gens.

Khrystyna Voi – Our new Francophone Newcomer Settlement Advisor

By Lorne Daltrop, Communications Specialist, Saint John Newcomers Centre

Khrystyna is from the city of Dnipro, Ukraine, arriving in Saint John with her husband and young son early in 2022. She worked nine years as a project manager in Ukraine for an import/export company after completing her Masters Degree in International Relations. Her role allowed her to travel to other subsidiary companies in Singapore and Hong Kong.

Khrystyna and her husband decided to leave their country more than three years ago. They chose Canada after attending a Destination Canada event in Paris, put on by the Federal Government and several provinces. After speaking to representatives from New Brunswick, they were accepted by the province's nominee program. However, their plans were delayed by COVID-19.

Their new visa came in early 2022 a short time before the war began with Russia.

Khrystyna is pleased to be working for the Saint John Newcomers Centre because it is in her nature to help people.

Councillors’ Corner

Transit transformation



John MacKenzie at Saint John Transit (Photo: submitted)

**By John MacKenzie, Deputy Mayor,
City of Saint John, (506) 977-3849**

Saint John Transit has been looking at changing its model for a long time. There have been many complaints about using 40-foot limos on all routes and routes being changed or eliminated because of budget cuts.

Well, the time has come, and transit is transforming! So, what does that look like? Here it is in a nutshell.

The new and improved system will be a hybrid model using some large traditional buses along with other smaller ones.

For the most part, routes with high ridership will have rapid service, and will run every 15 minutes using large buses. Routes with fewer riders will be introduced to an on-demand service.

The new on-demand service can be accessed by using the website on your cell phone or calling a phone number. Passengers will use the app to book, pay and track their rides. Drivers use the app to validate riders’ fares, including cash, passes, and contactless options. On-demand transit is used in many cities across Canada: Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, Regina, and Saskatoon to name but a few. On-demand transit will increase service levels by decreasing wait times. So no longer will you be waiting for a scheduled route, but instead contacting for services as needed. Trip planning will be made easy as technology will plan the trip for you in the system.

One thing we must keep in mind is that this is a public service, and it will not be competing with private taxis or future ridesharing industries. A bus stop to bus stop service, not door to door. Passengers will be required to walk to the nearest bus stop where they will be picked up and taken on their journey.

We can expect to see some changes in the system late spring. As with any new service going through a transition. I am certain there will be bumps along the way but having so many communities in Canada and around the world that use this new technology, the answers will be at our fingertips.

**No longer will you be waiting for a
scheduled route, but instead contacting
for services as needed**

Managing expectations



Greg Stewart at the Saint John Y's Irving Oil Field House
(Photo: Maggie Irvine)

**By Greg R Stewart, Ward 4 City Councillor,
City of Saint John, (506) 977-3854**

As with any new endeavour, one has expectations going in. These are usually based on prior experiences, a good amount of research as well as some guesswork. When I decided to run for Council, I had these expectations as well as desire and enthusiasm to do good for my city.

Almost 10 months after being elected, I find myself managing and adjusting my expectations on a regular basis. This is not a bad thing, nor should it be a surprise. Most plans require adjustments to reach the end goal.

I was like most residents of Saint John looking at the operations of the City from an outside perspective and usually criticizing from my armchair quarterback position. I can quite honestly say that was a much easier job than being on the inside and learning what goes on daily.

To be clear, I appreciate having the inside perspective, but I have come to realize that things sometimes move slower than I would like. That is not to say this is bad, only that it takes time to make real change. As a 30-year business owner I am used to getting things done much more quickly.

What I have learned is that progress in Saint John fell behind over decades due to several factors, a large one being that the City has little control over the tax money it collects. The Province has for a long time withheld a disproportionate share of these taxes as well as utilizing an unfair property tax assessment system for an industrial city. When you combine these factors with some questionable management decisions over the years, we ended up in a state where infrastructure, recreation, and growth have all significantly declined.

Not one to dwell on the past, I ran for Council to make things better and by a huge measure they are getting better every week. The City has been exercising strong fiscal restraint and as a result we are in a much better place.

Obviously, we need to focus more attention and money on our roads, sidewalks, transit system, and our recreational facilities. These are quality of life issues that directly influence decisions on whether to live in or move to this city. These are topics we are addressing every day and we will all be seeing major improvements in the coming years.

Managing our expectations and focusing on our priorities has never been more important than right now.

**Roads, sidewalks, transit system, and our
recreational facilities... we will all be seeing
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