



# Around *the* Block



Issue 92 December 2023/January 2024 [sjcommunitynewspaper@gmail.com](mailto:sjcommunitynewspaper@gmail.com)

Published six times a year by the Human Development Council

## 2023 YMCA Peace Medals: Cindy Floyd and Song Kim



Cindy Floyd (left) and Song Kim (Photo: Shelagh Murphy)

**By Raunak Bagga, Communications Team Lead  
YMCA of Greater Saint John**

From November 19th to 25th, YMCAs across Canada celebrated the presence of peace and reflected on the year-long peace-building work in the world. Many newcomers moving to Saint John prefer this city for its peace. Presenting the YMCA Peace Medal is a highlight of this celebration. This year, the YMCA of Greater Saint John recognized Cindy Floyd and Song Kim with these medals for their significant contributions to peace-building.

Cindy Floyd is a champion for local fundraisers and philanthropy who has been involved in supporting people in her community. She helps connect resources to people, ensuring they have everything to implement the goals and vision to help bring a positive impact. "Cindy's approach to philanthropy, whether at work or as a volunteer, is one that involves everyone and values all," said Kelly Evans, President and CEO of the Greater Saint John Community Foundation.

Song Kim is a champion for diversity and collaboration who creates various engaging and community-building opportunities for newcomers. She has also cultivated a community of 500 women through her women's hiking group, improving their mental health by coming out of loneliness and isolation, and nurturing friendships while staying healthy.

YMCA Peace Week sheds light on these peace-building efforts and encourage Canadians to support global and local efforts of creating a peaceful and inclusive world where we can all Shine On.

## Proud Sponsors of Around The Block



SAINT JOHN



## The Learning Exchange (Academic) Graduation 2023



Joy for teacher Ginny Hooper (left) and graduate Georgina (Jean)  
(Photo: Chrissy Cusack)

**By Ginny Hooper, Learning Exchange Academic Program  
(LEAP) Teacher, Saint John Learning Exchange (SJLE)**

On Wednesday, November 1st, 2023 The Learning Exchange held our graduation ceremony for learners who earned their Adult High School Diploma or their General Educational Development (GED). The ceremony took place at Stone Church (thank you for providing this beautiful venue) where bells were ringing – school bells, that is! This ceremony included youth and adults from all three of our academic programs. **(Continued on page 14)**

## From the Editor's desk:

### Food and community

Lorna Brown, [sjcommunitynewspaper@gmail.com](mailto:sjcommunitynewspaper@gmail.com)

The holiday season is traditionally a time of peace and good will. In a world in which peace is in very short supply right now, I am grateful to be in Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada, and mindful of the sufferings of those living in all war zones - not just those prominent in the nightly news, but in forgotten conflicts. Mindful, too, of the difficulties closer to home, the spirit and resilience of those undergoing them, and the efforts of all those trying to help bring peace. I am privileged to have encountered Song Kim through her volunteering at Civic Tech SJ, and a more exuberantly positive person you will never meet. I was thrilled to read (above left) of her winning the Y's Peace Medal. Congratulations to both honourees!

Stories of community always abound in *Around the Block*, and so often they revolve around food. Crescent Valley Resource Centre recently started a Breakfast Social, and it has been so popular that they decided to switch from monthly to biweekly (page 4)! Resident Roy Nairn captures the fun of PULSE's Slow Cooking Social (page 3), where participants prep in the morning and come back together in the afternoon to enjoy the delicious results. And a ham and cheese pinwheel surely tastes better when kids know how to make it themselves and eat what they have made in community (page 9). In each case there is food, yes, but there are also people. There is a special bond that comes from breaking bread together.

I am mindful always of those who do not have food security, and for whom community is missing, or painful. Romero House's reopened dining room (page 20) welcomes many, and as Evelyn writes, hats off to those who know they do better with a takeout meal than sitting in company. Don't forget the food purchasing order (PULSE has the basics on page 3, though it is active across the city) and the food contest (page 11) - this time the winners get a turkey and a gift card!

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



## New Neighbourhood Navigator

By Emily Patterson

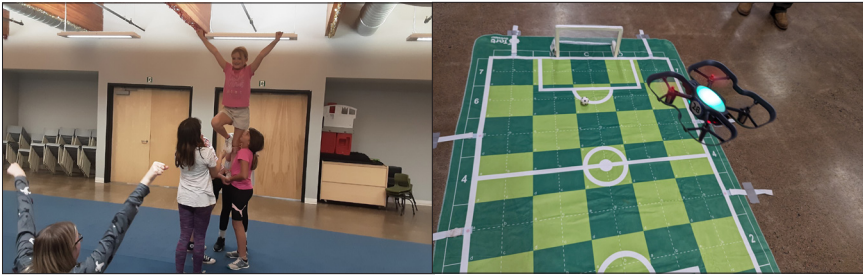
Hi all, I'm Em (Emily) and I'm the new Neighbourhood Navigator for ONE Change. Although I'm new to Saint John, I've been working in various roles in community over the past five years in Peterborough, Ontario. Coming from a place of my own lived

experience, I'm a believer of the valuable impact community brings, and passionately work from a foundation of harm reduction and trauma-informed care. I'm excited to be welcomed into the Old North End and look forward to getting to know everyone and supporting the community in any way I can. If you need help with housing, food security, program involvement, finding those hard-to-reach forms, or simply want to sit and chat, I'm here for you.

Above: Em Patterson (Photo: John Driscoll)



## Program updates



Left: the cheer team hit the heights (Photo: ONE Change); right, a drone moves a ball (Photo: Jonathan Driscoll)

### New at ONE Change: Cheerleading - by Jade-Lynn Shepherd

The newest addition to the evening programs 2023 is cheerleading. The kids are really enjoying it and they look forward to it every week. I have been working hard with the kids to learn a full two-and-a-half minute routine. The kids have worked super hard and have been amazing to work with. It has been so fun watching the kids become great teammates with each other. Thank you to all the kids who have joined me this fall. I can't wait to continue at the beginning of February.

### Drone Club update - by Jonathan Driscoll

The month of October was amazing and full of code and sports for the Engage4Change Drone Club in partnership with our friends from New Brunswick Community College (NBCC). The participants took it upon themselves to work together as a team and come up with the perfect code that would allow their drone to fly closely to a platform. The objective was to get as many balls to the other person's side using only the power of wind, sensors, and code. They worked hard figuring out the different sensors' abilities and how the wind pressure would affect how the balls would roll and what direction. In early November we used some of our old Engage4Change equipment from the Orange Tart Soccer bots and used the field platform to help inspire and let imaginations flow. Participants have strived with this program, learning new platforms like Python and Blockly. It is amazing to see how the impact of technology can truly make a difference in someone's life at school, centres, and most importantly home.

## Evening programs done – but start again in February



Story by Anna Pierce

Our programs at ONE Change have come to an end for 2023. We had lots of fun playing basketball, working on our technology knowledge, dancing, acting, and creating. The children's favourite programs were Pokémon Club and our newest addition, cheerleading! We'd also like to say a big "thank you" to those who have helped with our programs: New Brunswick Community College, Brilliant Labs, and Brooke Cheeks. We appreciate your putting in the time to engage and better our youth. We'd also like to thank our fantastic staff for all the work they have done. Your hard work improves the lives of those who come to the centre. Our programs will begin again at the beginning of February. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for dates and times!

Above: youth enjoying an evening program (Photo: ONE Change)

## PL day camps – watch for registration!



By Anna Pierce, ONE Change

One of the programs we provide at ONE Change is a two-hour camp for PL (Professional Learning) days. When the schools are closed, we offer themed activities to keep the children engaged and learning even on their days off. Some of our days included a science day, where we performed experiments using baking soda and vinegar to raise balloons, and a game-themed day, where we played math bingo and Jeopardy! We also played some games in the gymnasium to work off the children's endless, abundant energy. Keep an eye on our Facebook page to register your child for our March 25th and April 15th PL day camps. Above: Children in the gym at PL day camp. (Photo: ONE Change)

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, PULSE Inc. Coordinator**

**Check out our Facebook page for hours and upcoming programs!**

**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. She is not able to write prescriptions.

**Slow Cooking Social** Every month Lisa will be hosting a Slow Cooking Social which will feature nutritionally dense foods. Participants meet at 9:30 a.m. and get everything started in the slow cooker and come back at 4 p.m. to eat together and leave with all the ingredients to make it at home! Limited spots available; call Lisa at 506-632-6807 to register!

**Puzzle Pop-In** Join Lisa every other Tuesday 10-11:30 a.m. to help her work on a puzzle or start one yourself. Coffee and tea will be available.

**SJB-KE Parent Coffee & Chat** Join us every Wednesday morning 8:15-9:30 a.m. after dropping your children off at school and enjoy a fresh cup of coffee and friendly conversation.

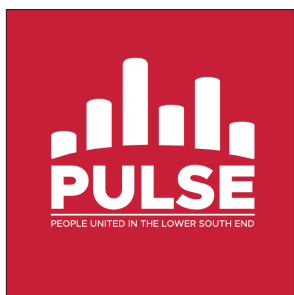
**Grab a Snack** Attention students: stop in, visit us at PULSE after school, tell us about your day, and grab a snack!

**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](mailto:Martha.MacLean@HorizonNB.ca). Please include your  
name, phone number, order size, and pickup location.

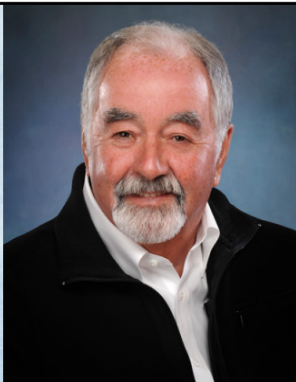
**December** - money due December 8th, pick up December 15th.  
**2024 payment and pick-up dates to be announced.**

Pay It Forward with a SJ Food Purchasing Order to someone in the community. Simply send a \$15 or \$25 e-transfer to [Martha.MacLean@HorizonNB.ca](mailto:Martha.MacLean@HorizonNB.ca) and put in the notes section “PULSE Pay It Forward.”



Gerry Lowe  
Ward 3 City Councillor

Email: [Gerry.Lowe@saintjohn.ca](mailto:Gerry.Lowe@saintjohn.ca)  
Phone: 639-0969



# PULSE Inc. Annual Tree Lighting

**Date: Thursday, December 14th**

**Time: 4 PM**

**Place: 251 Wentworth St.**

**Stop into PULSE Inc. Thursday, December 14th at 4 pm for hot cocoa and Christmas music, and join us as we light up our Christmas tree!**

**Donations to our pantry are welcome!**



## Slow Cooking Social

**Story and photo by Roy Nairn**

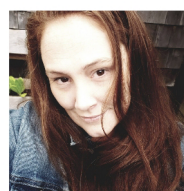
Whenever I get the chance to try new food and learn, I get very excited. They are two of my favorite things! So, when I asked to join the PULSE “Slow Cooking Social”, I jumped at the opportunity.

On Tuesday, October 24th at 9:20 a.m., I arrived at my destination. I was very happy I did. Not only was I going to learn how to cook a new delicious, healthy, cost-efficient meal. We received everything to make it at home, for our loved ones, family, friends, and neighbours: the necessary fresh ingredients and helpful preparation and cooking instructions. Also included was a fun fact sheet about squash. Did you know butternut squash can be substituted “for pumpkin in pies for a smoother texture”? I didn’t! Also, crossword lovers were gifted a fun treat with matching solution page.

The squash and apple soup was amazingly exquisite. The bright orange smooth texture brought me much joy, and nutrients with each spoonful. I could taste the squash, apples, and sweet onions mixed in perfect harmony. The coconut milk served on top made for an out-of-this-Tuesday experience. The Tuscany chicken sandwich makes it a perfect couple. Fresh spinach, Havarti cheese, sliced chicken, and multigrain Tuscan bread combined to make a mouthwatering meal. "Slow Cooking Social" is a wonderful program in place to empower our society. Special thanks to PULSE and all their sponsors.

(Above: the squash and apple soup)

## South End Neighbourhood Contacts



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Resident Engagement Coordinator  
info@pulsesj.ca



Mary LeSage  
Neighbourhood Developer  
pulsedeveloper.lesage@gmail.com



Parents and children learning together at HWSF (Hazen White-St. Francis)



HWSF stories and photos by Victoria Lawrence  
Community School Coordinator, HWSF

Our Grade K and Grade 1 classes participated in a side-by-side learning event with parents on Thursday, November 9th. Parents were invited into the classroom to see what their children were learning and to work with them on an activity. Thank you to everyone who participated!!

Above: Grade K student, Sidra, with her mother

CVRC biweekly Breakfast Social

By Char Levesque, Community Liaison  
Crescent Valley Resource Centre (CVRC)

CVRC has been hosting a biweekly Breakfast Social since November 15th, from 9-10 a.m. Residents of Crescent Valley are invited to enjoy a light, healthy, and delicious breakfast at the Centre (takeout is also available). Our Breakfast Social will provide a space for neighbourhood residents to meet new neighbours and catch up with old friends over coffee and breakfast. We look forward to having you join us for a delicious breakfast and conversation on December 13th (the last one before Christmas). Check our January CVRC newsletter for breakfast social dates.

Building empathy at HWSF

We are so happy to welcome our Roots of Empathy baby to Mrs. McKinnon's grade two class! The Roots of Empathy program has been shown to reduce aggression, increase sharing, caring and inclusion, and promote resilience, well-being, and positive mental health. Max is four months old and will come for monthly visits to Mrs. McKinnon's class until he turns one year old. Mrs. O'Brien will lead the class in a baby-centred discussion and students will ask questions about Max and his development and will get to watch as he learns and grows. Thank you, baby Max, for being our Roots of Empathy teacher! Above: Grade 2 students with Roots of Empathy teacher, baby Max, and Mom.



"Promise Partnership Returns!"



Promise  
Partnership

Is your middle school child in need of homework or learning assistance? We're here to lend a hand!  
University of New Brunswick Saint John student volunteers will run our Middle School Youth Mentor & Tutor Program. Join us upstairs at CVRC Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3-4 P.M. for free tutoring and mentoring. Participants will need to have parent(s)/guardian(s) signed permission to attend.

Forms will be available from the front desk at Crescent Valley Resource Center at 130 MacLaren Blvd.  
November 28, 30 December - December 5, 7, 12, 14.  
We will be back in January after the Holidays!

If you have questions - please contact Christine Davis, UNB Saint John - Promise Partnership Education Coordinator at 506-607-0845.

Trevor Holder  
MLA Portland - Simonds

Constituency Office:  
229 Churchill Blvd. Suite 11  
Tel: (506) 657-2335  
Email: trevor.holder@gnb.ca

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



Crescent Valley  
Neighbourhood Contact

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





### Ukrainian Association shares knowledge with BGC Seaside kids



Crowned with flowers, the children paint a Ukrainian flower, the orange viburnum

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

The BGC Seaside Park Afterschool Program was visited by the Ukrainian Association of Saint John (UASJ) this October to share some knowledge with the kiddos. Kids learned about Ukraine, famous Ukrainian-Canadians, and spent an afternoon with the UASJ volunteers.

The volunteers braided the youths’ hair with ribbons and provided them with Vinoks, Ukrainian flower crowns, to wear. Kids collaborated with the UASJ to create a beautiful painting of an orange viburnum flower, seen being painted in the image. The kids had a blast and wore their braids with pride. The program staff and kids were happy to learn and share the day and experience with the Ukrainian Association!

BEGINNER LEVEL PICKLEBALL

Mondays & Wednesdays 10:30am-12:30pm

OPEN LEVEL PICKLEBALL

Fridays 8:30am-10:30am

COMMUNITY DROP-IN PICKLEBALL

Dorothy Shephard

MLA Saint John Lancaster

Constituency Office:  
640 Manawagonish Road  
Saint John, NB E2M3W5  
(Located at side of building facing Church)

Tel: (506) 643-2900  
Fax: (506) 643-2999  
Email: dorothy.shephard@gnb.ca

### Christmas 2023 at the Carleton, December 15th-21st

The best way to spread Christmas cheer...

JOIN US DECEMBER 15 – 21st

FRI  
SUN  
MON  
TUES  
WED  
THURS

YOUTH CHRISTMAS CABARET

HOT CHOCOLATE, BONFIRE & SANTA

CANDYCANE SCAVENGER HUNT

NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTIVITY

CHRISTMAS MEAL (CCC KIDZ / TEENZ)

GIFT MARKET (CCC KIDZ)

watch our Facebook page for details

Carleton Community Centre

#SpreadChristmasCheer

Designed by Kate Worden, Marketing & Program Coordinator Carleton Community Centre

Cedar Hill - Greenwood Cemetery

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

New Columbarium at Greenwood Cemetery

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

– Please contact our office: 9 am - 4:30 pm weekdays for more details –

1650 Manawagonish Rd. Saint John, NB – 672-4309

West Side

Neighbourhood Contact

Jen Oliver

executivedirector@carletoncommunitycentre.ca

120 Market Place, Saint John NB

E2M0E1

506 658-2920

Page 5





The image shows a collection of educational posters displayed on a blue backdrop. The posters are organized into several sections:

- HARM REDUCTION:** This section includes a poster titled "HARM REDUCTION 101" with icons for various harm reduction strategies, and another titled "PRINCIPLES OF HARM REDUCTION" with a list of principles.
- NEEDLE USE:** This section features a poster titled "NEEDLE USE" with a list of steps for safe needle use, and another titled "NEEDLE EXCHANGE" with a list of benefits.
- DISEASE PREVENTION:** This section includes a poster titled "DISEASE PREVENTION" with a list of prevention strategies, and another titled "HIV TESTING" with a list of testing locations.
- OVERDOSE PREVENTION:** This section features a poster titled "OVERDOSE PREVENTION" with a list of signs and symptoms of overdose, and another titled "CAN YOU RECOGNIZE AN OVERDOSE?" with a list of warning signs.
- AVENUE B:** This section includes a poster titled "AVENUE B" with a list of services and resources, and another titled "WWW.AVENUEB.CA" with a list of contact information.

The posters use various visual elements such as icons, charts, and text to convey information. The overall theme is HIV/AIDS prevention and harm reduction.

**Story and photo by Diane Kerns, Harm Reduction Program Coordinator, Avenue B Harm Reduction Inc.**

To be completely truthful, we have another reason for having students at Avenue B. It is our chance to help show them a way to meet our clients with dignity and respect. A chance to understand harm reduction, see it in action and witness the success for themselves.

**It is our hope that they will take what they have learned with them into their work and change the world.**



## A photograph of a landscaped area. In the foreground, there is a grassy lawn with a metal storm drain cover. To the left, a concrete retaining wall runs along the edge of a grassy slope. On the slope, there are some small trees and shrubs. In the middle ground, a series of wooden planters or benches are arranged in a row. In the background, there are several residential buildings, including a prominent red one. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

***Story and photo by Chanelle Morgan, Coverdale***

The exciting work at Rose House continues! We have had new raised garden boxes installed, thanks to the Saint John Tool Library Community Build, including two lower beds for improved accessibility. We have had trees and plants installed by Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP) staff. The trees are red oaks, and there is a new pollinator garden next to the garden boxes, along with fiddleheads, rose bushes, and blueberry bushes. These trees and gardens will benefit the environment as well as our residents for years to come. We are all looking forward to enjoying what's been planted in the spring and summer, and our residents are excited to plant the garden boxes in the spring as well. We hope for lots of vegetables to supplement our residents' weekly grocery shop! We are grateful for all the folks who worked to improve our yard!

***Story and photo by the Reverend  
Jasmine Chandra***

The Keeping Warm Project run by Stone Church members Pam Galbraith and Kathryn Hanson has knit 44 hats and 10 scarves for members of the community who are in need.

They have also received other donations of socks and gloves. This project will make a big difference for members attending the drop-in program.



**Thanks to all those knitting and donating! Drop-in is on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 12–4 p.m. and Wednesdays 9 a.m.—12 p.m.**

Jennifer Hallihan  
Community Navigator  
Waterloo Village Neighbourhood  
Association/ The Stone Church  
87 Carleton Street 506-639-6317  
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## Active times @ SJBKE!



Drumming ceremony in the gym

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

"Crazy busy" is a good description (meant in the best way!) of this fall at our school. We had lots of amazing things going on in October including a school-wide Wabanaki drumming assembly (actually three, held throughout the day on October 25th) held by the amazing Mr. Greg Mansfield. In the same week, our middle school was treated to an incredible presentation by Alexander Chisom Guibault talking about his harrowing but inspiring early life in Guatemala. Finally, we capped off October with our K-3s making the first Trick or Treat tour through the Turnbull Home in four years (since COVID) - so thankful to be able to resume this long-standing tradition with our partners. This is just a sampling of all the things Clippers have been getting up to over this autumn - more to come!



Mr Guibault makes his incredible presentation in the SJBKE mini-theatre

## Family Literacy Night at Centennial



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

We have had several great experiences and opportunities at Centennial since our last submission, but we wanted to take a moment to highlight our first family event of the year. Our Family Literacy Night was hosted on October 26th, and we think it was a great success. We welcomed over 200 student/family members to the event! We were so happy to welcome our families, many of whom were in fun costumes, as they took part in several different literacy-themed activities throughout the event. Some of these included a glow room, a riddle/bingo activity room, a craft room, and an I-spy sensory room. We also had several stations set up in our gymnasium for families where they could have a light refreshment, obtain a library card, and hear about what the library has to offer families. As well, we had a story read-aloud where volunteers were reading Halloween-themed stories. Our staff are very thankful for all who lent a hand and volunteered their time and/or resources to make this such a fun and engaging event. We were ecstatic with the turnout and are currently planning our next family event. Stay tuned! Above: A few of our Centennial School staff ready to welcome families for our first Halloween-themed Family Literacy Night

## Huskies win by improving attendance



Story and photo by Victoria Lawrence  
Community School Coordinator, HWSF

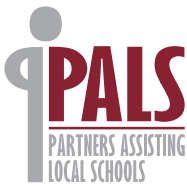
Each month we award certificates to students at our Husky assemblies. Awards for math, literacy, Husky of the Month, and attendance are given out. This year we continue to strive for increased attendance at school. Each month, one Husky from each grade who has improved their attendance is selected to receive the attendance award. With this certificate, students are gifted a gift basket to recognize their dedication to showing up ready to learn. Above: our winners from the month of September - K-5 students with their attendance awards and gift baskets



## 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
- Financial and Resource Support
- ... and so much more!



Deborah Fisher  
Susan Tipper  
Victoria Moseley

info@PALS.com

@PALSparters

@PALSparters

Help Make a Difference!



New bike trail at Forest Hills



Kids having fun and staying fit on the bike trail (Photos: Chris Tobin)

**By Chris MacLean. Elementary Physical Education Specialist Forest Hills School**

Come check out our new bike trail at Forest Hills School! Located in the back of our school alongside our soccer field, Dig In Trail Building and Design have created a beautiful biking trail that runs a complete loop on our hill! Not only is this trail ideal for beginner mountain bikers to come test their skills but also the trail offers perfect conditions for trail running. Earlier in the school year (shown in a photo below) are some elementary and middle school runners who participated in this year's SJEC Cross Country races. Both races for elementary and middle were hosted here at Forest Hills School on the new trail! The trail's length equals 1.1 km and provides riders or runners with lots of twists, turns and even a mini berm (perfect for mountain biking beginners). So come ride, run, or walk our awesome new, community bike trail! The trail will not be groomed in the winter but it is certainly welcomed for all to enjoy all year-round!



The new trail next to the soccer field

Great volunteers at Simonds – thank you!



Simonds' Seabee football team (Photo: Dee Arnold)

**By Jennifer Carhart, Principal, Simonds High School**

At the high school level, sports, clubs, and activities are at the core of all that goes on. These are the places students make memories and connections and develop skills. Simonds High School has an abundance of community support that wraps around our student body to ensure that opportunities are available to everyone no matter their area of interest. Providing these opportunities for our youth requires countless hours of volunteer work and commitment. Modeling that commitment and establishing a culture of civic responsibility is a gift. Of particular note is the unwavering dedication of our head football coach, Scott McNamee, and his team of assistant coaches. This group of volunteers gave an unmeasurable amount of time to our team of players through coaching and mentoring over the past many months. The mentoring, guiding, and coaching brought our Seabee football team to the New Brunswick Interscholastic Athletic Association (NBIAA) provincial finals in Moncton, New Brunswick for the first time since 1999. Though the Seabees placed second in the end, the experience and memories made will last a lifetime. Thank you to our volunteer coaches, family supporters, spectators, faculty volunteers and beyond.

Our community is fortunate to have so many incredible role models and supporters. As we embark on the holiday season it is a great time to take an opportunity to thank a volunteer- a thank you as a gift is free, fits everyone, and is always appreciated! On behalf of the Seabee students, thank you to the volunteers that keep us going!





## Kid Food Nation at SECC



*One of our participants with a ham and cheese pinwheel*

**Story and photo by Rachel Murphy, BGC Greater Saint John – South End Community Centre (SECC) location**

We have been having lots of delicious snacks these past few weeks, and it's all thanks to the funding we received from the Community Food Action Program with the Government of New Brunswick. We have been running Kid Food Nation in partnership with New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) nursing students, and the kids look forward to it every week. They get to make their own delicious and healthy snacks, play some games to increase their knowledge of healthy eating habits, and spend some time making new friends with the students from NBCC.

Some of the snacks we've made so far have been smoothies, ham and cheese pinwheels, and yogurt parfaits. The NBCC students are even putting together a cookbook for each of the kids to take home and share with their families. We are so grateful to be running this program, and excited to see what they have planned for the rest of it!

# VISIT SANTA

**Market Square | 11:00 am - 4:00 pm**  
**December 2nd, 9th, and 16th**

**\$20 INCLUDES DIGITAL PICTURE  
AND CANDY CANE**

**MUST REGISTER AND PAY IN ADVANCE**  
**SCAN THE QR CODE TO SIGN UP**



**ALL PROCEEDS SUPPORT**  **Greater Saint John**

 (506) 634 - 2011
  [www.sjbgclub.com](http://www.sjbgclub.com)




@BGCGreaterSaintJohn

## Free STEAM Programs in Saint John!



*Above and below: youth enjoying an engaging evening session at the Nick Nicolle Community Centre (Photos: Neil Gray)*

***By Brilliant Labs***

This fall, Brilliant Labs ran free coding, robotics, 3D design and printing, and maker-related evening sessions for children (aged 8 to 11) in partnership with The ONE Change Inc. at Nick Nicolle Community Centre, and biomaking and cybersecurity afterschool programs at ConnexionWorks.

**Youth are empowered with innovative mindsets, skills, and technologies to create a sustainable future for their communities in Saint John, thanks to the support of our community partners and funding from the Government of Canada's CanCode program.**









## 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](mailto: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](http://al-anonmaritimes.ca)

## Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Contest - holiday edition



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

We are happy to partner with Saint John Energy for the ninth year! For this December/January issue there will be two winners. Instead of fruit and vegetable packages, each will receive a \$25 gift card and a turkey!

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 15, 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](mailto: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 prizes. The contest will end at noon on December 14th and prizes, if possible, will be delivered on December 15th (or you might be asked to pick up your prize from PULSE, 1-4 p.m.). We will also list the winners on the Human Development Council Facebook page.

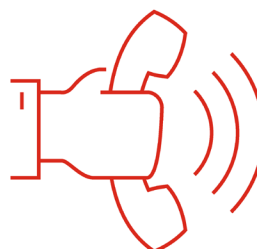
**The Issue 91 winners were:  
Tung Tran (Jerry) and Donna Veysey**



## Empty Stocking Fund - register by December 6th!

Registration for the 2023 Empty Stocking Fund has been extended until December 6th. A step-by-step process and a downloadable form are available at:

<https://emptystockingfundsj.com/registration>



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there for everyone in Canada.

Dial 2-1-1 or visit [211.ca](http://211.ca)



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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

All workshops are held at the Agar Place Work Room.  
For more information or to reserve a space,  
please call (506) 658-5580.





## Happenings at Portland United on the hill



Christmas 2022 at Portland United Church (Photo: Sue Nickerson)

By Lois Irvine

The holiday season is coming and there will be lots of opportunities at Portland United on Newport Crescent for celebration and reflection.

- Our Christmas tree went up at the end of November and along with it our annual Mitten Tree. This tree will be decorated over the month of December with lots of home-made mittens and scarves that will be distributed to the North End schools in January.
- On Thursday, December 7th at 2 p.m., we will be hosting a Christmas Social for the community. There will be sandwiches, sweets, a singsong, and maybe even a visit from Santa. Everyone is welcome and the event is free, but we ask you to let us know you are coming by calling the church office at 506-632-4030.
- Music Director Barry Snodgrass and our choir will be presenting a Christmas Cantata on Sunday, December 10th during the 11 a.m. service. On Christmas Eve, December 24th, a Family Service will be held at 7 p.m. We would love to welcome you!

## There is a free playgroup near you!

By Patricia Allan-Clark, Program Manager  
Family Resource Centre Saint John

We offer playtime, crafts, snacks, stories, songs and more for children 0-5 with their parents and caregivers. No need to register ahead of time, but dates and locations may change, so please call, email, or check out the Family Resource Centre Facebook page for more information. We look forward to seeing you!

**South End:** Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday, 10 a.m. - noon  
Family Resource Centre, 211 Wentworth St.  
Karen Kincade, 506-633-2182 ext. 203  
karen.kincade@frc-crfsaintjohn.com

**Crescent Valley:** Thursday, 10 a.m. - noon  
Crescent Valley Resource Centre, 130 McLaren Blvd.  
Samantha Middleton, 506-633-2182 ext. 206  
samantha.middleton@frc-crfsaintjohn.com

**West Side:** Wednesday, 10 a.m. – noon  
Carleton Community Centre, 120 Market Place  
Miranda Belliveau, 506-633-2182 ext. 205  
miranda.belliveau@frc-crfsaintjohn.com

**En français**  
mardi, 9h-12h  
CPE Centre Samuel de Champlain, 67, Chemin Ragged Point  
Christine Gee-Drisdell, 506-658-4600 poste 2101  
christine.gee-drisdelle@arcf.ca



## 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.

### Life after Loss: Survivors of Suicide

March 12th to May 14th, 2024  
Tuesdays 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.  
A 10-week education program for individuals coping with the loss of a loved one to suicide. The program will provide an opportunity to enhance your understanding of the grief you are experiencing and help you move forward in the healing process.

### Engaging Caregivers in Recovery

March 14th to May 16th, 2024  
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.

### Mindfulness

March 14th to April 18th, 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 of Canadian Mental Health Association of New Brunswick 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.

QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR SERVICES? CALL ANYTIME OR VISIT US AT [WWW.BRENANSFH.COM](http://WWW.BRENANSFH.COM)

### 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.



**Brenan's**  
FUNERAL HOME  
& CREMATORIUM  
506-634-7424

**Castle Fallsview**  
FUNERAL HOME  
506-634-1701

**Kennebecasis**  
COMMUNITY FUNERAL HOME  
506-849-2119





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## A greener year in review



Some of our volunteers after the Crescent Valley tree-planting event  
(Photo: ACAP Saint John)

**By Peace Omodele, Engagement and Communications Specialist  
ACAP Saint John**

As we approach the end of the year, we at Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP) Saint John are filled with gratitude for the incredible strides we've made together in nurturing a more sustainable Saint John. From in-school and community environmental and educational programs, water quality monitoring programs, and community cleanup initiatives, to restoring and revitalizing our local habitats, we've been on a remarkable journey.

Together, we've rallied 492 dedicated volunteers across 29 cleanup events, and cultivated the growth of over 6,000 trees with 174 planting enthusiasts in 13 tree-planting events! And a commendable 1,383 of you participated in 20 educational and outreach events. Our mission has resonated far and wide, reaching an audience of over 160,000 via social media. Those are not just numbers — that's you, your neighbours, and your friends making real change. These accomplishments could not have come about without the generous support of our donors, the collaboration of our partners, and the tireless efforts of our volunteers and staff.

As the festive season approaches, we urge you to embrace eco-conscious practices such as using eco-friendly decorations, supporting local businesses, choosing recycled gifts, and reducing plastic use. We wish you a joyous holiday and hope you carry this spirit of stewardship into the new year and beyond.

## Ending homelessness collaboratively



Conference attendees, from left: Spencer Hussey, Kat LeBlanc, Greg Bishop, Debbie Bentley-Lauzon, Chris Gorman, and Em Blanchet  
(Photo: HDC)

**By Heather Atcheson, Researcher, Human Development Council**

Staff from the Human Development Council (HDC) joined policymakers, funders, researchers, community leaders, and frontline workers from across Canada and beyond for the 10th National Conference on Ending Homelessness. It was hosted by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH). The conference was held in Halifax from November 8th to 10th, with over 1,500 in-person and virtual attendees.

Hundreds of national and international experts on homelessness delivered presentations designed to educate, inspire, and train participants to work toward the shared goal of ending homelessness in the country. Presentation topics included: reconciliation and Indigenous homelessness; chronic, veteran, and youth homelessness; homelessness for women and people in the 2SLGBTQ+ community; and more. The CAEH designed a conference agenda to motivate and support attendees in challenging homelessness systems and to advocate for program and policy change. HDC staff were privileged to attend this event. The insights taken away will inform and be applied in the organization's ongoing efforts to address homelessness in New Brunswick.

# Saint John Community Dashboard

TOTAL  
INDIVIDUALS  
EXPERIENCING  
HOMELESSNESS  
**237**

INDIVIDUALS  
EXPERIENCING  
CHRONIC  
HOMELESS  
**166**

WHILE  
HOMELESSNESS  
EXISTS IN OUR  
COMMUNITY, WE  
WILL  
STRIVE TO MAKE IT:

RARE

BRIEF

NON-  
RECURRING

Individuals  
Experiencing  
Chronic  
Homelessness  
Housed since  
January 1st  
**71**

CHRONIC  
INFLOW  
(PEOPLE ENTERING HOMELESSNESS)

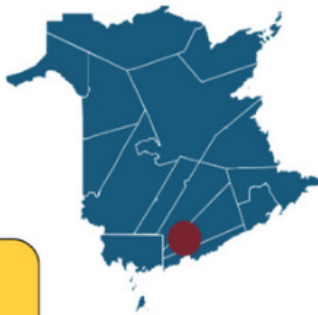
**+ 19**

CHRONIC  
OUTFLOW  
(PEOPLE EXITING HOMELESSNESS)

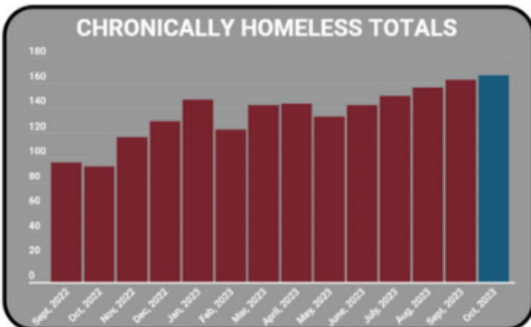
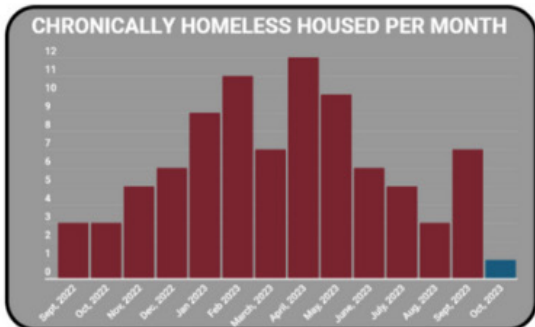
**- 15**

NET  
CHANGE  
THIS  
MONTH

**+ 4**



HUMAN  
DEVELOPMENT  
COUNCIL



OCTOBER, 2023

## Homelessness data

**By HDC**

How can we solve a problem if we don't understand it? Reliable, real-time data, like those highlighted in this dashboard, allow us to understand better the prevalence and characteristics of homelessness in New Brunswick — and to know when strategies to reduce it are working.

**By tracking these indicators, we can measure our progress to achieving Functional Zero: ensuring that when homelessness occurs it is rare, brief, and non-recurring.**





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## 20 years of the Black Book Challenge



**Column and above photo by Darlene Jones**  
**Financial Literacy Coordinator, Kaléidoscope Social Impact**

If anyone has taken the Money Matters course, you may have been given a black book. The Black Book Challenge is given to participants to write down every penny they spent today. If you want to get serious about your budget; two keys to success are using cash and keeping an accurate log of where your money went. I have given out the last of the black books that we had, to a class at New Brunswick Community College (NBCC). As we get ready to celebrate 20 years of providing financial literacy, there will be a revised edition. This habit of tracking where you spend your money is valuable, and accurate numbers create a better budget.

During my tenure in this role, I have heard and seen many great testimonies from using the black book. Some have used it to save a down payment for a car, or to keep track of their spending so they would not go over and be short on rent. Some said it showed them that they did have money to spend. My personal favourite was from a participant who put a smiley face on days when no money was spent. A reminder that life is not based on dollars but on experiences. Budgeting isn't about estimating what we can spend our money on. For example, if you budget \$100 for groceries but the actual total is \$125 your budget needs to reflect this reality.

Budgeting is making real plans based on real numbers. Knowing the truth about your money allows you to live and plan accordingly. So the next time you sit down to budget, take a look at what you actually spent money on last month. Use that as a template to identify places to spend money differently this month. We need to look after our money forever so yes, our budget can and will change month to month. Make your budget your real numbers. You'll be more successful this way and more likely to follow the plan.

Do you have a black book story? We would love to hear them. Please reach out to share your stories or to gain insight into budgeting help. Please email [darlene@kaleidoscopeimpact.com](mailto:darlene@kaleidoscopeimpact.com) or call 506-652-5626, extension 4. Always remember, no matter how much money you have, how you spend your money matters.



NBCC class with Darlene in front (Photo: V. Cosgrove)

## Learning Exchange graduation

*Continued from page 1*

There were 54 learners who earned either their GED or Adult High School diploma, with 18 graduates who were able to come and walk across the stage. Families, friends, and special guests were invited to share in this special day, with lots of hugs, laughter, and tears of joy and pride. The ceremony celebrated the learners' hard work, commitment, and perseverance. Each one overcame a number of obstacles to return to school and achieve their goal, no matter their age!

For many graduates this is not the end of their journey with us as they delve into Post-Secondary exploration and all the possibilities that come with it, while others move directly toward employment by participating in other programming at the Learning Exchange like WESLinks (Workplace Essential Skills) or WorkLinks. Each graduate is excited to explore all the possible job opportunities that are now available to them. If you are not familiar with SJLE or its programmes please visit our website: [www.sjle.org](http://www.sjle.org)

**Congratulations to our newest graduates!!**



The Class of 2023 (Photo: Chrissy Cusack)





## CIBC Run for the Cure 2023 results



All Participants of Hope forming a Breast Cancer ribbon  
(Photo: Saint John Fire Fighters)

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

The 22nd Saint John CIBC Run for the Cure was held at Fisher Lakes on October 1st, 2023. There were 227 participants; 34 of those were Participants of Hope (those who have been diagnosed with breast cancer). Saint John alone raised just over \$45,000! This national one-day fundraising event had thousands of people in their local communities stand together to show that strength in numbers can make a difference. The national one-day total raised was \$14.5 million! Special thank you goes out to the Saint John Run Committee: Allyson, Lamby, Stacey, Tina, Samantha, Karrie, Sarah, and Katelyn! Thanks also to our fabulous run day volunteers, and of course our generous sponsors! We could not have done it without you. The next run will be held on October 6th, 2024. Come join us! For updates, follow our socials at:  
Saint John-Canadian Cancer Society CIBC Run for the Cure.



## Vente de poutines râpées: une levée de fonds savoureuse

**Par Jonathan Poirier, Directeur des Communications  
ARCF (Association Régionale de la Communauté francophone) de  
Saint-Jean**

Les poutines râpées demeurent un mets populaire dans la communauté. Pour sa dernière levée de fonds, le Club Arc-en-Ciel en a préparé 265 et les a tout vendues durant la fin de semaine du 14 octobre.

Pour préparer et servir autant de poutines, il aura fallu 500 livres de patates, trois jours de travail et une dizaine de bénévoles chaque jour selon Clarence Allain, président du club dont les locaux sont dans le Centre communautaire Samuel-de-Champlain.

Grâce à cette vente, les aînés ont pu collecter des fonds pour leur organisation tout en faisant découvrir ce plat traditionnel acadien aux membres de la communauté ne le connaissant pas. Contrairement au plat de frites, fromage en grains et sauce, la poutine râpée est un plat traditionnel acadien qui consiste en une boulette de pommes de terre bouillie avec une garniture de porc.

La prochaine vente aura lieu le 16 décembre.



Des membres du Club Arc-en-Ciel qui travaillent fort dans la cuisine  
(Crédit photo : Gracieuseté)  
Members of the Club Arc-en-Ciel hard at work in the kitchen  
(Photo : supplied)

## Sale of “poutines râpées”: a tasty fundraiser

**By Jonathan Poirier, Directeur des Communications  
ARCF (Association Régionale de la Communauté francophone) de  
Saint-Jean**

Poutines râpées remain a popular dish in the community. For its last fundraiser, the Club Arc-en-Ciel prepared 265 and sold them all during the weekend of October 14th.

To prepare and serve so many poutines, it took 500 pounds of potatoes, three days of work and a dozen volunteers every day, according to Clarence Allain, president of the club whose premises are in the Samuel-de-Champlain Community Centre.

Through this sale, the seniors were able to raise funds for their organization while introducing this traditional Acadian dish to members of the community who did not know it. Unlike the dish of fries, cheese curds, and gravy, poutine râpée is a traditional Acadian dish that consists of a boiled potato dumpling with a pork filling.

The next sale will take place on December 16th.



Purse Project helps women in need



Group of firemen lending a hand with volunteers (Photo: Karen Stears)  
**By Pam Thomas, President, Canadian Progress Club Ignite**  
**Proud Founding Member since 2012**

On November 4th Canadian Progress Club Ignite held the 8th Annual Purse Project, which continued as a drive-through drop-off. With the help of many volunteers, 1,050 purses were collected from many people and groups throughout the surrounding communities. The purses were filled with various women’s personal care items including items to help with upcoming cold weather. We were happy to also receive a few filled backpacks. The purses were donated to community partners who are direct resources for women in need. Community partners include Fresh Start Services for Women, Sophia Recovery Center, First Steps Housing, Coverdale Centre for Women, Elizabeth Fry Society, Avenue B Harm Reduction, and Hestia House among others.

Ignite ([www.facebook.com/CanadianProgressClubIgnite](http://www.facebook.com/CanadianProgressClubIgnite)) is a volunteer not-for-profit service club chartered in April 2012. Our mandate is to strive to assist women and children in need to enhance their quality of life through volunteering and fundraising. Ignite is part of the Canadian Progress Club ([www.progressclub.ca](http://www.progressclub.ca)) founded in Toronto in 1922.

School tours are back at the Port!



School tour of Nutrien potash terminal  
**Story and photo by Port Saint John**  
Port Saint John is excited to announce that the Port Saint John school tours are back for K-12! Imagine a 90-minute tour where students step out of the classroom for some practical learning. Students will visit the Cruise, Potash, and DP World terminals to learn how our port works and connects with the world.

Visit our website to find out more or book a tour for your class:  
<https://www.sjport.com/education>

Alzheimer Society: first link to support

**By Jess Baxter, The Alzheimer Society of New Brunswick**

With Alzheimer’s Awareness Month coming up in January, The Alzheimer Society of New Brunswick is highlighting their free services and programs available for people living with Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of dementia, as well as their circle of care. A diagnosis of dementia is not easy, but connecting to a community of support can make a big difference by eliminating uncertainty and unknowns.

The Alzheimer Society can be the first link to support to help you live well with dementia. Located in the Loch Lomond Villa Seniors Wellness Centre, the Alzheimer Society’s Saint John Resource Centre offers information and education, counselling and support services, and free programs to anyone on the dementia journey.

Contact us at 1-800-644-8411 or [info@alzheimer.ca](mailto:info@alzheimer.ca) to learn about resources in your community, or join our free information session at the C.E. Nick Nicolle Community Centre January 18th, 2024 at 12:30 p.m.

*Société*  
**Alzheimer**  
*Society*

NEW BRUNSWICK /  
NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK



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& HAPPY HOLIDAYS**  
FROM TEAM LONG



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Saint John - Rothesay  
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[Wayne.Long@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Wayne.Long@parl.gc.ca)



## SJNC builds bridges between newcomers and the community



Saint John Newcomers Centre team with Minister Arlene Dunn (right)  
(Photo: SJNC)

**By Sochi Azuh, Communication Specialist  
Saint John Newcomers Centre (SJNC)**

In a recent visit to the Saint John Newcomers Centre, Minister Arlene Dunn emphasized the importance of identifying and filling gaps and connecting newcomers to employers with meaningful employment opportunities that match their skill sets.

The Saint John Newcomers Centre, through its pre-employment services, continues to be a driving force that helps newcomers get ready for work so they can be successful. Capacity-building is a crucial determinant of success for newcomers in the labour market. Newcomers may have trouble learning new things and understanding how things work, making it hard for them to succeed.

Mohamed Bagha, Managing Director of the SJNC, thanked Minister Arlene Dunn for the support shown to the Centre for her continued commitment to helping newcomers make the province their permanent home. The SJNC is grateful for the support from Immigration New Brunswick that allows us to design and implement programs connecting newcomer talent and skills to opportunities.

## SJNC hosts successful Culture Fest In The Valley



Saint John Newcomers Centre team with volunteers and performers  
(Photo: Sochi Azuh/Shobita)

**By Sochi Azuh, Communication Specialist  
Saint John Newcomers Centre (SJNC)**

SJNC hosted a successful Culture Fest in the Valley at Rothesay Common on October 1, 2023. The event was a celebration of diversity and inclusion, bringing together people from different cultures and backgrounds to share their traditions, food, and music. With the high energy and professionalism of comperes Nissrine Niazi and Akin Adesoji, the success of the event was made possible through the partnership of the hosting Mayors of both Towns in the Valley, Rothesay and Quispamsis, and the support of sponsors, Saint John Taxi, SN Interior Saint John, Rothesay Hive, ethnocultural groups, and performers. The Culture Fest in the Valley featured a variety of activities, including cultural performances, food vendors, and Living Library interactive exhibits. Attendees had the opportunity to learn about different cultures and traditions, and to connect with people from diverse backgrounds.

## Christmas music with the Sea Belles



**Story and photo by Julie Strang, Vice President, Sea Belles**

The Sea Belles have been busy preparing our Christmas music and holding our first online auction! We practice Tuesdays 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Portland United Church and sing a cappella four-part music. We will be back to regular rehearsals after the holidays on January 9th.

We will be singing for nursing homes and will be singing tonight, December 1st, at Uptown Sparkles for a sing-along at 6:30 p.m. We will also be at Rockwood Park on December 8th at 6 p.m. All are welcome! We will be collecting winter apparel for Romero House at our Christmas party this year, December 15th.

We would like to thank our donors for our auction including: Little Julie's Hair Studio, Elliot & Stanley Mutual Insurance Companies, Shoppers Drug Mart Lansdowne, General Emporium Sussex, Graybar Canada, Ambassadors Grayline, H&R Block, anonymous donors and our members for their help making this event a big success.

Happy holidays to each and every one! Above: a Saturday coaching session with Ellen Belyea (front row, third from left)

When you need social supports to face difficulties, but don't know where to start, call 2-1-1.

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## PRUDE Inc.’s Enduring Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)



Jackson Enoch (Photo: The Saint John Region Chamber of Commerce)

**By Sandeep Dsouza (he/him), Marketing Specialist  
PRUDE (Pride of Race, Unity, and Dignity through Education)**

Over four decades, PRUDE Inc. has been pivotal in bridging cultural gaps, addressing systemic discrimination, and confronting various barriers to inclusion. Our consulting and training sessions provide real-life business solutions to assist stakeholders in translating their DEI vision into actionable items. Through these platforms, we provide strategies that help stakeholders to celebrate diversity, promote equity, and nurture inclusive practices in ways that positively impact overall organizational performance.

PRUDE Inc. is poised to assist corporate and public sector stakeholders, corporate executives, young professionals, HR specialists, hiring managers, educational institutions, and newcomers in nurturing diverse, inclusive, and equitable communities that foster talent attraction and retention, nurture safe spaces, increase collaboration, and aid overall sustainable growth. Are you an organization, ethnocultural leader, key decision-maker, educational institution, or hiring manager with an interest in broadening your understanding of DEI?

**Do you require support on how to navigate your DEI journey? If so, please, feel free to direct your inquiries by email to our DEI Program Manager, Jackson Enoch, at [jackson@prudeinc.org](mailto:jackson@prudeinc.org). We look forward to hearing from you.**

## Embracing diversity: Valuing Our Differences program



## 211 – offering help and validation



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

A caller contacted 211 for help. She had been involved in a domestic violence situation and her spouse was arrested. The caller wanted to have the charges dropped. According to the caller, it was the first incident of violence, and she had been struggling financially and emotionally since her spouse’s arrest. The caller reported that she had already been to a food bank for assistance as well.

The 211 Service Navigator let the caller talk about her feelings, and validated the difficulty of what she was going through. By gently probing, the Navigator discovered that the client had already been in contact with victim services and counselling services. The Navigator suggested also reaching out to warm lines, but the caller declined these referrals. (A warm line is a confidential, free phone service offering mental health support.)

As the caller and the Service Navigator discussed the situation and various options, the caller wanted to know more about her legal rights before looking into other programs. The Service Navigator gave her a referral to Legal Aid, which could let her know her legal options, including child support, to ease her financial situation. The client took down this information and the Service Navigator encouraged her to call 211 again anytime if she wanted to explore other types of referrals.

If you or someone you know is struggling and could use some help or social supports, remember that help starts here at 211. The service is confidential, free, and available 24/7 in over 150 languages.

**By Gary Flanagan, Diversity Education Program Coordinator  
PRUDE Inc.**

Valuing Our Differences is a program delivered by PRUDE Inc. to schools in the Anglophone South School District. This presentation has been delivered for many years to thousands of students in all grade levels. It teaches students the value of diversity and inclusion and how to avoid assumptions.

There are various versions of the presentation that are suited for each grade level, from kindergarten all the way up to grade twelve. A typical presentation includes a colourful PowerPoint, games, activities and lots of discussion. It truly emphasizes how we can all benefit from our differences!

**If you are a teacher interested in booking this presentation for your class, please do not hesitate to contact me at [gary@prudeinc.org](mailto:gary@prudeinc.org).**

*Left: Gary teaching students the benefits of valuing our differences  
(Photo: PRUDE Inc.)*



## Warm up seven days a week at the Saint John Free Public Library



By S.D. Thompson

Even though temperatures are dropping, and snow is falling, things are warming up this winter at the Saint John Free Public Library!

The Main Branch at Market Square is now open seven days a week. This means no matter what day of the week, you can drop in between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. (10 a.m.-8 p.m., Wednesdays and Thursdays) and hang out by the fake log fire.

The Library will be closed for public holidays, including December 24th-26th for Christmas and January 1st for New Year’s Day.

The reading room is home to a light therapy lamp, which can help with seasonal affective disorder as daylight hours are short.

Drop-in Pilates sessions can get you moving Wednesdays at 12 noon.

You can also borrow items like a slow cooker or instant pot to make hot food, or books and DVDs to snuggle up with in the evening.

For more information, or to learn about our upcoming programs, please visit the Library or follow our Facebook and Instagram pages.

**The Main Branch at Market Square is now open seven days a week!**

**You can drop in between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. (10 a.m.-8 p.m., Wednesdays and Thursdays) and hang out by the fake log fire!**



## Around The Block Team (Issue 92)

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## How Civic Tech volunteers Fix(ed)-IT into educational tools



Above and below: volunteers and organizers at a recent Fix-IT Night

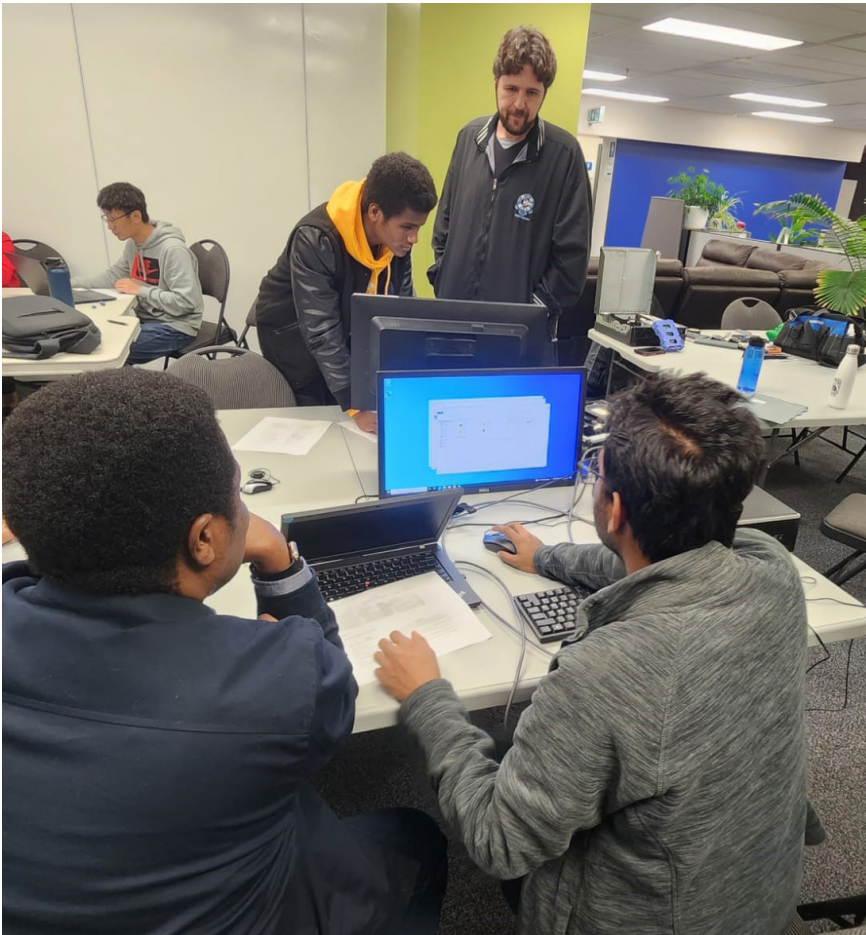
Story and photos by Civic Tech Saint John Co-organizers

This fall, Civic Tech Saint John (CTSJ) introduced a new volunteer-driven theme night, the Fix-IT Night! CSTJ organized five Fix-IT nights this fall, and at the event on November 7th, the volunteers repaired five out of the eight laptops brought by the Saint John Learning Exchange, which will be used in their educational programs. They have also refurbished four of the seven desktops donated for the #DigitalEquity Project.

“We have had an amazing response so far, and it feels good to see over 30 volunteers ready to solve huge challenges,” says Michael Kerr, one of the co-organizers of CTSJ. “We were glad that a Saint Johner heard about us, showed up at the Fix-IT Night with her laptop, and our volunteers repaired it.”

At the Fix-IT night, anyone can bring their broken electronic devices, such as computers, phones, or tablets, and get a diagnosis from the Fix-IT volunteers and potentially get a repair as well. The involved volunteers are a combination of skilled IT professionals, youth, and those curious about technology.

CSTJ’s Fix-IT nights are a part of our #DigitalEquity project that aims to improve access to devices, Internet access and digital literacy in our society. To get involved or for more information, contact [civictechsaintjohn@gmail.com](mailto:civictechsaintjohn@gmail.com).





### Councillors’ Corner

*For this issue, councillors share a favourite Saint John holiday memory. As a little child, I always loved how the Uptown was transformed: the bell decorations outlined in lights in King’s Square, the bustle of shoppers at Pascal Emerson, MRA, and the five and ten on King Street, the beautiful Christmas music in churches. And people smiling more. That was the real transformation. - The Editor*

**John MacKenzie, Deputy Mayor, 506-977-3849**

My favourite memories of Christmas are actually from when my own children were young and seeing the joys of Christmas through their young eyes. We had my father living with us also and every Christmas Eve, after the kids went to bed, my Dad would help me to put the “Santa toys” together... . Sounded easy enough until you discovered all the tiny parts included. Things were always assembled eventually, usually in the wee hours of the morning and with much laughter. These were times I will always cherish. Merry Christmas everyone!!



**Barry Ogden, Councillor, Ward 2, 506-639-1334**

My best Christmas memories are with my family as a little boy having breakfast, opening gifts and Christmas dinner - a family time. Also when I had my sons, who now live away, it would be the same experiences.



**Paula Radwan, Councillor, Ward 4, 506-977-3846**

Growing up in a Christian family, we always looked forward to going to the Santa Claus parade. It was a time that we would get really excited for the big day. Most children were excited to see Santa, Donald Duck, or any other characters in the parade. I was excited to see Mayor Elsie Wayne for the first time on the city float. I remember listening to her every morning on Top of the Town radio show and I finally got to see her in person. We shared something in common: we both really love Saint John. Happy holidays to everyone!



**David Hickey, Councillor, Ward 3, 506-721-5690**

My favourite holiday memory, both as a City Councillor and as a kid growing up here, is the Mayor’s Tree Lighting. The carols, candy canes, Santa, and of course the Mayor, kick off the holiday season with lots of excitement and tradition. This year, as it has been for the last few years, the tree lighting will be part of Uptown Sparkles. This incredible Uptown Saint John event brings thousands of people to our community to celebrate the season. The lights of the City Market, ice carvers in King Square, trolley rides, and the Mayor’s Tree lighting make it my favourite night of the season.



Hope to see you there again this year!

Important Dates:

Christmas Bag/Stocking pass out

December 23rd & 24th 9:30-1:00

NO REGISTRATION NECESSARY

- ALL WELCOME

Candy Cane visit from Santa

December 23rd 9:30-1:00

TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS DINNER

DECEMBER 25TH 9:30-1:00

(TAKE-OUT ONLY)

### Romero House update

*By Romero House*

The decision to offer a hybrid service of dining in/takeout has so far proven to be a good one. We are currently serving on average 400 meals a day with about one-third inside and two-thirds as a take-out. The higher take-out volume has resulted in less congestion in the dining room and essentially less conflict and a more pleasant experience for everyone.

The take-out meals are mostly being utilized by those not comfortable coming into a soup kitchen, for a variety of reasons. Those with mental health issues/addictions are unable to cope with a crowd (hats off to their self-awareness) and others require an additional meal for later in the day. As the cold weather creeps in, I am sure the inside service will reflect a higher number.

**The Mobile is now on the road again in the evenings until the end of March and in-house we are preparing for Christmas ... time sure flies!**