



Around *the* Block



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L'Arche Connects: a place to call my own



Members of the L'Arche Connects community gather for a games night. Clockwise from left: Shawna, Jessica, Warren, Stacey, Catherine, April, and Kathryn. (Photo: L'Arche Saint John)

**By Kristen Scott, Community Development Coordinator
L'Arche Saint John**

In June 2023, four adults with intellectual disabilities moved into apartments in The Wellington, and for some, this is the first time in their lives they have a place to call their own. L'Arche Saint John is there to support them as they forge a new chapter of their lives.

This program, L'Arche Connects, goes beyond supporting four individuals to include outreach to at least 20 adults with intellectual disabilities who may wish one day to live independently. Outreach programs will introduce options of support to members while focusing on inclusion and lifelong connections. Individuals will experience meaningful participation in social, recreational, and leisure opportunities, as well as volunteering and employment opportunities.

Launched in partnership with Saint John Non Profit Housing, the Department of Social Development and InclusionNB, L'Arche Connects is uniquely and authentically L'Arche.

**Learn how you can get involved with
L'Arche Saint John: visit
www.larchesaintjohn.org/volunteer**

Romero House reopens dining room - weekends still “out the window”



The Romero House dining room

Story and photo by Evelyn McNulty, Romero House

After three-and-a-half long years “out the window,” our dining room is now open again for eating in. We wrestled with concerns over the increased volume of our service (100,000+ meals so far this year), an increase in mental health issues and drug abuse, the safety of our volunteers, and the need to balance all of the above while ensuring that we continue to provide daily meals to anyone in need in our community. We also remain concerned and mindful of those, particularly the elderly, who have newly benefited from our meals and who may not be comfortable dining in.

**Romero House Soup Kitchen
“Out the Window”
1,269 days = 476,622 meals**

(Continued on page 6)

From the Editor's desk:

Accomplishments - well done!

Lorna Brown, sjcommunitynewspaper@gmail.com

The last thing I do before sending *Around the Block* off to press is proofread the whole thing (all errors mine). The wonderful thing is, it gives me a chance to reread every story. Singly they are great to receive; together they pack a real wallop. This time I was inspired by the people in the stories who are trying something new, expressing a passion, going beyond their comfort zones. You are amazing!

On page 2 you can read about 20 children in the Old North End who this past summer collectively read - wait for it - 269 books! On the same page we hear from Izzy Veinot who takes the ONE Future course in Digital Marketing and now believes he can “be something.” From the story it is clear that he already is. Well done!

Lisa Morris' painting (page 3) helps her, but also gives beauty to her community. The WESLinks learners help her water the herbs in the Sustainer Container every two weeks (page 6). A simple action, but it helps cement community. Had I been there I would have bought lemonade from the enthusiastic Seasideers (page 5) or from Ilya at the Market (page 14 - the photo of him standing on a cooler is priceless). And those inquisitive kids in STEAM camps! They show us that learning, including science, is for everyone. And it's fun.

Community happens when we make it happen. See Councillor Harris' op-ed on page 20. If you are interested in volunteering to make our beautiful city better for all, lots of groups are looking for your skills and time - BGC (p.9), YMCA (p.11), ACAP (p. 13) Civic Tech (p. 19). And L'Arche (above). A first-time submitter. Welcome!

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

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SAINT JOHN



ONE Future Digital Media Marketing



Story and photo by Izzy Veinot, program participant

What has the ONE Future Digital Media Marketing program done for me? We are partway through the training, and ONE Future has given me something to do during my days. Before, I spent my time doing nothing and pushing off things I knew needed to be done because there was always more time. I had a string of jobs that I often left because I couldn't see myself doing them long-term. I felt that I would never become a productive member of society. I had no one in my corner fighting for me. I only had people telling me my goals were something I should attempt. Now, people tell me that my dreams are worth fighting for. This program has taught me that digital marketing is something I can do not only as a main source of income but also on the side to make extra money. I thought this career would lead to a boring office job, but I've recognized it could be something much more exciting and creative. I've discovered a love for video editing. I often create short and cheesy videos of people I love, for fun. The program offers information on how to achieve my goals in life, from having a career to owning a home. It has given me motivation. It has given me hope for my future and shown me that I can do more than I assumed. ONE Future has shown me that I can be something.

School supplies thanks to UCT



By Anna Pierce, ONE Change

ONE Change would like to recognize one of our generous partners, United Commercial Travelers (UCT) Jack Kidd Council #755. UCT is a service group made up of community-minded people dedicated to improving the lives of their community members. UCT volunteers come year-round and help with various programs at both ONE Change and Crescent Valley Resource Centre. One this year was a donation of school supplies for families in the neighbourhood. This included bookbags, lunch boxes, pencils, crayons, pens, notebooks, and much more! With their generous donation, we were able to give out school supplies to 44 families. Thank you, UCT! Above: ONE Change Staff and UCT members with our school supplies (Photo: Jonathan Driscoll)

Summer Reading Club

By Katie Herrington (she/her/elle), Neighbourhood Developer
ONE Change

This summer, we launched a Summer Reading Club with the neighbourhood youth. Each participant was provided with a pamphlet to track the number of books they read, plus some questions at the end. These included: "What was your favourite book you read?" "If you could meet a character from one of the books you read in real life, who would it be?" "Which book would make a cool movie/video game/TV show?"

We were lucky to have over 20 kids participate, and by August, together they had read 269 books! Ilyas won the \$30 gift card, James won the \$20 gift card, and Lillian won the \$10 gift card.

We're so proud of our youth for continuing to read throughout the summer to help maintain what they learned throughout the school year. We wish them all the best as they go back to school in September!



Above right: James Weare, winner of the \$20 Dollarama gift card. He read 17 books this summer!

Painting with PRUDE Inc.



PRUDE Inc. and ONE Change staff (Photo: John Driscoll)

By Katie Herrington, Neighbourhood Navigator, ONE Change

On Wednesday, August 23rd, ONE Change hosted a painting session at our community centre in collaboration with PRUDE (Pride of Race, Unity and Dignity through Education) Inc. More than 20 people came out to this event to learn step by step how to make a beautiful painting suitable for all skill levels. We had everyone from seniors to youth to newcomers participate, and it was a successful afternoon. Several participants came to us after to tell us how much they enjoyed the event and that they hope that we will continue to host more similar events in the coming months. We are so thankful to PRUDE Inc. for providing volunteers and an instructor so that this event was possible. We're looking forward to our next event happening with PRUDE next month, where we will be learning how to crochet.

Trevor Holder MLA Portland - Simonds

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Hours: Mon: 8 am - 4 pm, Tues: 9 am - 1 pm,
Wed: Closed, Thur: 9 am - 1 pm, Fri: Closed



North Neighbourhood Contact

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

*By Lisa Morris, Resident Engagement Coordinator
PULSE Incorporated*

PULSE Inc. Hours of Operation
New hours: Monday - Friday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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!

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

SJB-KE Parent Coffee & Chat Join us every Wednesday morning 8-9:30 a.m. after dropping your children off at school and enjoy a fresh cup of coffee and friendly conversation.

Grab a Snack Attention students: stop in, visit us at PULSE after school, tell us about your day, and grab a snack!

Free Tax Service - PULSE is open year-round to complete your taxes including previous years. Through the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVIPT) find free Income Tax clinics in Saint John for eligible individuals who have a modest income and a simple tax situation.

PULSE Inc. has a drop-off tax clinic; this means you can stop in anytime we are open with your paperwork and piece of ID. Together we will fill out the forms; your tax return will be completed by a volunteer. You can pick up a copy of your completed return in approximately four to seven business days.

The CVITP does not provide training or support for complex tax situations.

SJ 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.

October - money due October 13th, pick up October 20th
November - money due November 10th, pick up November 17th
December - money due December 8th, pick Up December 15th

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 section “PULSE Pay It Forward.”



The Honorable Arlene Dunn
MLA Saint John Harbour

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Operation White Heart - making things better one heart at a time

By Mary LeSage, Neighbourhood Developer, PULSE Inc.

Two new white hearts located at the Housing NB complex at Crown and Queen Streets were installed! Thanks to Housing NB, Operation White Heart - Gary Brown Senior, Saint John Police Community Engagement Team - Sgt Tammy Spence, Councillors Gerry Lowe and David Hickey and the residents of the housing complex who participated in placing the two white hearts.

By displaying a white heart on your lawn, you are letting people know that you understand that everyone has a story. When someone walks or drives by, they will notice these hearts and will be reminded that they are not alone and that it's ok not to be ok. The hearts will keep the conversation going. It's all about kindness and hope. Above: left, top to bottom: Debbie McLeod, Kathryn Ferris, Amanda Smith, Gary Brown Sr. Right, top to bottom: Sgt. Tammy Spence, Julie MacNamee, Mary LeSage, Lisa Morris (Photo: Aimee Hooper)



Paint it forward



Story and photo by Lisa Morris
Resident Engagement Coordinator, PULSE Inc.

Last summer, when dealing with the loss of both a dear friend and my beloved grandmother, I found comfort in creating a fun parking lot at PULSE. In the PULSE parking lot you will find lots of sidewalk games including snakes and ladders, tic tac toe, and hopscotch, and on the shed door you can take a photo of yourself as a beautiful butterfly. When I found out plywood was installed behind the window at the Sustainer Container in Chown Field due to rocks being thrown, I knew what I had to do. Through the support of ACAP Saint John, PULSE, and funding through a Horizon Health Network/Réseau de santé Coin-G grant, I was provided funding for the supplies to create a mural in Chown Field and update the PULSE parking lot. The murals were designed and painted by myself in my free time as a way for me to give back to a community that has done so much for me. The mural in Chown Field is filled with all the herbs and plants we grow in the Sustainer Container, a bee and butterflies that pollinate our garden, and a bluejay in memory of my Grandmother Bluejay who inspires me each and every day. (Above: The mural)

South End Neighbourhood Contacts



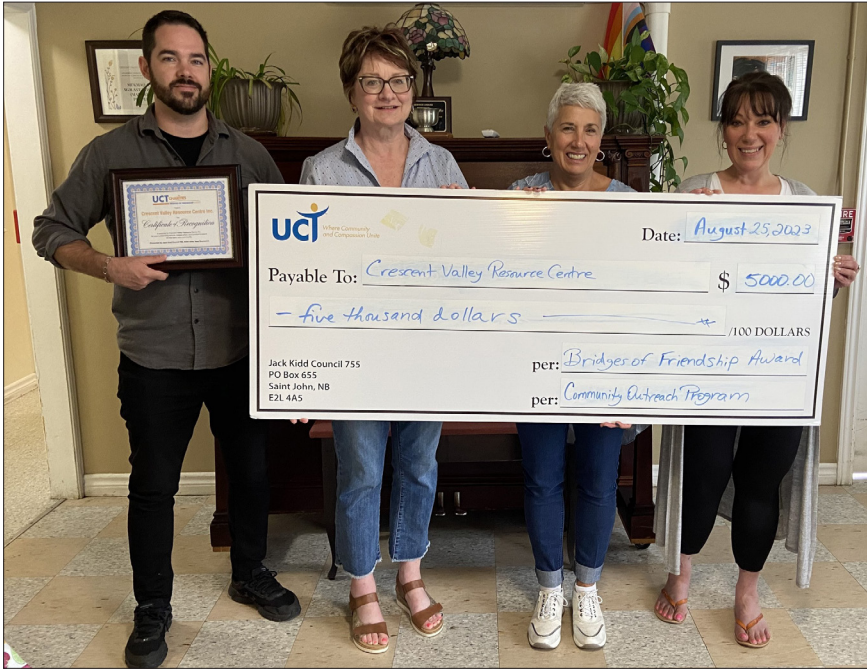
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CVRC wins national award



Justin Shepard, Anne Driscoll, Olivia Donovan, Char Levesque

Story and photo by CVRC

United Commercial Travelers (UCT) Jack Kidd Council #755 Community Outreach Program (COP) Chairperson Vice-President Olivia Donovan submitted an application for the Bridges of Friendship Award on behalf of Crescent Valley Resource Centre (CVRC) in March of this year. Only one award is given in Canada and one in the US annually. Recipients are nominated by local UCT councils and winners are chosen by an award committee in the US. This year CVRC was chosen to receive the \$5000 award to assist them with their programming.

Anne Driscoll, Executive Director of the CVRC, said the funds will help the centre make a difference in the lives of the neighbourhood residents through various programs and services. “We are delighted to receive this award,” said Driscoll. “As the sole recipient in Canada, we are thrilled our work and contributions to the community have been recognized by the UCT. We are so appreciative of the support UCT Jack Kidd Council #755 has given to CVRC, their support has been impactful to our work,” she added. This is the second year in a row that Jack Kidd Council has received the award, and the Council has been a community partner with CVRC for the past 18 months. The UCT Community Outreach Program provides regular monthly support to CVRC and works together to ensure that the items donated are exactly what is required for the residents who access CVRC.

CVRC Community Health Nurse

By Char Levesque, Community Liaison, CVRC

Join our Community Health Nurse at Crescent Valley Resource Centre (CVRC) on October 5th, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. and October 19th, 1-3 p.m. to address your medical questions and concerns. Please note the times as we have added a morning time slot for your convenience. Did you know you can also speak to our Community Health nurse about mental health concerns you may be experiencing? She can lend an ear and recommend mental health services that may benefit you. Our Community Health nurse can also give vaccines. Please visit with Starr ahead of time to discuss which vaccines she may need to bring for her next visit. She cannot write or refill prescriptions or order tests. No appointment is required, and all are welcome.

Barry Ogden

Ward 2 City Councillor

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Phone: 639-1334



Long-time CV resident will be missed

By Char Levesque
Community Liaison, CVRC

With the passing of Shirley Viola Stevens on May 19th, 2023, Crescent Valley lost a long-standing member of our community. A resident in our neighbourhood for 64 years, Shirley’s days were often filled with many of her favorite pastimes, such as bowling, photography, music, and playing cards in various clubs and with friends and family. Often you could find Shirley sitting on her front porch on Flemming Ct, enjoying the neighbourhood she so loved, with her friendly smile to friends and neighbours passing by. Those who knew Shirley would best describe her as funny, thoughtful, kind, and a mother to all. Our deepest condolences to her son, Rodney Middleton Sr. and family.



Hazen White-St. Francis (HWSF) news

Story and photos by Vicki Lawrence, Community School Coordinator, HWSF

Thanks to our partners at UNB Promise Partnership, 10 of our Huskies got to take part in the UNB Discovery STEM Summer Camp for one week in August. There they created their own video games, used coding to move objects, and participated in many other fun activities using science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Different technologies were available for students to use, including laptops, iPads, and coding devices!



Thank you to our partners at Horizon Health NB for providing our school with much needed school supplies! We are so thankful for their generosity each year.

Another big “Thank you” to the thoughtful people at Horizon, Heart and Stroke, and Burger King Saint John for their financial donation that will help out our students for this school year.

Above: Sadia Hedayat creating her own video game;
right: welcome school supplies



Crescent Valley
Neighbourhood Contact

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My journey at the Carleton



Abbygail (Photo: Morgan Langille)

By Abbygail Craig, Summer Special Events Coordinator, CCC

My name is Abbygail Craig. I have just finished my summer position as Special Events Coordinator with the Carleton Community Centre (CCC). For over a decade, I've been involved with the centre: attending youth program, joining the cheer program, growing into a coach-in-training (CIT)/cheer coach and summer camp counsellor, followed by a youth leader position. This year, I had the pleasure of joining the centre as Special Events Coordinator. While I still enjoyed assisting summer camp on field trips, I valued this opportunity for growth and expanding my reach to our West Side community as a whole. As program lead I organized the Carleton Beach volleyball league, gaining further supervisory experience. I also had a hand in planning and delivering our community events like Carleton Day (a family fun day) and our Party in the Park (youth water fun event). I had the opportunity to work on the first annual Saint John West Days, specifically assisting with the organization and delivering of Family Day. I'm grateful to the CCC staff for granting me this position. It allowed me the opportunity to view our centre from another point of view and explore other ways it benefits our community. It was such a fun experience!



**Story and image by Kate Worden
Marketing & Program Coordinator, CCC**

What is pickleball? It's a racket/paddle game with two or four players played on a badminton-sized court with a lowered net, a perforated plastic ball, and wood or composite paddles. It's fun for all ages and abilities. Whether you want to learn, want to practice, or just enjoy some fun play - we'd love to have you! Monday, Wednesday, and Friday - \$2 drop-in.

Team Otter Seaside Park



Team Otter members at Lepreau Falls, August 2023

**Story and photo by Krista Turnbull,
Community Schools Coordinator and Team Otter**

This spring a new club was formed at Seaside Park Elementary. The new club, Team Otter Seaside Park, was created in partnership with the International Otter Survival Fund (IOSF) in Scotland. Seaside's mascot is an otter, and the new club is working to promote awareness for not only otter habitat, but that of other species as well. In addition to promoting the protection and care of otters, the group is a school leadership team. In May, Team Otter held a school-wide popsicle sale on World Otter Day with funds being donated to the IOSF and the adoption of Eden, a young, abandoned otter being cared for at the IOSF's Otter Sanctuary.

In August some members met up for a day camp which included a trip to Lepreau Falls in the hope of spotting an otter. Although we did not see one it was an amazing day of fun ... and we also got to visit a few of our PALS Partners along the way. We're excited for more Otterly Awesome fun this school year!

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Page 5

Kids on the Go!



***By Angela Calder, Community School Coordinator,
Forest Hills/Prince Charles***

Staff and students at Prince Charles are looking forward to our PALS trips this year. We would like to send out a big "Thank you" to our PALS at JDI for all their hard work and dedication to our students. Without them, our trips would be impossible. Special thanks to Mr. Dalton who always greets the kids with a smile and is ready for any adventure. We look forward to the year to come.



*Above and right:
Mr. Dalton taking the
grade 8 students to
their year-end event at
Boston Pizza
(Photos: Lorna Carrier)*

Kindness from Costco!



Mrs. Roy and Mr. Loughery flank Mr. Lemieux as he drops off!

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

Imagine our delight when kind hearts at the Saint John Costco decided to donate a full school set (and then some!) of bookbags to SJBKE on September 1st, just in time for Open House! The capable and kind Michel Lemieux spearheaded this effort on behalf of the store, and Mrs. Roy and Mr. Loughery were grateful to receive this gift. Thank you, Costco - thanks to you, all our kids who needed bookbags either now have one or have access to one through us! We are so very grateful for this donation - what a way to lead off our school year, with such an unsolicited act of kindness. Thank you!

Centennial news



Mrs. McPartland and her students highlighting some Kindness Café offerings. At right are support staff Ms. Burton and Ms. Fulton.

Story and photo by Kate MacDonald
Community Schools Coordinator, Centennial School

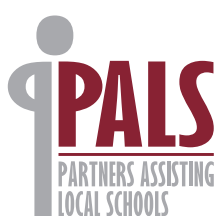
In late May, Centennial students in Mrs. McPartland's grade 3 class hosted their "Kindness Café" initiative. In this student-centered learning opportunity, the class worked as team to produce hand-crafted items as well as offering café items for purchase. This was a fantastic learning opportunity, and the students had such a great time learning! While welcoming community members, parents and partners to the Kindness Café, the class raised over \$1,600. These funds were donated to the North End Food Bank. Our students delivered this donation, where they learned just how much of an impact their hard work and dedication to their learning initiative would have to better the community they live in. We are so thankful to all who supported this initiative allowing for an amazingly successful project.

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

Help Make a Difference!



Deborah Fisher
Susan Tipper
Michael Whelton
info@PALS.com



Bee Me Kidz Saturdays are back!



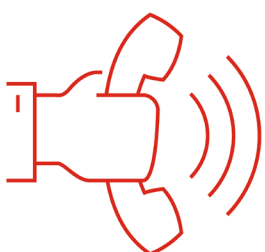
Everyone had fun making Bumble Bee planters at our Saturday Program last year! (Photo: Keri Tasker @ Ampersand Social Co.)

By Sarah Johnston, North Program Coordinator

What's the buzz at Bee Me Kidz? We are so excited to BEE back to our Saturday Programming! It was so nice to be reunited with our families after the summer break. We had a lot of fun recently making Bumble Bee Fidgets. These are great to use as a calming tool. In the coming weeks we will be having a Tie Dye party with parents and children. We will also be making Moon Dough, Pet Ghosts for our Halloween party and on November 4th we are having a Pokémon Day where children will be making their own Poké Balls.

If you want to join the fun, you can register for our Saturday program by reaching out to me.

It is never too late to sign up!
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Summer Slide and Brilliant Labs



Teddy at Summer Slide

Story and photo by Rachel Murphy, BGC

We just finished up another great Summer Slide program. We were extra lucky this year to, once again, partner with Brilliant Labs. Our kids were super engaged when it came to whatever projects the Brilliant Labs team threw our way.

We are very thankful for the awesome team from Brilliant Labs for being so fun, kind, and patient with our kids. They not only had a lot of fun, but have learned something new, and for some, even picked up a new interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) activities.

**We are very thankful for the awesome team from
Brilliant Labs**

FREE



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@BGCGreaterSaintJohn

Relaunch of Cooking Up Justice



*Sadie Lawton (left) and Tina Mengdie Liu enjoying Cooking Up Justice
(Photo: Natalia Fana)*

By Sarah Lunney. NBSP

New Brunswick Social Pediatrics (NBSP) is resuming the Cooking Up Justice (CUJ) program this fall. The CUJ program is an eight-week program for youth in grades 9-12 coming from various backgrounds, including clinic patients. Each week youth begin the session by cooking a meal and learning different food skills with a Registered Dietician. The second half of the session is dedicated to discussions and activities on topics related to gender-based violence (GBV). Youth learn about gender vs. sex, gender stereotypes and norms, aspects of healthy relationships, consent and boundaries, intimate partner violence (IPV), gender-based violence, violence on social media, and children's rights. At the end of each session youth gather to eat the meal they have created and are sent home with the ingredients to replicate the recipe with their family. At the end of the eight-week program, local elected officials are invited to a community dinner to hear from youth on what they learned and what they would like to see changed in the community. This program is important for mitigating IPV/GBV as it directly teaches youth about these topics, engages them to critically think about how these issues show up in our day-to-day lives, and how as a collective group we can support the creation of communities free of violence. It also empowers youth to voice their opinions and thoughts freely among their peers, with adults, and elected officials. All these aspects are important for creating healthy communities free of violence as it takes the approach that children/youth, adults, and elected representatives all have a role to play.

A Seaside Park summer



Happy young entrepreneurs celebrate their success

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

BGC Seaside Park had a busy and enterprising Summer Program. We ran a lemonade stand on the West Side of Saint John for two days. Over the course of two weeks in August, the kids put up posters on the West Side to advertise the stand, happening on August 15th and 17th. The community really took to the promoting and the encouraging of the kids to be ambitious and put in some hard work. Selling cups for \$2 and cookies for \$1, and having performances from our staff musical guru Borys, the kids didn't slow down over the two days and made sure to get the attention of every car and pedestrian going by with signs and shouts. After the two days of working, the youth raised a total of \$586.35 from generous donations by businesses and community members. The kids treated themselves to an end-of-summer bash with a trip to the Q-Plex, root beer floats, and a pizza party.

BGC fall 2023 programs



***By Jill Farrar (she/her), Program Manager
BGC Greater Saint John***

BGC Greater Saint John has finished our Summer Day Camps and we are now jumping into After School and Evening Programs. Our free Evening Program with transportation will be starting up in the second week of October for two nights per week. Programs will be running for leadership, cooking, coding, and sports. All programs on these nights will be available for youth in grades 3 and above only. We will also be hosting a ball hockey league (no transportation) one night per week throughout the fall. Watch our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/eveningprogram or our website at www.sjbgclub.com for updates and registration information! *Above: a child playing in BGC's ball hockey league (Photo: Trent Donkers)*

STEAM Camps 2023 in Saint John



Above and below: innovation in action - children at a 2023 STEAM Camp

Story and photos by Brilliant Labs

Huge thanks to community partners, and donors and funders, Brilliant Labs has provided free, summer STEAM Camps across Saint John since 2017. (STEAM = Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math.) This summer, about 769 children (aged 7 to 12+) from all walks of life and learning abilities had fun learning how to create and innovate and develop their digital competencies with today's technology at camp. In partnership with AREA 506, BGC of Greater Saint John, Carleton Community Centre, City of Saint John's Sunshir Program, ConnexionWorks, Crescent Valley Resource Centre, Laura Gaiten & Associates Office, Milford Memorial Community Centre, The ONE Change at Nick Nicolle Community Centre, and the Main and West Branch Public Library, camps ran for seven weeks in 13 locations for a total of 84 sessions. Brilliant Labs provided STEAM Camps free-of-charge thanks to funding from the Government of Canada's CanCode and Canada Summer Jobs programs, Mariner, Port Saint John, Saint John LNG and Ted Rogers Community Grants. Thank you for your support!



Rainbow Lunch Club is open



By Luc Wolfe, Peer Support Work Intern, Chroma NB

The Rainbow Lunch Club is hosted by Chroma NB on the bottom level of The Interaction School of Performing Arts, a space that hosts a kitchen, cozy sofa corner, an old piano and many tables. The Rainbow Lunch Club is held 12-2 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays; it started September 11th. The entrance to the building is at the Queen Street side door, and is open to any high school-aged youth. During the lunch time drop-in, students help themselves to a sandwich station, snacks, juice, water, etc. The Lunch Club allows teens a place to hang out with their friends and peers. Play board games, use the Play Station, read, do some cooking or baking, look into our clothing closet, or just have a place to be yourself. We are closed on all Professional Development (PD) days and snow days.

Above: The author flanked by Kailer (left) and Justice at the ONE Change community fair in August. (Photo: Daniel Meza)



STANDING FOR YOU!



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Al-Anon meetings in Saint John

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

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

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

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.

To find information on Al-Anon or more meetings in District 15, please go to: **al-anonmaritimes.ca**

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Contest

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

We are happy to partner with Saint John Energy for the ninth year! We offer two \$15 fresh fruit and produce orders for this October/November ssue, 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 below), one in the ad on page 5, and one in the sponsor section on page 1.

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

Send your answer to juanita@sjhdc.ca or call 506-651-3044 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 October 19th and orders, if possible, will be delivered on October 20th (or you might be asked to pick up your order from PULSE, 1-4 p.m.). We will also list the winners on the Human Development Council Facebook page.

**The Issue 90 winners were:
Susan Barriault and Patrick Callaghan**



North of Union: free heritage walking tour and concert

By David Goss

This event will be held each Thursday to October 26th, 10:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

David Goss leads a tour from the Saint John Arts Centre (20 Peel Plaza) at 10:15 a.m. to highlight the Loyalist history of this area which survived the Great Fire. After a one-hour walk, at 11:30 a.m. Tim Blackmore presents a 45-minute keyboard concert titled “Georgian Serenade” which features music the first settlers would have known.

Participants can attend either portion of the program or both. The walk is limited to 25, and the concert to 50 people. There is no fee for this program as it sponsored by the Early Music Studio, the Saint John Arts Centre, the Music Performance Trust Fund, the City of Saint John, and the Province of New Brunswick.

Mental health - upcoming programs

From Canadian Mental Health Association of New Brunswick - Saint John

Depression

January 16th to February 20th, 2024
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.

Understanding Anxiety & Panic Disorder

March 12th to April 30th, 2024
Tuesdays, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

This eight-week program is for individuals who have been diagnosed with generalized anxiety and / or panic disorders. A trained facilitator and health care professionals discuss issues related to anxiety and panic disorders, including information on symptoms, treatment options, coping strategies and community resources.

Engaging Caregivers in Recovery

March 14th to May 16th, 2024
Tuesdays, 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.

Mindfulness

March 14 to April 18, 2024
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.

The programs do not replace counselling and / or any other forms of treatment. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. For more information on the programs, please call 506-652-1447.



Canadian Mental Health Association

New Brunswick

Mental health for all

Association canadienne pour la santé mentale

Nouveau-Brunswick

La santé mentale pour tous

The Christmas Exchange – the dates!

Saint John Christmas Exchange

Help us fill empty baskets so that everyone can enjoy Christmas dinner!

November 14, 2023 - December 1, 2023

email: sjchristmasexchange@nb.aibn.com

call: 506-634-7868



By Beth Roy, Saint John Community Christmas Exchange

The Saint John Christmas Exchange will offer help with a Christmas dinner for those in need again this year. In co-ordination with churches and agencies in the Saint John area, help will be provided for those who register.

Our office opens Tuesday, November 14th, 2023 and the last day for registration is Friday, December 1st, 2023. We are asking individuals or families to register early at a church or agency in your neighbourhood. Check with them to see when their registrations start. Some churches start and end registrations early. You can register for the Christmas Exchange at one place only. Duplication of registrations will result in delays.

Churches will require current government identification for each household member. Register everyone living in your home. The Exchange checks all those registered for duplication. The church or agency where you register provides for you and will advise when you can pick up your gift card or basket. The Christmas Exchange Organization does not give gift cards to individuals. The Christmas Exchange does not take registrations.

Reminder, there is no Empty Stocking Fund this year. Looking forward to serving our community again this year.

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Back-to-school spending on the rise

2023-2024 Post-Secondary Tuition Estimates for Undergraduate and College Students

A bar chart comparing the 2023-2024 post-secondary tuition estimates for undergraduate and college students across five institutions. The y-axis represents the tuition amount in dollars, ranging from 0 to 20,000. The x-axis lists the institutions: Mount Allison University, NBCC, St. Thomas University, Université de Moncton, and University of New Brunswick. For each institution, two bars are shown: a light green bar for Canadian Student Tuition and a dark green bar for International Student Tuition. The exact tuition values are labeled above each bar.

| Institution | Canadian Student Tuition | International Student Tuition |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Mount Allison University | \$10,015 | \$20,210 |
| NBCC | \$3,420 | \$9,575 |
| St. Thomas University | \$8,280 | \$18,610 |
| Université de Moncton | \$7,642 | \$14,005 |
| University of New Brunswick | \$8,177 | \$19,148 |

The start of a school year is an exciting time full of new beginnings and opportunities to learn and grow. It can also be stressful because preparing for students' return to the classroom is expensive. This fall, families with school-aged children are feeling the impact of inflation and the rising cost of living.

ACAP Saint John is a community-based, non-profit organization that aims to find solutions to environmental challenges through outreach, restoration, and research. We encourage communication, partnership, and active involvement from all sectors of the Saint John community in managing our local environment.

These events are open to all members of the community who are interested in contributing to the environmental sustainability of Saint John. By participating in these events, you can contribute to the betterment of our environment and help make Saint John a more sustainable city.

We highly encourage you to visit our events page at www.acapsj.org/ events to learn more about our upcoming events and register for any event you are interested in. Follow us on Instagram & Facebook - @acapsj, Twitter - @acapsaintjohn and LinkedIn - @ACAP Saint John to stay updated on all our upcoming events and initiatives.

A recent publication by Statistics Canada reveals that prices for school supplies and textbooks increased 2.8% year over year in July. Participation in extracurricular activities like music lessons and martial arts programs cost 5.6% more than last year. Food prices also increased, making it harder for families to afford nutritious lunches for their children. Apples cost 7.8% more, milk prices were 6.2% higher, and bread was 8.1% more expensive year over year in July. The price of cheese was 6.9% more nationally and 13.5% more in New Brunswick. Processed meat was priced over 5.2% more, while jam and other preserves cost over 18.8% more in July than 12 months prior!

Post-secondary tuition fees are also hefty – especially for international students! The graph above shows tuition fees for Canadian and international undergraduate and college students at post-secondary institutions in New Brunswick. Statistics Canada reported that in 2022-2023, international undergraduate students would pay a whopping 429% more than Canadian students for tuition, while international graduate students would pay 184% more.

Education costs and other living expenses will be factored in the Human Development Council's Living Wages in New Brunswick 2023 report, to be released later this year. A living wage is the amount necessary in any given city to cover basic needs and allow people to live in dignity and enjoy a decent quality of life. (The living wage is not to be confused with the legal minimum wage; employers are not obliged to pay the living wage.)

Families with school-aged children are feeling the impact of inflation





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Financially empowered benefits



Column and above photo by Darlene Jones, Money Matters Coordinator, Kaléidoscope Social Impact

The world of finances is changing almost daily. Everyone is feeling the pinch of high prices and the housing crisis. In these times it is imperative that we pay close attention to our financial picture. Paying attention to every detail enables us to capture all benefits that are available to our situation. One key area to look at is our taxes; making sure you have filed up to 2022 is important. Here are a few benefit programs that have been introduced this year.

- 1) Climate Action Benefit – Residents in NB will receive the benefit in addition to their GST payouts. This October we will receive a double payment as we did not receive the benefit in July.
- 2) NB Housing Rent Subsidy Program - If you are working and earn less than \$50,000 per year you may qualify for a portable rent subsidy. Information can be found on gnb.ca.
- 3) One of the most underutilized government benefits is the Canada Learning Bond (CLB). The CLB is money put into a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) for children from families making less than \$44,000 per year. Parents can apply before the child turns 14 or young adults can apply for the benefit between the ages of 18 and 20.

You are able to go back 10 years and file taxes. Once you have filed you are then assessed for the benefits for those years and the money will be processed for you. If you have direct deposit set up with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), your money will be deposited directly. This is quicker than receiving mail.

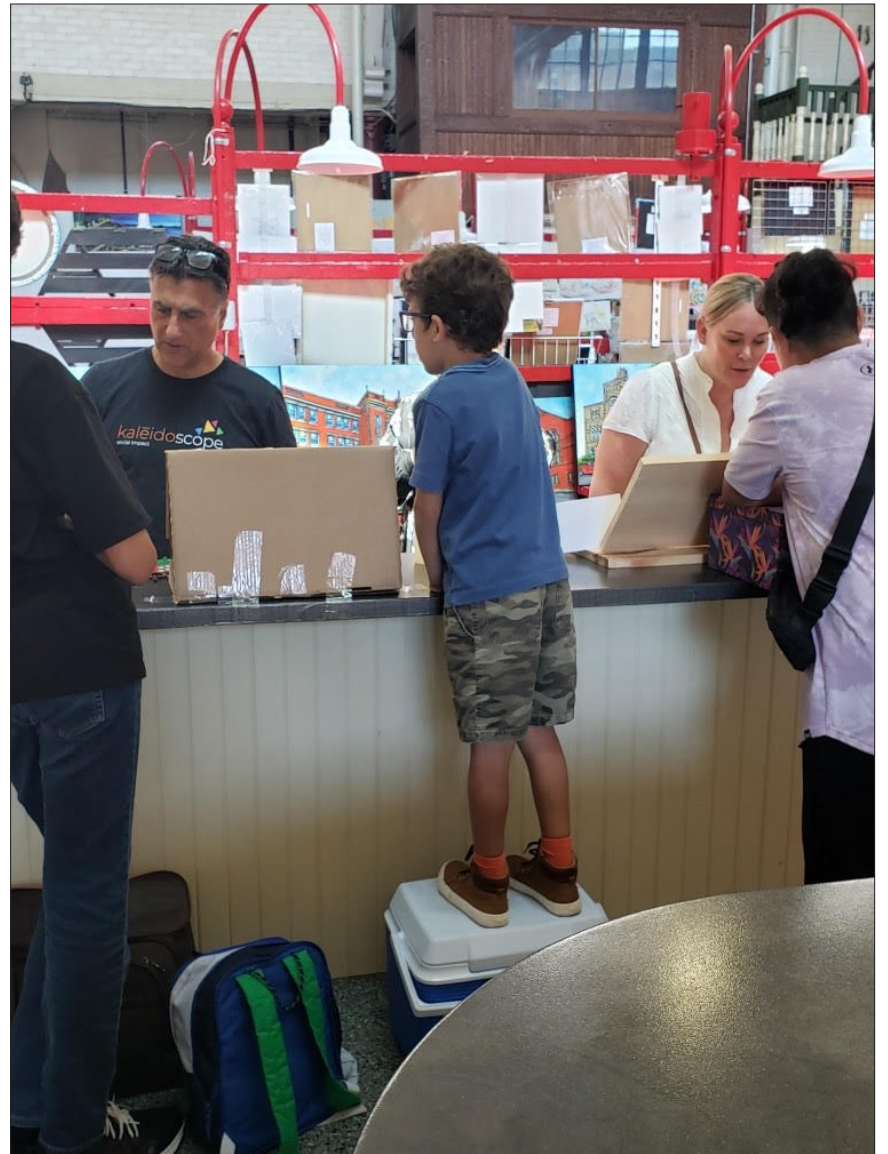
I try to use the term “helpwork” not “homework” as it has a more positive spin. For your helpwork this edition, I encourage you to look at your financial picture. Does it need dusting? Repainting? A new frame? Everyone sees different pictures through their kaleidoscope. These views shape our happiness, freedom, wealth, and success. If you need a “where does my money go” conversation, reach out to me at 506-652-5626 Extension 4 or darlene@kaleidoscopeimpact.com.

No matter how much money you have, how you spend it matters.



The author (second from right) with a group from Working NB about to start their first jobs (Photo: Vicki Cosgrove)

Young entrepreneurs thrive at Saint John City Market



Ilya from ONE Change (centre, back to camera) hard-selling his homemade lemonade to Seth Asimakos, Executive Director, Kaléidoscope

By Isaac Hierlihy, Kaléidoscope Social Impact

Young and creative entrepreneurs from local community centres dazzled customers at the Saint John City Market with their entrepreneurial flair in August. These talented kids showcased an impressive array of handmade products, including Croc Jibbitz, bracelets, t-shirts, crazy pencils, and pearlor beads.

This initiative was a collective endeavour run by Kaléidoscope Social Impact involving several community centres in the Saint John area, designed to offer children a platform to exhibit their talents and passions while nurturing their entrepreneurial aspirations.

The standout attraction at the event was undoubtedly the Croc Jibbitz, which added a playful twist to footwear. Shoppers were drawn to the vibrant charms, and Miguel, a 12-year-old participant from BGC Grand Bay, beamed with pride. Handmade bracelets, t-shirts, and quirky pencils with unique designs also captivated shoppers, demonstrating the remarkable creativity of these young minds. The intricately designed pearlor beads and bracelets were also a huge hit!

The Saint John City Market buzzed with enthusiastic shoppers, all impressed by the imaginative products on display. Visitors left not only with one-of-a-kind treasures but also with a sense of pride in supporting the next generation of entrepreneurs.

This event's success underscored the significance of nurturing young talents and providing them with opportunities to explore their creativity while developing essential life skills.

As these young entrepreneurs continue to thrive, Saint John's innovation looks forward to a promising future.

World Hepatitis Day, July 28th, 2023



Public health staff, left to right: Annette MacKinnon, Lindy Thom, and the author (Photo: Karen Gillespie)

By Krista Connell, Public Health Nurse, Saint John Horizon Public Health

To recognize World Hepatitis Day, July 28th, Saint John Horizon Public Health, Avenue B, RECAP/Riverstone Recovery, Phoenix Pharmacy, Port City Pharmacy, Fresh Start and other community partners came together to offer a free community event at 70 Crown Street (RECAP/ Riverstone Recovery).

Viral hepatitis affects more than half a million Canadians. In New Brunswick, Hepatitis C is the most common reportable blood-borne infection. Viral hepatitis is spread through contact with contaminated blood or bodily fluids and can lead to liver damage, cirrhosis and cancer. The 2023 World Hepatitis Campaign theme “We’re not Waiting” highlights the need to accelerate viral hepatitis elimination efforts through testing and treatment.

The event was well attended and over 100 community members came out to enjoy food, music, games, and viral hepatitis education. Testing for hepatitis C was also available through the RECAP clinic. Horizon Public Health staff provided hepatitis education through an interactive game (see above). The Teen Resource Centre provided a painted banner and sidewalk chalk to help promote the event.

Welcoming Jenette Forbes, Community Social Pediatrics Advocate

By Jenette Forbes and Sarah Campbell, NBSP

In August of this year, New Brunswick Social Pediatrics (NBSP) welcomed our newest team member, Jenette Forbes, as the Community Social Pediatrics Advocate at the POP Centre. Over the last 30+ years, Jenette has accumulated a wealth of experience working with people and supporting communities. From the outset, Jenette has served as a community connector. In the early years of her career, Jenette worked as a Human Service Counsellor, providing home care support for adults with additional needs living in community-based homes. In this role, Jenette implemented programs to ensure inclusive practices for community involvement.



Most of Jenette’s work experience derives from her various roles at Face and Child Education Program Anglophone South (FACE). The starting point of her experience at FACE NB was in 1992, as a Family and Early Childhood Educator. After a decade of hands-on, collaborative experience working with families and other professionals, Jenette then transitioned to a team lead and supervisor within the organization until 2022. In her supervisory roles, Jenette played a centralizing role to support client care and facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration. With her multitude of experiences on the front lines and in supervisory roles, Jenette can foster relationships, assess barriers, navigate resources, and most importantly, serve as a devoted advocate for all. No matter the circumstance, Jenette approaches relationships with empathy and compassion.

Above: Jennette (Photo Molly Sheehan)

New Program and Event Coordinator joins NBSP

By Natalia Fana

The New Brunswick Social Pediatrics (NBSP) recently welcomed Destiny LeBlanc as the new Program and Event Coordinator to join their team. Prior to joining the team, Destiny was an educator with the Anglophone South School District. In her spare time she volunteered with one of the NBSP’s programs called Cooking Up Justice.



Destiny’s academic journey at Memorial University has equipped her with a solid foundation in time management, organizational skills and executive functioning. Additionally, she has an extensive background in education, leading various educational programs catering to a diverse student body. The role as an inner-city educator in the south end of Saint John honed her ability to develop engaging curricula, foster inclusive learning environments and prioritize relationship building.

In the current role, Destiny will be dedicated to community outreach, partnership development, volunteer coordination, community and fundraising event coordination, and program coordination for children, youth, and their families. She will foster and maintain strong and trusting relationships with the children, families, and partnering organizations in the community.

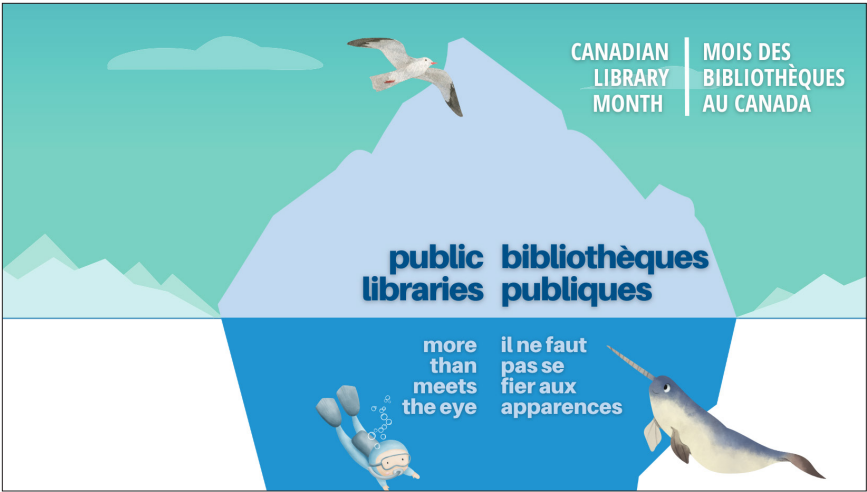
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Celebrate Canadian Library Month at the Saint John Free Public Library



By S.D. Thompson

October is Canadian Library Month, and the Saint John Free Public Library, Market Square, would like you to celebrate with it. This year’s Canadian Library Month theme is “More Than Meets the Eye” and, like an iceberg or a transformer, there’s more to a library than just books.

- Libraries offer free internet access from your choice of public access computers or free wi-fi. Printing and photocopying are also available for a small fee per page.
- Looking to learn more about your technology? Drop in to one of the library’s E-clinics Thursdays at 6 p.m. or Saturdays at 2 p.m.!
- Talks at the library can help you learn more about our world, like the New Brunswick Genealogy Society’s presentation on New Brunswick Unidentified Flying Object (UFO) researcher Stanton Friedman on Saturday, October 29th, 1 p.m.
- The library also brings you movies, music, career resources, puzzles and games, and so much more!

Follow the Saint John Free Public Library on Facebook or Instagram to keep up to date on all our upcoming programs!

Sea Belles news



At the AC&C Contest (Photo: Pierre Turnbull Photography)

By Julie Strang, Vice-President, Sea Belles

We are back to rehearsals in full swing until June when we will return to Area Contest and Convention (AC&C) 2024 for our 55th year in Harmony Inc. This past year was a bit bumpy; our Director of 32 years stepped away, then we had another director from November till March, and then Marilyn Hickman, a longtime chorus member, stepped up and got us ready for contest stage! We placed fifth, which we were very happy about! Given our current director Marilyn’s move at the end of September, we are currently looking for a new director who is interested in directing an a cappella chorus of committed women who love to sing in the barbershop style. We practice Tuesdays 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Portland United Church. Come check us out! We hope to have many performances or sing-outs this year as well and sing for everyone that will have us! We all do it for the love of singing as it keeps us young. We also support our charities which at present are Romero House and the North End Food Bank.

PRUDE Inc. celebrates Young Ambassadors Leadership graduation



Councillor David Hickey (back row, left) with the YALI graduates, staff, and volunteers of PRUDE Inc. (Photo: PRUDE Inc.)

By Ogorchukwu Ugolo, Program Coordinator, YALI, PRUDE Inc. (Pride of Race, Unity, and Dignity through Education)

On August 26th, 2023 at Saint John Arts Centre, nineteen dynamic youth ambassadors, fresh graduates from Cohort #1 of the YALI Program, showcased their unique ideas aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Goals. The Young Ambassadors Leadership Initiative (YALI) initiated an invigorating eight-week program, empowering these newcomers to become influential leaders in their communities and achieve holistic success.

Throughout these intensive weeks, these youth honed their public speaking, conflict resolution, and etiquette skills. They delved into topics such as scholarship applications, partook in community-focused volunteer activities, and explored project management and career pathways, positioning themselves as future change-makers.

Yet it’s not all work; the program offers a balanced blend of outdoor adventures like paddleboarding and hiking, bonding picnics, team-building exercises, and creative arts and crafts sessions. Historical site visits deepen their appreciation for the past, while collaborations with local entrepreneurs open doors to exciting opportunities on their journey to making a lasting global impact.

Should this program capture your interest or that of someone you know, please get in touch with the program coordinator at ogorchukwu@prudeinc.org for more details.

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Creating Traditions

There are many traditions surrounding funerals. The oldest have been with us for centuries, the newest - *they are 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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506-849-2119

Families tour a cruise ship



Some neighbourhood families on board Norwegian Escape
(Photo: Norwegian Cruise Line)

By Port Saint John

Port Saint John takes great pride in working with nearby priority community groups to showcase the various sectors within our port. Wednesday, August 30th, was very special and unique, as some neighbourhood families were invited for a ship tour and lunch onboard Norwegian Escape! These families were selected through the community centres.

We wanted to provide the children with a unique opportunity to explore and be inspired by the activities in the cruise industry, perhaps even plant the seeds for future career aspirations in the marine and logistics industry. We hope this experience inspired the children to dream big!

Happenings at Portland United



Members of the Music@ Portland committee with Lori McGovern, North End Food bank. From left: Lois Irvine, Lori, Eileen McLaughlin, Joanne Keith, Sharon Melanson, Marilyn Lester, and Sue Nickerson.
(Photo: North End Food Bank)

By Lois Irvine, Portland United Church

The organizers of the Music @ Portland series thank the community for their very generous contributions, over eight weeks of musical evenings, to our collection for the North End Food Bank. The banner (above) reads: “MUSIC at Portland with support of community presents to The North End Food Bank \$3448.50. Thank you to everyone.”

This summer at Portland we’ve welcomed the sounds and sights of excited children. Following renovations, the children and staff from Somerset Pre-School moved into the lower part of our building. We are extremely happy to have them with us!

On Saturday, September 30th we will be hosting a Community Block Party in our parking lot. The City of Saint John Block Party Trailer will be there to help with the event. Come and join us for hot dogs, entertainment, and games from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. If the weather is bad, we will be partying inside in the church hall. Everyone is invited!

Helping kids be the spark



Camp participants at the Forest Glenn Community Centre donating to the East Side Food Bank the money they raised through their Bake Sale

Story and photo by Heather Oldfield
YMCA Child Care Supervisor, Forest Glen Community Centre

At the Forest Glen Community Centre this July, we decided to run a summer day camp with a twist. We wanted to teach the children what it means to help others and give back to their community as part of our Food Frenzy themed camp. On Monday, the children discussed what they would like to bake during the week and visited Sobeys with our staff to purchase the supplies. On Wednesday, they hosted a bake sale to donate the money they raised to a charity of their choice. The group decided on the East Side Food Bank across the street from the Forest Glen Community Centre. The children worked very hard to create some yummy treats. They even created posters about the bake sale to put around the centre. Between their planning and baking, they enjoyed food-themed activities such as bobbing for donuts.

On Friday, once they were ready, I asked the kiddos, “How much money do you guys think you raised?” Some said \$100, and when I told them they raised \$270.70 they were pumped! We walked over to the food bank and gave the ladies the money. One of the ladies told us that “because you guys raised the money, we are going to use it towards buying snacks for children.” Afterward, I told the group how amazing they were to help our community.

The Purse Project, November 4th

By Pam Thomas, President,
Canadian Progress Club / Ignite -
Saint John

The Canadian Progress Club Ignite is presenting the 8th Annual Purse Project on Saturday, November 4th (10 a.m.-3 p.m.) at 100 Station Street continuing as a drive-thru, drop-off. We will be collecting new and gently used purses filled with various personal care items for women, including socks, hats and gloves. We also accept filled backpacks for those living rough. The purses are donated to community partners who are direct resources for women facing unfortunate life circumstances such as homelessness, poverty, domestic violence, or other emergency situations. Community partners distribute the purses as needed. They include Fresh Start Services for Women/YWCA, Elizabeth Fry Society, Avenue B Harm Reduction, First Steps/Second Steps, Coverdale Centre for Women Inc., and Hestia House, among others. In 2022 the project collected over 850 purses. Canadian Progress Club Ignite (<https://www.facebook.com/CanadianProgressClubIgnite>) is a volunteer not-for-profit service club chartered April 2012. Our mandate is to strive to assist women and children in need within our community through fundraising efforts and volunteering. Ignite is part of the Canadian Progress Club (<http://www.progressclub.ca>) founded in Toronto in 1922.

Above: a variety of what can be included in the purse (Photo: Karen Stears)



The Around the Block interview: Debbie McLeod



Debbie McLeod (above) is well-known to many of us for her expert, supportive work in public housing, but she has been so much more: a tireless and cheerful colleague, ever ready to organize and attend community events and to listen empathetically and learn to really know her clients - families, seniors, newcomers. Debbie is retiring on Friday September 29th. She'll be missed!

Congratulations on retiring soon! How long have you worked at the Government of New Brunswick?
I've been here at Social Development for 27 years. September 9th was my first day, so it's kind of full circle finishing in September.

What were your roles along the way to where you are now?
I was hired as a case manager. Then Brian Marks at Housing asked if I'd be interested in looking after the relocation project on Churchill Blvd where the Y is. We were able to help people purchase their first homes; some moved to other public housing. Others had the opportunity to move to wherever their families were. That was a wonderful program. It took almost two years. Then there was a vacant position here at Housing, it was Community Development. There was nobody in this role and I had no idea what to do. So I guess I developed it for the last 15 years!

And you would have been so well placed given the previous couple of years in the community.
That's right. Being a case manager for all those years, the families that I was working with doing the relocation, I had all kinds of connections, relationships already formed. It made it much easier.

What's been the best thing about your job?
I guess the best thing, and I mean this has been my whole life, is just being able to help people. I have no greater joy at the end of the day, knowing that you've made a difference. You might have been able to just connect somebody to a program or a service or listen to somebody - just being able to be a good listener, to build relationships so that people call me looking for help. And of course being able to house people, especially today, where housing is such a premium. And the relationships that I've been able to form in those 15 years with stakeholders, people outside our communities that have been more than willing to come in to work with us in our communities and make them brighter and better for people. Housing isn't just a place to live, you know, it's just not the bricks and mortar. We've really tried to transform our communities and bringing greater joy to people that are living with us - wellness programs, working with the seniors, hearing what their needs are and being able to bring the resources in to meet those needs. So just being able to help, I guess that's been my greatest fulfillment.

So what will you miss, if anything?
Oh my gosh, I'll miss the people! Friendships have formed. And the everyday. I could be working with seniors and kids, families, stakeholders, so I'm going to miss all of that busyness... The relationships are the biggest thing I'm going to miss. It's the people.

What are you most looking forward to about retirement?
I'm really looking forward to my husband and I being able to have more time to do the things we like, hiking and biking and spending time with our grandchildren and being able to help out our children. We have a farm in Wickham, so, spending more time there. I'm doing some travel and volunteering. I'm on the board at the Crescent Valley Resource Centre . And getting back to the Y. I can't wait to do some volunteering there - and I love playing pickleball! My days are going to be filled and I'm happy about that because I'm used to a busy lifestyle.

Do you have any advice for young people who are thinking of working for government?
For me, government has been a wonderful employer. I enjoyed my experience, you know, working with GNB. I've always felt very supported. My needs were always met. It's a great career. There's lots of places that you can branch off to once you're with Social Development or with GNB - lots of opportunity. I feel very fortunate being able to work with the same employer for 27 years, and have never looked anywhere else. And I have been very fortunate being able to do different roles. Before government, I worked at the Saint John Learning Exchange - I did literacy training - and then the Family Resource or Single Parent Resource Centre and my career there was awesome. I got to develop a program with Susan McKeon and teach self-esteem for women. And I connected with Roxy Marr, with Family and Community Services. She would always support our self-esteem for women program. She' probably the reason why I left nonprofit and went to government. I'm pleased because now I'm retiring with a pension, which is also another really lovely thing to be able to gain while you're working for government.

It's been lovely talking with you. And we appreciate you. We'll miss you!

Unsure what service you need? Call 211!

**By Daniela Fernandez,
Director of Community
Engagement for 211
NB, adapted from caller
testimonials**

Sometimes people wonder if they can call 211 if they are not exactly sure what service they are seeking. The answer is yes! 211 Service Navigators will talk with callers to understand their circumstances, and they will figure out needs and referrals together.

A 211 Service Navigator took a call from a woman who was struggling. She was audibly upset and said she was looking for any type of help but was so overwhelmed that she could not be specific. The 211 Service Navigator spent some time listening to the caller's situation, empathizing, and legitimizing the caller's feelings. After this, she was able to open up more, and the Service Navigator could probe further regarding what supports she needed. Together, they identified some core needs that the caller was struggling with. There were several needs including mental health support, legal support, and food support. One by one, they went through each need, and the Service Navigator provided several resources that could assist the caller. He then offered the caller a follow-up call to make sure that she successfully connected with said resources. The caller mentioned that even just knowing that someone cared enough to call back and check in was very reassuring for her, and she was thankful for 211's support.

When you're not sure where to turn to find the help that you need, remember that #helpstartshere at 211.
(Photo: LittleCityLifestylePhotography from Getty Images Signature)



One step closer to #Digital Equity



*CTSJ Community Coordinator Karla Marticorena (left)
and Mariah Darling of ChromaNB*

Story and photo by Civic Tech Saint John Co-organizers

This summer, Civic Tech Saint John embarked on a transformative journey towards digital equity, thanks to the unwavering support of Port Saint John, the University of New Brunswick Saint John, and New Brunswick Community College, as part of the #Digital Equity project. The passionate community of volunteers collected used computers and restored them to support community organizations with IT equipment needs. In early September, the Civic Tech Saint John team donated computer systems to ChromaNB, Stone Church, and Carleton Community Centre to improve access to computers in these hard-working community organizations.

Access to devices is a key pillar of #Digital Equity. The other pillars are Internet access and digital literacy, supporting our society in overcoming the accessibility barrier inclusively and safely. Civic Tech Saint John's mission is to apply technology to make Saint John a better place for all. If you're eager to join this digital movement and help reduce the digital divide, consider volunteering with us. Together, we can ensure that everyone has a fair shot at the benefits of technology. And we can foster a more inclusive and connected community. For information, contact civictechsaintjohn@gmail.com.

Civic Tech meets at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesdays at ConnexionWorks, 1 Germain Street, 3rd floor (sign in, in the main lobby, if you arrive after 6 p.m.). Our larger events are sometimes held at other locations, so check out Civic Tech Saint John on Facebook to stay up to date. We thank ConnexionWorks and the Human Development Council as our founding partners, and the Government of New Brunswick Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training, and Labour for providing support for our Community Coordinator.



Around The Block Team (Issue 91)

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Palestinian Tatreez workshops



Participants at a recent Tatreez workshop

Story and photo by Dr. Helmi Alfarra

The Atlantic Canada Palestinian Society of Saint John recently completed its second Palestinian Tatreez workshop at Loch Lomond Villa and is finishing one at the Saint John Free Public Library in the first week of October. The workshops are instructed by skilled Palestinian individuals and are hands-on, allowing participants to learn and practice the ancient art of Tatreez simultaneously.

The workshops begin with an introduction to Palestinian heritage and culture; participants learn how to make a frame around the Tatreez fabric and then work on various projects that introduce new patterns and their meanings. They have shown great enthusiasm for learning the techniques of Palestinian Tatreez. Katie described the Tatreez Learning Cafe as a combination of hands-on creativity and cultural education. Jose found the workshop to be an enjoyable introduction to a rich cultural tradition. She was previously unaware of the meaning behind the multitude of designs in Tatreez.

The workshops will continue until December in collaboration with other community organizations. If you are interested in participating, you can reach out to the Atlantic Canada Palestinian Society of Saint John via email at info.acps.sj@gmail.com or follow them on Instagram @ACPS.sj, X [formerly Twitter] @AcpsSi50140, FB @ACPS of Saint John.

CIBC Run for the Cure 2023

***By Stacey Hamdan, Run Day Experience Lead
CIBC Run for the Cure Committee***

One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. The volunteers of the Saint John CIBC Run for the Cure committee also organize the annual Tea of Hope to honour those who share this life-altering experience. The Tea represents strength in numbers, a support system, and hope to those who may need some inspiration. This year we held the Tea on September 24th. The Run will be held on October 1st at Fisher Lakes. We wish to thank all volunteers and supporters who make both events possible!

Together, we can change the future of breast cancer.



Saint John's 2022 Run participants (Photo: Saint John Firefighters)

Councillors' Corner

For this issue, we asked some councillors to write on a topic of their choice. Below we hear about empowerment and housing, and then a few words on some welcome changes. Thanks to Councillors Ogden, Harris, and Radwan!



Empowerment

By Councillor Barry Ogden, Ward 2

I think one of the hardest things is convincing people that they have the power that they can make their lives and the lives of others better.

For decades I have coached different sports to boys and girls, taught school, worked with food banks for 35 years, and created community projects all by working with and bringing people together. I feel you must know how to help empower people and delegate tasks and listen to other people's ideas. That's the hitch sometimes - that people lack the confidence to speak up and to act.

Being a lifetime Saint Johner is perplexing as we have created so many great things yet for the past while, we have watched our city slide backwards, not knowing what to do. Poverty is not having the basic things in life so people feel they are just surviving and poverty in our city has grown.

There is another way we need to tackle poverty besides providing housing, education, food security and the loving support of children by adults. This is empowering people with hope, confidence, actions with results.

I have heard the negative when we created Marigolds and Murals, building the Marco Polo, restoring the Loyalist Refugee House and the closed and condemned Canada Games Stadium and the creation of the Atlantic Football League. If you listen too much when you have an idea, the negative people will have got what they want: they will stop progress.

It's so important that we as Saint Johners experience success as a community and as individuals. Create a garden, take a course, make your bed, paint and clean something, no matter how big - but create that confidence that doing things builds.

Empowerment will help make a better Saint John.



What are we going to do about housing?

By Brent Harris, Councillor at Large

We are all experiencing the worst shortage and crisis in our housing system since the 1950s. I recently had to find an apartment for myself and my three children. If I didn't have an inside connection with a friend who had an apartment I would likely still be looking for something I could afford.

We've all heard stories like this and ones much worse. In my case, the ability to go into that apartment and finish the renovation made the difference.

Rising rents, predatorial behaviour by management companies and landlords, and a major labour shortage in the construction industry are driving the problem into all of our lives. So what do we do about it?

There is something to be said about the person-to-person connection that we have lost. We need a system that enables more of us to take action and create housing opportunities like we used to have when we last faced this crisis. I'm talking about housing cooperatives.

Almost all of us renting are paying more than we would if we were owners. Sure, there are maintenance costs that are difficult to predict but on the level it still is true. Our tax dollars used to be prioritized for collective action on housing creation back in the 1950s -1980s and cooperatives were one way that a group of people could pool their resources to own and operate an apartment building.

Many of these apartment buildings were constructed by our municipal housing corporation which allowed for agreements to be struck by residents to mortgage the building. Banks weren't the ones who did this, we were.

Today, banks have almost no ability to help a group of people take this action, which is why the council is now trying to reestablish a housing corporation that can do this. All we need is to focus some of our tax dollars on supporting local action and solutions.

But not everyone agrees with this, and it will need all of us to talk about this to drive this political change.

Positive changes

By Councillor Paula Radwan, Ward 4



Our council are making some positive changes to the City of Saint John on behalf of the residents of the city. We have made investments in the waterfront development project; there will be public space started on the Sugar Refinery site; improvements made in Rockwood Park; the first phase of Dominion Park is complete along with some smaller improvements like park benches purchased, garbage cans, fences getting fixed, etc.

There has also been investment made to help with community with our new block party trailer, a new cricket field getting established, investments made in Passports to Parks and a new Golf Disc course. We are moving forward in the City of Saint John to make improvements and to bring quality-of-life items to our residents.