



Around *the* Block



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UYES! offers youth opportunities



UYES!-Outflow Carpentry Program trainees and instructors brave the cold to build a tiny home for those experiencing chronic homelessness. (Photo: Rob Pitman)

By Callie Mackenzie [she, her, hers]
UYES! Project Manager, Human Development Council

For people 15-30 years old and ready for a change, the Urban Youth Employment/Education Service (UYES!) offers opportunities through learning, working, and connecting with community.

The Introduction to Carpentry and Job Readiness Program (a Human Development Council and Outflow Ministry joint project) is an all-in-one example. Over four months, a small group learns carpentry basics, including safety certifications, while being paid to build a tiny home and, at the same time, new friendships.

Under Red Seal carpenter Rob Pitman, the current cohort of eight young adults has been working together since September 6th and has formed some close bonds. "I feel like we got a really special group!" said one participant. Another noted that "it leads you directly into a lifelong career."

The program will wrap up with a certificate ceremony December 21st. Trainees will transition to college, employment, or an apprenticeship, while the home they built together becomes a valuable part of Outflow's affordable housing plan for those experiencing chronic homelessness in Saint John.

To learn more about UYES! programs and services, visit <https://sjhdc.ca/uyes/> or email Callie@sjhdc.ca

Proud Sponsors of Around The Block



SAINT JOHN



Annual Kettle Campaign kick-off



Watched by fellow councillors and well-wishers, Deputy Mayor John MacKenzie makes a donation at the annual Kettle Campaign kickoff and flag-raising at City Hall. Photo: The Salvation Army

From the Editor's desk:

Warmth, hope, and heroes

Lorna Brown, sjcommunitynewspaper@gmail.com

People talk about the warmth of the holiday season. The warmth of hugs and hot meals and heated homes, families gathered by the fireside, protected from the icy winds. I thought about that on the cold morning recently when I met colleagues to look at the planned House of Merritt's building site, where in stark irony a fellow Saint Johner was living in a very much unheated tent. With 133 souls living on our streets right now, it was a relief to read submitted stories that inform us how the community is rallying around the need for affordable housing and acting on it in very practical ways. You can read about it on the back page and in the *ATB* Interview on page 12. Thanks to our Councillors and to Seth Asimakos for the time.

So there is hope at this most hopeful time of year. There is so much more that needs to be done, but I want to pay tribute once again to the heroes in our community who work with compassion and good humour to support those with challenges. They enact the warmth of the holiday season all year round. They live love as a verb, which is really the only way that word has any use or meaning. Feeling without action is pointless. And a shout-out to their clients who display a heroic resilience that would be beyond many of us.

Another great hope is in our youth. Long-term investment in those with the potential to be marginalized will lower the numbers on the street, years from now. Just looking at the young people doing robotics and other tech (pages 2 and 5) and SPARC programs (page 7), and learning building skills towards a trade (page 1), one can't help but feel optimistic. Not to forget our fabulous seniors! Debbie McLeod from Social Development is never short of a story on something helpful that our energetic seniors are doing for others - for this issue she sent two! See page 17. And thanks to the Canadian Red Cross (also page 17) and ARCf (page 13) for stories about programs that help seniors stay in their homes longer.

Peace and joy to all. You get them by giving them. May you enjoy true peace during this holiday season. See you in 2023!

Robotics Club



Vivid responses at Robotics Club!

Story and photo by Jonathan Driscoll, ONE Change

This year The ONE Change partnered alongside NBCC, and Brilliant Labs had a wonderful privilege of teaching teens in the Old North End the power of coding and building skills. The program was launched as Engage4Change powered by Orange Tart Robotics, a brand-new Lego based programing robot that has endless possibilities. We started the last week of September to showcase to the youth and their parents what they would be working on for the upcoming weeks. Each of the youth was super excited and ready to learn what was to come. The past few weeks have shown so much growth in all these wonderful individuals; they have learned everything from coding, building skills and most importantly teamwork skills, to learning to overcome stressful situations and understand that mistakes happen - but with a friend and teammate alongside, we can do anything. It has been a true honour seeing what each one of these youth could come up with, from cranes to soccer robots, spider bots and so much more! We cannot wait to see what the new year holds for this wonderful Engage4Change Program here at The ONE Change.

EducatUS

By Leaya Mullin, ONE Youth Coordinator, ONE Change

At the heart of the EducatUs program is the fundamental belief that standardized methods of penalizing students fail to address the root of why they are experiencing behavioural concerns in the first place. It is the mission of EducatUs to do and consider all that is necessary to avoid exasperating anxieties, stressors and other external and internal obstacles that may lie out of the control of the student in question and potentially lead to additional consequences or worse outcomes. To date, the program has received three student referrals, with new referrals coming in daily! Contact Leaya Mullin, ONE Youth Coordinator for more information. (Photo of Leaya: Jonathan Driscoll)



Coffee with a Cop



Deputy Dwyer (right) and her colleague with the children.
Left to right, Maisie, Sophia D., Skylar, Sophia C.

Story and photo by Jonathan Driscoll, ONE Change

In November we had a special event: “Coffee with a Cop.” Deputy Dwyer dropped in with coffee to chat with our residents. Our children from the After-school Program were so excited to meet them. Our parents were able to ask questions, raise concerns and get advice. We even had some of our teens come in to ask about becoming a police officer. It was a great meet-and-greet for us all. Thank you to the Saint John Police Force for hosting this event for our neighbourhood. We are looking forward to a similar event in the future.

Santa on a Budget



Story and photo by Katie Harrington, ONE Change

On November 18th, the Neighbourhood Developers at ONE Change, the Crescent Valley Resource Centre, PULSE, and the Carleton Community Centre collaborated with Kaleidoscope Social Impact to host a “Santa on a Budget” event at the Nick Nicolle Centre. Community champions from each of the neighbourhoods participated and learned how save money and budget for the upcoming holiday season. Important connections were made between the residents and Darlene Jones, Kaleidoscope’s Financial Literacy Coordinator. The Neighbourhood Developers and the community centres are always thrilled to have the opportunity to collaborate and connect with resources that the City and Province provide to help improve the lives of the residents of Saint John. We look forward to working with Kaleidoscope again in the future! (Above: collaborating and connecting)

Barry Ogden

Ward 2 City Councillor

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North Neighbourhood Contact

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Nick Nicolle Community Centre
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658-2980



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

By Lisa Morris, Resident Engagement Coordinator,
PULSE Incorporated

PULSE Inc. NEW hours of operation

Monday-Tuesday 9 a.m.–3 p.m., Wednesday 8 a.m.–3 p.m., Thursday 9 a.m.–7 p.m., Friday 9 a.m.–4 p.m.

Holiday hours – Last day December 23rd, open 9 a.m.– 2 p.m. We will be open again on January 3rd, 2023 and will have a warm Grab & Go Breakfast available that day from 9-11 a.m.

PULSE Annual Tree Lighting – Join us Thursday, December 15th at 6 p.m. and enjoy some hot chocolate and chat with neighbours as we light up our Christmas tree.

Noon Nuggets – Join us every Wednesday 12-1 p.m. for small nuggets of information on a wide variety of topics based on residents' requests. Register in advance to make sure we save you a seat! Have an idea on a topic or want to lead a conversation? Call us at (506) 632-6807. We would love to hear from you!

Saint John the Baptist-King Edward (SJBKE) Parent Coffee & Chat – Join us every Wednesday morning 8-10 a.m. after dropping your children off at school and enjoy a fresh cup of coffee and friendly conversation.

Community Health Nurse - Kathy London Anthony is available for drop in at PULSE every Wednesday 1-3 p.m.

Tax season is over; however, we are still here for you! PULSE is open year-round to complete your taxes including previous years'. Drop off your taxes anytime we are open and pick up in a few business days.

Monthly Calendars available! Next time you stop in, do not forget to grab a monthly calendar to keep track of what is going on each month!

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 reduce wait times or call to schedule (506) 632-6807. Limited to 30 minutes.

Saint John Food Purchasing Order- Looking for affordable veggies? Money can be dropped off at PULSE Inc., 251 Wentworth Street or E-transferred to Martha.MacLean@HorizonNB.ca. Please include your name, phone number, order size, and pickup location.

- December – money due December 9th, pick up December 16th
- January – money due January 13th, pick up January 20th
- February – money due February 10th, pick up February 17th

If you want to Pay It Forward with a Saint John Food Purchasing Order to someone in the community, simply send a \$15 or \$25 e-transfer to:

Martha.MacLean@HorizonNB.ca

and put in the notes in which area you would like your order donated!

Gerry Lowe
Ward 3 City Councillor

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



Grab & Go Breakfast

9am to 11am

December 6th
December 13th
December 20th

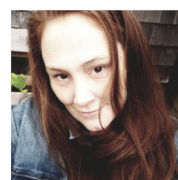
January 3rd
January 17th
January 31st



Stop in and grab a breakfast to go!
Breakfasts vary but usually include a juice box,
yogurt, cereal bar and fruit or hot oatmeal.
Great way to start the day!

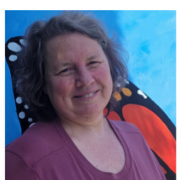


South End Neighbourhood Contacts



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Resident Engagement Coordinator
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P.U.L.S.E Inc.
251 Wentworth St
(506)632-6807



Mary LeSage
Neighbourhood Developer
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Remembering Wayne King: amazing bike technician and a great guy



Wayne King, Bike Tech, Saint John Bike Share Program (Photo: CVRC)

By Justin E. Shepard, BA, BEd, Community Engagement Coordinator, Crescent Valley Resource Centre (CVRC)

Three-and-a-half years ago Wayne King applied for the bike technician position with the Saint John Bike Share Program at the Crescent Valley Resource Centre. In his interview, Wayne was incredibly polite, well spoken, funny, and showed great enthusiasm in wanting to help people and give back to the community. Based on his excellent interview and his experience as a mechanic he was hired.

Wayne quickly became a vital part of the CVRC team. He was highly motivated, dedicated and enthusiastic about doing his absolute best in his position as bike tech. Wayne was always reading about and watching YouTube videos of how to better repair and build up bikes. Within a month or so, Wayne was already becoming an expert in bike repair, learning the names and purposes of every bike part and repair tool he came across. He would often explain bike repairs to me using the proper terms for the tools and parts of bikes and when I would look at him blankly not knowing what in the heck he was talking about, he would dumb it down for me and say something like “Ok, this part here is bent. So, I need to take ‘er off and throw on a new one.” We were all beyond impressed with his knowledge, work ethic, and how organized and focused he was. His workspace was always immaculate, and he kept neat and detailed records of repairs, builds and the bike parts and donations we received. His dedication to the bike program will never be forgotten as he repaired and gave out hundreds of bikes over the years for so many children and adults.

The whole CVRC team appreciated Wayne not just as a co-worker, but also as a friend. Wayne regularly offered to go for a “Tim’s run” to pick up a coffee or something to eat. He would make his way around the building making sure to ask every person if they wanted anything, so nobody was left out. Wayne had a great sense of humour, too. Even on the most stressful days he could get a laugh out of you. Not long ago, Wayne gave me a good laugh telling me about how he tried an apple fritter for the first time and how much he loved it. He said “Brother, I’m 33 years old and this is the first time I ever had an apple fritter. I was eating it saying to myself ‘Where have you been all my life!?’” Wayne was also quite intelligent. He had great skill in math, an excellent memory and had a real interest in history. Over the years all of us here at the CVRC have had good, interesting talks with him about various historical events. He was particularly interested in World War II and had profound respect for the people that risked and gave their lives to help others. You’d never see Wayne without his poppy leading up to Remembrance Day. He was one of a kind. Just a straight-up nice guy who always thought of others.

Wayne passed away suddenly on November 16th, 2022. He will be missed by his family, his friends and the Crescent Valley community. Although we are heartbroken, I know that Wayne would want us all to try to focus on the good times we had with him. He would want us to be kind to each other, be there for our family and friends, and live our lives the best we can.

**We at the CVRC will always keep his memory in our hearts.
He was our co-worker. He was our friend. He was our family.
Rest easy, Brother.**

**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
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After-school STEAM programs in Saint John!



Carleton Community Centre (Photo: Brilliant Labs)

By Brilliant Labs

Following Brilliant Labs' free STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) Camps in Saint John this past summer, we introduced new after school programs this fall for children (aged 7 to 12+) in partnership with Carleton Community Centre and the Saint John Free Public Library in Market Square. Similar to our camps, children from all walks of life and technical abilities have fun developing their creative and digital skills by learning how to innovate with today's technology.

Additionally, Brilliant Labs, in partnership with Newcomer Connections at the YMCA of Greater Saint John, is piloting a new digital skills training program for newcomer Arabic-speaking youth to expose them to creating and innovating with digital technology. Brilliant Labs is able to provide such STEAM-based programs free of charge in the community, thanks to funding from the Government of Canada's CanCode program.



Saint John Free Public Library in Market Square (Photo: Brilliant Labs)

Christmas cheer at the Carleton



Diversity at BGC Seaside



Story and photo by David MacDonald (He/Him), Team Leader, Seaside Elementary School, Youth Programming, BGC

This fall, the BGC Seaside Park Evening and Afterschool Program have been running Multi-Culturalism and Diversity programs at Seaside Park Elementary. Through a grant, we are able to run a program focused on promoting diversity, equity, and inclusivity. We were able to feature Saint John Newcomers; they presented on what it is like to be a newcomer preparing for their first winter in Canada. Many of the kids didn't realize how much we take for granted such as being taught at an early age to walk like a penguin when crossing patches of ice or how much of a difference wind chill can have on the temperature. Kids were impressed with how many hurdles newcomers face when they arrive in Canada, especially in the winter. After presenting, the kids were put into a raffle for some knit mittens and bags from Saint John Newcomers.



The Honourable Dorothy Shephard
MLA Saint John Lancaster

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West Side Neighbourhood Contact

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New PCAP meeting space at the Wheelhouse



The new meeting room

**Story and photo by Hallie Merry,
Parent-Child Assistance Program (PCAP)**

A huge thank you to University of New Brunswick Saint John (UNBSJ) Bachelor of Health students Megan and Emma for helping beautify our PCAP meeting room. We can now offer a calming serene space to meet with families. We have the pleasure of offering warm drinks and snacks in a relaxing atmosphere during client meetings.

The Advocates can now support families through play in our toy area. When sitting down with children on their level, we are able to help mothers engage in play and activities that help with early childhood development. Since community partnerships are key to our success, we welcome you to come meet with a member of our team in our inviting new space.

PCAP works with birthing people who have experienced alcohol or substance-use during pregnancy.

**If you know someone who could use this kind of support,
please visit our website www.nbsocialpediatrics.com
or call the office at (506) 214-1186.**

The Honorable Arlene Dunn
MLA Saint John Harbour

Constituency Office: Mercantile Centre
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Saint John, NB E2L 5B7

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Celebrate the Christmas season at Stone Church



By Reverend Jasmine Chandra

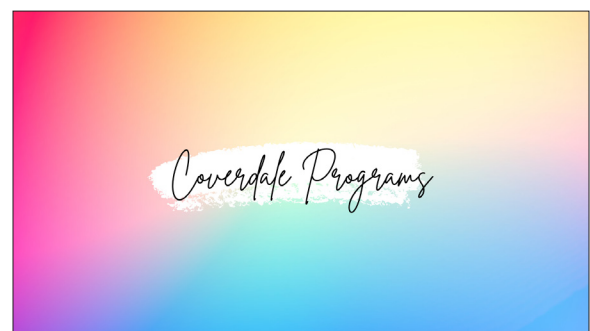
December 11th 10:30 a.m.: Celebrating the Joy of Advent
December 18th 10:30 a.m.: Lessons and Carols
December 24th 4 p.m: Christmas Eve Service / Children's Nativity Play
December 25th 10:30 a.m.: Christmas Day Service

Coverdale programs for women

**By Chanelle Morgan, Program Facilitator,
Coverdale Centre for Women Inc.**

Coverdale offers programs to women at our Drop-in Centre to help women develop new skills to take steps toward change. Some of these skills will improve relationships, increase self-esteem, inform healthy choices, or prepare people for employment programs. Programs include Boundaries, Communication Skills, Your Financial Toolkit, Financial Basics, Healthy Living on a Fixed Budget, Transition to Work, Social Networking Safety and Cyber Harassment, and others.

Coverdale also works with women individually to address self-identified needs. We connect women with other resources as needed or make referrals for wrap-around supports. We will work collaboratively with other agencies to offer our programs to those groups as outreach. We have recently taken steps to begin offering programs online as well. We have an exciting new program we plan to launch in the New Year so watch our socials for that announcement! For more program information, call Chanelle at 634-0812 or email coverdaleprograms@gmail.com.



**Waterloo-Village
Neighbourhood Contact**

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139 Prince Edward Street
647-8047



SPARC is back!



Our SPARC students enjoying cheer at Port City Elite
(Photo: Kate MacDonald)

By Kate MacDonald, Community Schools Coordinator,
Centennial School

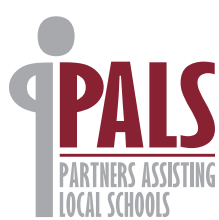
We are so excited to be able welcome SPARC back! SPARC stands for Sports-Arts-Recreation-Culture. This amazing program allows students to explore different extra-curricular activities through three-week sessions. The SPARC program will provide different activities over the course of the 2022-2023 year. Students will be eligible to participate in up to two programs of their choice giving them experiences they may not otherwise receive. We are starting this year with students participating in cheer!

We are so thankful to our partners in this opportunity, P.R.O. Kids, our PALS.



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!

Autumn altruism

Story and photo
by Ben Gillcrist,
Community Schools
Coordinator, Saint
John the Baptist/
King Edward School
(SJBKE)

As the holiday season (quickly!) approaches, SJBKE will certainly be gearing up for Christmas, and can look forward to benefitting from many kindnesses as we work to make a pleasant December for our students. It is worth noting, though, that, without much fanfare, our partners and friends have been with us since the beginning of the school year (and before) working to ensure that our school has what it needs to help out our children - be it donations of mittens or sneakers, or help with programming (in many capacities), or time volunteered, we have been most fortunate in our friends, who have worked diligently while the leaves fall to ensure we are kitted out in every sense of the word. That work will continue through and after the holidays - for all those who put in, in whatever capacity, almost all of whom have stuck with us during these past crazy years, we thank you!



Above: a sampling of items donated at SJBKE since September (all part of larger sets!)

BGC's LeadHERBrave underway



Story and photo by Rachel Murphy, BGC

The South End Community Centre is running a new program this year and a few weeks in we are so excited about it. LeadHERBrave is a 12-week interactive program for girls aged 12 to 16. This program was created by Terri-Ann Richards and is meant to offer space and the tools needed to develop the participants' potential through growth and leadership experiences. Every Wednesday Terri-Ann and her daughter Jateena chat with the girls about any topics the participants might bring up, and they handle the tough ones with so much grace and without any judgement. The girls are working on their self-confidence and on setting goals for themselves. We're excited to see how much growth and development the participants go through by the end of the program. To enquire about potential future programs, please contact me at Rachel.murphy@sjclub.ca
Above: LeadHERBrave playing some "get to know you" games

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.

There are no dues. Face-to-face meetings have resumed; masks are not required but feel free!

- 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.

Christmas dinner at St Luke's, December 19th at noon

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

We will be continuing our Monday take-out lunches until December 19th, on which day we will have a take-out Christmas dinner.

The volunteers will then go on break until January 9th when the meals will start up again.

CTSJ Holiday Potluck on December 13th – register now!

By Civic Tech Saint John Co-organizers

Civic Tech Saint John celebrates the season with its first-ever CTSJ Holiday Potluck on December 13th, 6:30 p.m. at ConnexionWorks.

All are welcome – please visit www.civitechsaintjohn.ca/ and complete the registration form located in the “Upcoming events” section.

The holidays have different meanings for everyone in our city's growing, diverse and multicultural communities. And Civic Tech Saint John is about creating greater social inclusion and development through community. So, regardless of your ethnicity, culture, or beliefs, gatherings like this are how we show our appreciation for one another, create meaningful connections, and find optimism and hope together for the coming year.

As Civic Tech Saint John prepares to refresh its format for Tuesday evening's #HackNight, the Co-organizers wanted to close this year full of positivity, surrounded by community partners and great flavours, and with arms wide open to receive a 2023 full of new opportunities for us to use technology for social good.

Visit www.civitechsaintjohn.ca/ and complete the registration form located in the “Upcoming events” section



CIVIC TECH SAINT JOHN
Technology + Social Good

Holiday Turkey and Gift Card Contest

By Juanita Black, HDC and Mary LeSage, PULSE

We are happy to partner with Saint John Energy for the seventh year!

For this December issue, instead of fruit and vegetable orders as prizes, we have a \$50 gift card and a turkey to each of two winners! We'd like to thank Saint John Energy and the Human Development Council for the gift cards. 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 10, 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 prizes. The contest will end at noon on Monday, December 19th, and pick-up for the winners will be on the 20th. We will also list the winners on the Human Development Council Facebook page.

The Issue 85 winners were:
Diana Doyle and Marilyn Wilson



Join us at any of our free Workshops for Job Seekers!

Résumé Writing Workshop
Every Monday at 10:00am

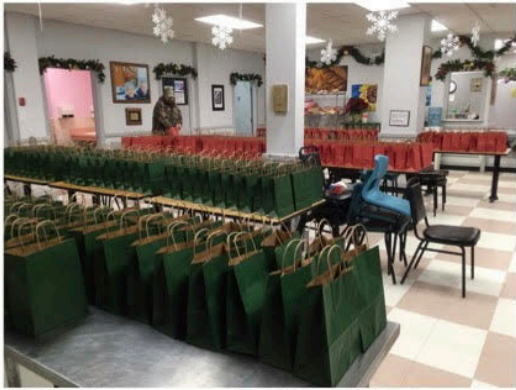
Interview Skills Workshop
Last Thursday of each month at 2:00pm

For more information or to reserve a space, come inside and speak with us or call (506) 658-5580.

WORKING NB
TRAVAIL NB



Christmas @ Romero House 2022



This year we will be handing out Christmas bags/Stockings to young people 13-18 and all adults who come for a meal as usual.

In place of our usual Christmas Party Santa Claus will be handing out candy canes out our Christmas window again this year.

**** Please note that you must come for yourself in order to receive a Christmas Bag/ Stocking and bring your Medicare card or another form of ID.**

Important Dates

Christmas Bags/Stocking pass out – December 19,20,21,22

Candy Canes with Santa – December 18th

Traditional Christmas Dinner - December 25th - Served "Out the Window"

New Year's Dinner – January 1st



Happy Holidays from all of us at Port Saint John! Photo: Cassandra McLaughlin



Community Partners • *Community Partners* • Community Partners • *Community Partners* • Community Partners

Christmas 2022 - Santa is on a budget



Left to right: Darlene Jones, Justin Sweeney (partly hidden), Guillermo Marroquin, Seth Asimakos, Peggy Thompson, Guylaine Cyr, and Michelle Lodge - the staff of Kaleidoscope Social Impact learning that money does not grow on trees (Photo: supplied by Darlene Jones)

By Darlene Jones, Financial Literacy Coordinator, Kaleidoscope Social Impact

Christmas is the #1 spending season of the year. This year with inflation and higher prices many of us are struggling with day-to-day bills and are not sure how Santa will be able to make an appearance. Ho ho hold the purse strings.

Here are a few tips to consider this Christmas...

Develop a gift-giving philosophy. Make a list...check it twice.

1. Consider giving fewer gifts or going in on a group gift. A card and the latest family photo may be just as meaningful to your family and friends.
2. Donate to charity. Include in a card a note that states you made a donation to those less fortunate since we are blessed with all we need. No one needs to know how much you donated. Have some fun with it. For example, for my father's 80th birthday I bought a goat in a developing country on his behalf.
3. Consider time over money. Have the family over for a Christmas party. Consider having it after Christmas Day while the kids are still home from school. Movies and popcorn with a coloring contest. Being together and making memories as a family is most important.
4. Learn a family recipe. Perhaps this is the year you ask your great-aunt to teach you how to make that family favourite. Ask your family to provide a recipe they hand-printed on an index card that can be inserted into a photo album. For years to come you will have many family favourites with the personal hand-written touch.

How to stretch your purse strings

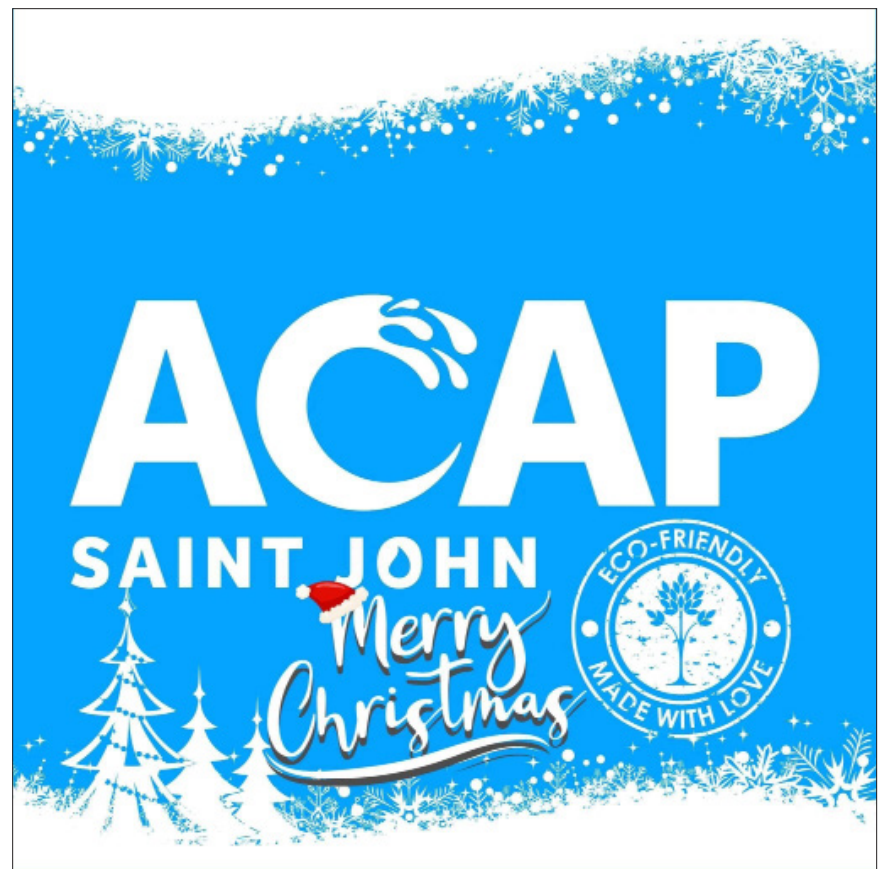
1. Take inventory; check old gift cards; use points on Scene/ Optimum; regift; make gifts such as crafts or cooking
2. Budget. The best gift you can give yourself is the gift of peace of mind. Sticking to your budget means that you avoid paying high interest on a credit card or taking out a loan that you need to pay back after the holidays. You don't want to be paying off purchases long after the item has lost its shine.

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

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

**Remember, no matter how much or how little
your income is,
how you spend your money matters.**

Tips and tricks for an eco-friendly Christmas



**By Vincent Scully,
Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP) Saint John**

With the holidays right around the corner, we wanted to share some tips and tricks with you to make your festivities as eco-friendly as possible.

If you are using an advent calendar that covers the whole month of December, instead of buying a single-use one, buy one that can be used year after year and fill it with your own treats.

When decorating your Christmas tree, use decorations that you already own. This will make it even more meaningful to you and your family. If you need to buy new ones, get some that won't end up in the trash and that can be reused.

If you are wrapping gifts, try to reuse materials from previous years and use the least amount of plastic possible.

Instead of using premade Christmas cards from the store, create your own cards or better yet send out E-cards online.

From our team to you, we wish you a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and Happy New Year!





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Ready...Set.... Mentor!



Saint John Learning Exchange learners and JDI volunteers, November 23rd, 2022 (Photo: Alex Ash)

By Stacy Doyle, Saint John Learning Exchange

The Saint John Learning Exchange hosted volunteers from J.D. Irving's (JDI) IT Division for a speed mentoring session. Speed mentoring is a series of networking conversations, sharing knowledge, experience, and expertise to help mentees gain information about the corporate work environment, get advice about the recruitment process, and develop networking and soft skills.

JDI's mentors rotated every 15 minutes to small groups of learners who took turns asking questions ranging from general employment, to those specific to JDI, the company, and the information technology sector.

It was a valuable exercise for learners, who provided the following feedback:

- "Now I am excited for my next steps!"
- "The information about interviews was helpful and reassuring."
- "It showed me that no matter how far you may feel you are off course, you can always find a way to steer your ship back in the right direction."

Thank you, JDI!



Fishing Week 2022

**By Kaya Guptill,
Atlantic Coastal Action Program
(ACAP) Saint John**

I am Kaya. I'm a high school student at Kennebecasis Valley High School (KVHS). I decided to do my five-month co-op placement with ACAP Saint John. Ever since I was young I always wanted to go out fishing with Dad, go hunting, go on a hike. This year I have truly learned how much I love nature. Nature is so beneficial.

I find nature is so healing and grounding. During my few months at ACAP I have been involved in Fishing Week, tree planting, and helping Glen Falls School create a rain garden. Here are some of the highlights. During fishing season in mid-October I got to experience beach seining and measuring the length of the fish we caught. A beach seine is a big net that two people hold while walking through the water going upstream. After seining, we pulled the net onto the shore. We then measured the length of the fish; if there were more than 30 we just counted the rest. This experience was so cool! Just to see the different fish and shrimp species in our waters was so eye-opening. Above: Kaya during Fishing Week, October 2022 (Photo: ACAP Saint John)



Seeking more non-profit partners to join the CARE Database



The CARE Database

Communities Acting on Research Evidence

Srijain Shrestha, New Brunswick Social Pediatrics

Attention non-profit agencies! Do you struggle to collect information on your clients and report on your outcomes? Have you heard of the CARE Database? The CARE database has the staff and technology to help you achieve your goals! The CARE Database provides a secure online platform for collecting and evaluating data for non-profit agencies. With CARE, non-profits will have access to standardized and validated tools for measuring indicators and outcomes. At the end of each year, CARE will create a community-level report to highlight the greatest needs, gaps, and victories among CARE partners. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saint John, Bee Me Kidz, the Pediatrics on Princess (POP) Centre, and the Parent-Child Assistance Program (PCAP) are Saint John-based early adopters of the CARE Database. We are very excited for more non-profits and community-based agencies to join the CARE database! Check out our website to learn more: www.nbsocialpediatrics.com

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The Around the Block interview: Seth Asimakos, Kaleidoscope Social Impact, on affordable housing

Given the coming of winter, Coverdale's construction of Rose House, the City's housing plan, and the new Out of the Cold shelter (see page 20), it was timely to check in with Seth Asimakos, General Manager and Co-Founder of Kaleidoscope Social Impact, an important non-profit developer of affordable housing.



Seth Asimakos
(Photos: Lorna Brown)

Tell our readers a bit of the background about The House of Merritt. Whom is it going to help and what's different about it?

The House of Merritt is going to be 12 units of supportive housing for women who currently are mainly living on the streets and with significant barriers like substance use. The difference is the supportive piece. Coverdale is just finishing a project [Rose House] which is affordable housing, but it doesn't have a supportive entity within it, whereas the House of Merritt will have both Fresh Start Services for Women and Avenue B inside on the ground floor. The tenants will already be clients of theirs, so they will know them and will already have been servicing them. That's the unique element of it. It will also be a very energy efficient building, with solar as part of the energy.

And is it meant as transitional housing? How long will can the women stay?

It's a Housing First model. If there are women that stabilize when they're there and make the choice to do other things, they will have supports there to make those movements. But it really is about harm reduction and Housing First.

Who are other partners in the project?

The Human Development Council (HDC), early on, threw their support behind it and have put in significant amounts of equity. CMHC (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation) has just come on with a long-term loan, a 50-year mortgage, and a bit of grant money. Social Development has put in \$70,000 a unit and will be supporting with supplements for the tenants so that they're paying no more than 30% of their income for rent.

What was the spark that started this project?

Avenue B and Fresh Start have been talking about doing something around housing, and approached HDC, who suggested we talk.

When will you break ground?

Hopefully it will be out to tender in January with a contractor ideally signed in early March. We would have ground-breaking in April. It's probably going to be a 12-16-month project.

What are your other projects in affordable housing that would be of interest to our readers? We bought Saint John the Baptist on Broad Street. It has the church, the vestry connected to it, and the rectory. We will be renovating the church for creatives, like artists, entrepreneurs - Brilliant Labs will be in there. In the back area there's enough land that we're envisioning a 30-36 unit potentially with a childcare centre. It's a big vision. but we'll see. I was just at a Rapid Housing Initiative discussion today with the City with proposals needed by March 31st so we may put that 30-36 unit into that application.

Would that be mixed housing or affordable housing?

It would be for the most needed and it's going to be affordable housing. But it could be a mix between women and children but also artists who are struggling in affordable housing as well. It was supposed to be a third phase of this whole project, starting in April 2024, but now with this new call for proposals for the RHI it may fit within that, and happen sooner and without the debt we have on other projects. **[Editor's note, see page 20 for the City's initiative.]**

What's your view of the affordable housing situation in SJ?

Clearly it is very poor, ever since COVID with an influx of so many people. It put pressure on the market; landlords saw a windfall because they could charge higher prices. Buildings doubled in price from a

previous year, which means higher caring costs. You have to get it back somehow, which is [from] the tenants. Rents basically doubled overnight. We bought a 10-unit this summer on Union St to maintain it as affordable; if it had gone to market pretty much everybody in the place would have had a 50% increase right away. My property manager went to tell them and to get new leases signed; one [tenant] just started crying and said, "I thought you were coming to evict me." Other landlords that are getting older are going to sell at some point and I'm talking to them now, so that we might be able to buy those properties. They say, yes, they sold one and right away the [new] landlord doubled the prices and all of a sudden, their 20-year tenants were no longer there. I believe that we as housing developers and government need to have rent controls; we need a funding system that allows you to purchase existing housing so that it doesn't go to the private market; and we need to continue to renovate and build new ones. But if we don't buy the stuff that's going to market, we will never catch up - not a chance! Because eight affordable units are lost to one being built right now. That's the scenario across the country. We in Saint John, in New Brunswick are one of the worst right now.

You pretty much answered my question about what more can be done: rent controls, funding, the ability to do things differently. Do you have anything to say about the City's housing plan?

I think it's going to fit as long as we're working all together. If the City applies on behalf of a non-profit organization who will own and run it, it looks like CMHC will have a lot less things to check off because basically you've got a big city that has a big budget and has accountability that can take the liability much more than a small non-profit, I guess. I don't know. I think that's the reason. So that may quicken the pace, that kind of partnership. We know that we're living in a very tight market and it's pushing people onto the streets and all of us are seeing it, whether it's Saint John, Moncton, Fredericton, Bathurst, wherever - it's the same all over the province. On our fund side in just the last eight months we have financed four or five projects [around NB], which add up to about 50 units altogether, either going to be built or maintained. We see we have another \$1,000,000 in the pipeline right now of other developers ready to do stuff. If the money is there, clearly we can do it. But there still has to be policy around putting a bit of a blanket on housing as a commodity. If housing remains simply an open buy and sell commodity like the market, it's hard to catch up. So rent control is one thing. The other is controlling the amount of equity you can take out in any given year, from year to year, so that people don't have a bonanza kind of situation happening. I'm a big proponent of that idea. In the past real estate was, you buy 10 buildings and you're a millionaire when you retire. Now it's, you want to be a millionaire in two or three years by owning three buildings then turning them over. It's just crazy the way it's being seen as the best speculative thing you can do - go out and flip and make some money.

Without counting the human cost.

Right. If you consider housing a right, then it flies against that for sure.



A picture that speaks to the need for affordable housing. Left to right: Julie Dingwell, Avenue B; Melanie Vautour, Fresh Start Services for Women; and Seth, at the site on which the House of Merritt will be built. A homeless Saint Johner lives in the tent behind them. This picture was taken with the permission of the resident.

Latin American Heritage Month, October 2022



Above: Salsa workshop by Willinton Vega and attendees dancing, October 29th (Photo: Josue Arce Arzola); below: great attendance at the Cultural Celebration! (Photo: Mark Goodfellow)

By Karla Marticorena, board member, Red Latin

Latin American Heritage Month was a great success in our community. A big shout-out to Red Latin@ members and to our partners for hosting events in October 2022 to celebrate Latin American culture. Almost 900 attendees among Saint Johners, tourists, local authorities, and community partners brought joy and enthusiasm through the activities. These included: a soccer tournament; a film festival; Spanish story time; a Latin market; and finally a cultural celebration in the atrium of Market Square on October 29th. Talented performers delighted the audience to the rhythm of Latin music, and there were family activities and visual arts. Sponsors of Latin American Heritage Month included Opportunities New Brunswick, Saint John Free Public Library, City of Saint John, Port Saint John, and Saint John Youth Orchestra, among others. The Red Latin@ is a volunteer-based non-profit organization, created in January 2022, whose purpose is to support Latin newcomers in settling in Southwest New Brunswick.



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Le Projet pilote sur les aînés en santé

Par Jonathan Poirier, directeur des communications, ARCf de Saint-Jean

Lancé cette année, ce projet financé par les gouvernements du Canada et du Nouveau-Brunswick permet à l'ARCf (Association Régionale de la Communauté francophone) de s'assurer que les aînés francophones vivant à Saint-Jean reçoivent les services dont ils ont besoin pour rester chez eux plus longtemps.

L'installation récente d'un espace d'activités pour les 50+ directement dans le Centre Samuel-de-Champlain fait partie de ce projet. Le lancement au début de la nouvelle année d'un nouvel espace de services communautaires permettra d'aider les aînés à trouver les services dont ils ont besoin pour rester à la maison plus longtemps.

Des présentations par des professionnels sont offertes gratuitement. Philippe Richard, avocat, a donné une présentation sur les procurations et testaments tandis que la diététiste Renée Cool a expliqué comment économiser de l'argent en cuisinant pour une ou deux personnes. En novembre, le Défenseur des aînés du Nouveau-Brunswick et la Commission des services financiers et des services aux consommateurs ont offert des séances d'information.



Gaétane et Suzanne aiment rester informées grâce aux sessions d'informations offertes par des professionnels. Crédit : Gracieuseté / Gaétane and Suzanne like to stay informed thanks to information sessions offered by professionals. (Photo: supplied)

The Healthy Seniors Pilot Project

By Jonathan Poirier, directeur des communications, ARCf de Saint-Jean

Launched this year, this project, funded by the Governments of Canada and New Brunswick, enables ARCf (Association Régionale de la Communauté francophone) to ensure that francophone seniors living in Saint John receive the services they need to stay in their homes longer.

The recent installation of a 50+ activity space directly in the Centre Samuel-de-Champlain is part of this project. The launch in the new year of a new community service space will help seniors find the services they need to stay at home longer.

Presentations by professionals are offered free of charge. Philippe Richard, a lawyer, gave a presentation on powers of attorney and wills while dietitian Renée Cool explained how to save money when cooking for one or two people. In November, the New Brunswick Seniors' Advocate and the Financial and Consumer Services Commission offered information sessions.

The launch in the new year of a new community service space will help seniors find the services they need to stay at home longer.

POP Centre welcomes new Program Coordinator!



Shira Zipursky (Photo: supplied by Shira)

By Sarah Campbell, New Brunswick Social Pediatrics

It is with great excitement that we announce the recent hiring of Shira Zipursky, Certified Child Life Specialist, as Program Coordinator at the Pediatrics on Princess (POP) Centre. Shira comes to us with years of hospital and community experience from across Eastern Canada and is eager to begin working with our population in the Saint John community. To kick off the new year, Shira is planning an exciting array of programs to meet the developmental and learning needs of our patients. Creative Expressions will begin Thursday, January 12th from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. and is geared towards children in grades three to five. This 10-week program will focus on ways to express your emotions through art, learning healthy coping strategies, and will allow for connections with others in the community. We look forward to what is to come and the inspiring direction we are going in. For more information check out our website: www.nbsocialpediatrics.com

PRUDE English Conversation Practice

Story and photo by Robert Sancton

If you are a newcomer to Saint John who wants to improve your everyday English, learn about local cultures, make new friends, and establish professional connections, join our new group at the Saint John Free Public Library. The group meets every Thursday from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. All English levels are welcome! Please contact robert@prudeinc.org to register. Below: three students met for the first time through the PRUDE English Conversation class.

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Students in the community: Julia Kaine



Julia Kaine (Photo: supplied by Julia)

By Paige Stewardson, Office of Experiential Education, UNBSJ

SOCS 4501 is an experiential learning course offered at the University of New Brunswick Saint John Campus (UNBSJ) which aims to integrate the knowledge we bring to the class, challenge the assumptions and ideas we currently hold, and strengthen our understanding of ourselves and each other. These goals are achieved with the help of dedicated community partners.

Julia Kaine, a fourth-year Bachelor of Arts student majoring in Communications, is currently enrolled in the course, finding meaningful work experience with the non-profit organization People United in the Lower South End (PULSE).

PULSE is a resource centre whose main target is food insecurity in the community. Julia is using her passion for Communications and Media to help promote PULSE in the community by creating graphics, posters, and videos.

Julia says that this Experiential Education opportunity is helping her prepare for the workforce while providing an encouraging environment to learn.

May the joy of the season fill your homes and your hearts.

Photo by Aaron Burden on Unsplash

CMHANB Saint John Programs 2023

Dawn O'Dell, Community Program Coordinator
Canadian Mental Health Association of New Brunswick
Saint John office

Reserve your spot in one of our 2023 education programs! Pre-registration is required a minimum of one week prior to start date. To register, please visit Canadian Mental Health Association of New Brunswick's (CMHANB) Saint John office in Hilyard Place, 560 Main St, Suite A315, Saint John NB E2K 1J5.

Depression - January 24th-February 28th - Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
A six-week program designed to help people who have been diagnosed with depression. A trained facilitator and healthcare professionals discuss issues that relate to depression. These include information on symptoms, treatment options, coping strategies, and community resources.

Mindfulness - March 16th-April 20th - Thursdays, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
A six-week skills-based program designed to introduce you to the benefits and practice of mindfulness in your everyday life and to teach you the basics of mindfulness meditation. Participants will learn how to practice mindfulness to calm the mind and to improve both mental and physical health.

Engaging Families in Recovery - March 16th-May 18th - Thursdays, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
This 10-week program is for family members, caregivers and friends of someone living with mental illness. The goal of the program is for caregivers / loved ones to feel better equipped with various coping skills and knowledge of how best to be a supporter and caregiver in ways which are healthy and effective for all parties.

For more information: (506) 652-1447, dawn.odell@cmhanb.ca



Canadian Mental Health Association
New Brunswick
Mental health for all

Association canadienne pour la santé mentale
Nouveau-Brunswick
La santé mentale pour tous

EFryNB winter initiatives

by Christine Wark,
Director of Housing and Wellness Coordinator, EFryNB

EFryNB supports individuals in our community who are returning to community, experiencing precarious living situations or homelessness, or adjusting to the transition to stable housing. The holidays are no exception. We are presently focusing our attention on increasing support before and during the holidays and colder months.

First, a huge thank you to our UNB Nursing students, Emily Fitzgerald and Hilary Waugh-Flood, who spent their fall term with us to focus on promoting wellness with our My Place residents through nature walks, helping with our Walk Run event at Rockwood Park, and creating beautiful wellness baskets for each of our residents. Second, to bring warmth to those who are in the process of returning to community we are collecting women's winter coats in all sizes. We ask that they be in good condition and be dropped off at the office on 75 Adelaide. Lastly, we welcome donations of small gifts for women and gender diverse folk whom we are assisting in moving into housing. Self-care or indulgent items are always greatly appreciated and help to make that new-to-them space feel like a home.

All the best to you for a happy holiday season!



Hilary (left) and Emily
(Photo: Nicole Jack)

Operation White Heart



By Lorraine Lord

Have you ever felt unnerved or overwhelmed by circumstances? Or do you know anyone who felt like that or died by suicide?

There are 300 white stone hearts on lawns in Saint John, to let people know they are not alone, someone cares and it is okay not to be okay. The first large heart was planted behind the Crescent Valley Gospel Centre and Newfie's Car Wash in the North End, in 2019. Operation White Heart began in Saint John in April 2022. Operation White Heart became an incorporated non-profit organization in the summer of 2022. Gary Brown Sr. and his caring followers are not finished spreading the word that "You Matter!"

You can join Operation White Heart on Facebook to find out more.
(Photo: Operation White Heart)



**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND
HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**



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

What are transferable skills?



Learning transferable skills (Photo: Saint John Y)

By Nehal Rabie, Employment Trainer, YMCA Newcomer Connections

When you’re looking for a new job, employers often look for specific transferable skills in your application. Including transferable skills in your resume and cover letter is essential for any position to serve you well, regardless of whether your new role is in the same industry or one you have never worked in before.

Transferable skills are abilities or talents relevant to all professions and facets of life. They include skills such as teamwork, time management, communication, adaptability and critical thinking, among others. On many occasions, they determine success in the workplace and, as a result, also determine who gets hired. They’re also called “portable skills” since you can transfer them from one career to another. You likely already have many transferable skills, so the next step is to assess the strength of each skill. Developing competencies in as many transferable skills as possible is critical to achieving the diversity needed to stand out in a competitive job market. Also, the required mix of transferable skills varies by employer.

To read more of this blog, visit saintjohnny.ymca.ca/transferable-skills/. We offer free Employment Language Training, Employment Readiness programs, and Pre-Employment Services to all newcomers looking for jobs or building community connections in Saint John. Start your employment journey by sending an email: newcomeremployment@saintjohnny.ca

Pet safety at Christmas

By Joan Richardson, Shelter Manager, SPCA Animal Rescue

Christmas is coming and there’s much to do.
Put pet safety on your list.



- Secure your Christmas tree so pets can’t knock it over. Keep wires, electrical cords and Christmas lights out of reach. They can deliver a shock if bitten.
- Keep an eye on your decorations. Cats especially find artificial garland and holly inviting but if ingested can be trouble for them.
- To avoid upset tummies and a trip to the emergency veterinary clinic, don’t share holiday treats (especially chocolate) or your holiday feasts with your pets. Choose healthy, pet-specific treats.
- Holiday party noise and extra visitors can cause anxiety for your pet. Make sure your pet always has a quiet space away from the celebrations.



Santa and Neville Longbottom
(Photo: Manda West Photography)

The Rainbow Lunch Club



Chroma’s Mariah Darling and Kailer Boyne at the new drop-in space at InterAction School of Performing Arts. (Photo: Sean Simpson)

By Chroma

This November, Chroma launched Saint John’s newest safe space for youth, at Interaction School of Performing Arts. Previously run at 10 Germain Street, under the name Adoringly Shire, the Rainbow Lunch Club is continuing to support and care for Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual Plus (2SLGBTQIA+) teens and allies in the city.

With lunches always provided free of charge, and houseplants brought from the Shire, we strive to provide a comfortable environment for youth to be themselves. Chroma staff is on site to provide support, answers to questions, and resources without judgment. We hope to see a lot of familiar faces - as well as new ones - dropping by the new space to have lunch, chat, or just hang out.

We are located in the basement of Interaction, at 228 Germain Street, and we are open Monday to Friday, from 12 p.m. until 3 p.m. To stay up to date with everything we’re doing, follow our Facebook page “Rainbow Lunch Club,” or follow us on Instagram at “rainbowlunchclub.”

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Canadian Red Cross Connection New Brunswick: Dave Banks



Story and photo by Allie Murchison-Maguire, Communications and Government Relations Advisor, Atlantic, Canadian Red Cross

Dave Banks from Saint John, New Brunswick joined Canadian Red Cross Connection NB Pilot Program eight months ago. He came across the program while reading the *Around the Block* newspaper and thought the program sounded like something he would be interested in.

The Connection NB Program is a pilot project focused in three New Brunswick communities: Saint John, St. Andrews, and Moncton. The project's goal is to decrease social isolation and loneliness and help keep seniors in their own homes for longer.

A little over a year ago Dave Banks lost his best friend and wife Shirley. With the support of his children who live outside of NB, Dave stays active visiting his grandchildren and doing the activities he loves. A gap that Dave saw was his involvement in his own community of Saint John, New Brunswick, and his online presence.

"Sometimes it's easier to ask someone who isn't family for help," admits Banks. "In this digital age it's hard to ask my family who lives away to help with computer problems; it's easier to ask Shannon the Connection NB Volunteer."

If you are someone like Dave who wants to be more connected to community but don't know where to start, give the Connection NB team a call at (506) 343-4339, email connectionNB@redcross.ca or visit the website at connectionNB.redcross.ca



Seniors supporting community



Mary Anne, Gary, Hazel, Jean, Joan

Story and photo by Debbie McLeod, Community Involvement Coordinator, Social Development

The seniors from Charlton Place and Stephenson Tower have been collecting returnables all year. The group voted on which organization they would fundraise for. This year's recipient was the North End Food Bank.

The Tenant Association invited Hazel from the Food Bank to come to their Tenant meeting where a cheque was presented to Hazel for \$1050. The Tenant Association will vote on who they will support next year. Well done, seniors at Charlton Place and Stephenson Tower. Your support to community is fantastic!

Looking for knitters and yarn



Knitters from Charlton Place/Stephenson Tower, left to right: Mary, Wanda, and Gloria

Story and photo by Debbie McLeod, Community Involvement Coordinator, Social Development

Charlton Place and Stephenson Tower seniors meet every Wednesday afternoon 1-3 p.m. and knit. All their knitting is donated back to the community. Different organizations that they have donated knitting to are Hestia House, Fresh Start, Outflow, Coverdale, First Steps, and many more. They are looking to add knitters to the group so if you like to knit and socialize, they are the group for you! They meet at the Stephenson Tower community room. They always have the teapot on and something sweet to eat! They are low on yarn, so they are asking for donations. Please call Audrey at 696-0359 if you have any questions about the knitting group or if you would like to make a donation.

Saint John Newcomers Centre recognizes volunteers



Awardees, volunteers, friends and staff of SJNC (Photo: SJNC)

By Sochi Azuh, Communication Specialist, SJNC

The Saint John Newcomers Centre (SJNC) honoured volunteers with awards at its Volunteer Appreciation Night on Thursday, November 24th, 2022. The Newcomers Centre recognized volunteers and organizations involved in community engagement to uplift and drive the growth of the Saint John community.

Special guests of honour included The Honourable Arlene Dunn, who shared rousing words of encouragement with the awardees of the night: "I can't thank you enough for what you do to improve the quality of life in our community and the lives of newcomers in the Saint John area. We thank all newcomers for the significant contribution you make to our communities and our province. Your recognition tonight is well-deserved!"

Among the awardees at the event were Crosby Molasses Co. Ltd and Kennebecasis Valley Regional Police Force for supporting the Newcomers Centre community engagements.

Continued growth at Sophia



Back row, left to right: Dr. Tracy Meyer, Ama Diafo, Mery-Eileen O'Brien, Lisa Rouse, Trish Boyle, Cathy Connolly, Kathy Dumechel, Chris Buckley. Front row, left to right: Victoria Maxwell, Julie Atkinson, Lynn Nagle, Mary Nagle, Judy Wityszyn, Julie Trites, Kathy Gorman, MaryBeth Barbour (Photo: Sophia Recovery)

By Kathy Gorman (she/her), Communications and Development Director, Sophia Recovery

Over the past six months, we welcomed new board, staff and committee members. We've also expanded our meeting spaces, including St Stephen and Rothesay, and programming as more women have continued to pour in from the community in the aftermath of the pandemic. So far this year we have already supported close to 250 women and have provided over 4000 support services.

Reach out today if you need support.

- Saint John: (506) 633-8783
- Rothesay: (506) 271-5470
- St. Stephen: (506) 469-1058

The Purse Project continues to be successful



Busy Ignite members and volunteers gratefully accept a large donation of purses from UNIFOR (Photo: Barb McKnight)

By Pam Thomas, Founding Member, Canadian Progress Club Ignite

The Canadian Progress Club Ignite held the 7th Annual Purse Project Saturday, November 5th at 100 Station Street as a drive-through drop-off. Many communities and organizations supported, with 875 purses collected. The purses were filled with various personal care items including items to help with upcoming cold weather. There were a few filled backpacks as well. The purses were donated to community partners who are direct resources for women in need and who hand out the purses, as needed. Our community partners include Fresh Start Services for Women, First Steps/Second Steps, Elizabeth Fry Society, Avenue B, Coverdale Centre for Women Inc., and Hestia House, among others.

Canadian Progress Club Ignite (<https://www.facebook.com/CanadianProgressClubIgnite>) is a volunteer not-for-profit service club chartered in April 2012. We are accepting new member applications. Our mandate is to strive to assist women and children in need within our community to enhance their quality of life through volunteering and fundraising efforts. Ignite is part of the Canadian Progress Club (<http://www.progressclub.ca>) founded in Toronto in 1922.

...to assist women and children in need within our community

TUESDAYS 6:30PM - 8:30PM
YOUTH LEADERSHIP PAGES 10 - 13

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Online resources from your library

By S.D. Thompson, Saint John Free Public Library

As winter falls upon us, you may decide you don't want to leave the house. And that's fine, because the Saint John Free Public Library has plenty of resources you can access at home through our Online Library.

Searching for "NBPLS Online Library" will show you all the virtual resources available for you, not least of which are e-books and digital audiobooks through Overdrive. Those books are also available through the Libby app on your phone or mobile device. Children love TumbleBooks, which allows you to read and hear animated books online. PressReader offers free access to newspapers and magazines from Canada and abroad, from the *New York Times* to the *Chronicle Herald*, *The Scots Magazine* to *Canadian Living*. You can even learn a new language using Rosetta Stone through the Library, or a musical instrument with ArtistWorks.

For more information about our online library, or help with using it, contact us at the Saint John Free Public Library. Phone (506) 643-7236, email adult.sjfpl@gnb.ca, message us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, or drop by!

Help starts at 211

Daniela Fernandez (she/them - elle/iel)
211 NB Director of Community Engagement

A woman called 211 and began her story by saying she was on Employment Assistance at the moment; she wanted to know if there were services that could help her. The Community Resource Navigator began asking various questions to get a better picture of her situation. It was discovered that she was a single mother of five children for whom she did not receive child support. With this information, the Navigator was able to ask more specific questions in order to evaluate all of her needs. The client was able to learn about resources that could assist her with rent payments, food, clothes, support for single parents, employment counselling, and even Christmas gifts for her children! She was grateful to know that these services existed and said she would call 211 again anytime she needed support.

As you can see, the service navigators at 211 are able to help callers triage and prioritize their needs when faced with complex life challenges, and their empathy and expertise can make a real difference for people who would otherwise feel overwhelmed navigating the myriad of community resources on their own. Next time you're not sure where to turn, remember help starts here at 211.



Around The Block Team (Issue 86)

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Giving hope and opportunity to New Brunswick's children



Autism Summer Camp
(Photo: Thu Minh Ha, Autism Connections Fredericton)

By Stacey Richards, New Brunswick Children's Foundation

We believe all children in New Brunswick deserve the opportunity to succeed. From its beginnings, the New Brunswick Children's Foundation has taken great steps to support and nurture communities and charitable organizations that aim to enrich the lives of needy and deserving children across our province.

Year after year, we support a variety of valuable recreation programs, school breakfast and lunch programs, mental health programs, local theatre and music programs, fun summer camps and compassionate care programs – these are just a few examples of where we invest in the lives of children.

We want to hear from organizations doing great work in NB for children. The Foundation accepts applications for grants four times a year. Visit www.nbchildren.com for an Application, guidelines and further information.

Cedar Hill - Greenwood Cemetery

The advertisement features a photograph of two large, modern stone columbariums in a cemetery setting. The text is overlaid on the image. At the top, it says 'Cedar Hill - Greenwood Cemetery'. Below that, in a blue box, it says 'NEW COLUMBARIUMS CEDAR HILL AND GREENWOOD Reserve your space now'. At the bottom, in another blue box, it says '– Please contact our office: 9 am - 4:30 pm weekdays for more details – 1650 Manawagonish Rd. Saint John, NB – 672-4309'.

Councillors’ Corner: Saint John’s Affordable Housing Action Plan

By Councillors David Hickey (Ward 3) and Joanna Killen (Ward 1)

This year, more than ever, the housing crisis in Saint John has come to the forefront. Our neighbours are in need and community members are showing up in record numbers wondering how to help. From a municipal standpoint we have been looking at the big picture. How can we ensure action is undertaken swiftly?

As of this fall the City of Saint John released and approved its first Affordable Housing Action Plan. The plan is in response to the increasing housing crisis that our city is facing. This month, according to the Human Development Council, 133 people spent the month on the street, with numbers rising. The rent cap deadline is looming.

The launch of the new Out of the Cold shelter at the Belyea arena will support the 94% occupancy rate that our shelters are currently facing and is supported by Social Development, The City of Saint John and The Salvation Army. But we need long-term action, especially as the need grows to help folks living on the street. As this shelter runs until March 31st, City Council will find long-term solutions that will help our neighbourhoods. Long-term planning needs to start now.

Beyond shelter housing, our role in affordable housing is changing. As this becomes more urgent, our aim is to act as the coordinator for our non-profit agencies and establish a Municipal Housing Entity. In this we’ll work to make sure we can secure important provincial and federal dollars that will build more safe and affordable housing for our community now. We’re excited for what’s ahead and know the urgency that we need to meet - we’re counting on our provincial and federal team to act with the same urgency.

Long-term planning needs to start now.



Councillors Killen and Hickey (Photo: Joanna Killen)

Councillors’ Corner

Messages from Councillors on housing - and the holidays.

Paula Radwan, Ward 4:

We are being faced with many challenges in our community post-COVID. The increases in interest rates, inflationary pressures, and supply chain issues are creating more pressure on our housing markets. This is also increasing the homeless population as many residents were faced with renoviction. The City of Saint John is exploring setting up a Housing Entity and the proposed budget has \$2.4 million to help with our housing shortage. I am hopeful that the value proposition that will be created from this entity will help us leverage even more funds from our Provincial and Federal partners to help us to create a more robust and affordable housing supply.



Christmas holidays are a wonderful time of the year for many people. As someone that grew up Christian, I have many wonderful memories of Christmas in Saint John. Although I am a Muslim now, I still spend time with my family that is not Muslim and enjoy them while they celebrate their holiday. I had many Jewish friends as well and always wish them a Happy Hanukkah. For those that don’t celebrate either holiday, hopefully they can spend some time enjoying with others that do, or at least take a break from the busy life to have fun and food with loved ones.

Barry Ogden, Ward 2:

Saint John needs housing and the City is working on a strategy. The City of Saint John in 1943 created a very forward-thinking strategy and was involved in building Rockwood Court, the first of its kind in Canada. We can do this again. As a family we lived in Rockwood Court in the 1960s.



I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. The holiday season reminds us of the importance to be kind and to treat others, animals, and the environment the way we wish to be treated - with kindness, support, and love.

Former arena becomes a shelter



Story and photo by Heather Atcheson, Human Development Council

An Out Of The Cold Shelter is up and running at the former Hilton Belyea Arena on the West Side. It is a temporary measure to assist an increasing number of people experiencing homelessness in Saint John. The Salvation Army manages the shelter. It opened its doors this month and will remain operational until March 2023. The facility provides emergency shelter for up to 35 people per night. Its hours of operation are 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. Saint John Transit offers a daily shuttle service to folks at the shelter.

The Human Development Council’s Homelessness Dashboard indicates that at least 133 individuals are currently experiencing homelessness in the city, with 93 of those experiencing chronic or long-term homelessness. Though the solution to homelessness is affordable, safe, suitable, and stable housing, the Out Of The Cold Shelter will help people who are sleeping rough to weather the winter months. For more information about homelessness in Saint John and the community’s coordinated efforts to reduce it, visit www.sjhdc.ca.