



Around the Block



Issue 93 February 2024 sjcommunitynewspaper@gmail.com

The final issue - published by the Human Development Council

Investment in affordable housing



Councillor Barry Ogden, Minister Jill Green, Mayor Donna Reardon, MP Wayne Long, KSI General Manager Seth Asimakos, Councillors Gerry Lowe and David Hickey (Photo: Ray Hachey)

By Darlene Jones, Kaléidoscope Social Impact (KSI)

The provincial, federal and municipal governments are making a combined investment of more than \$7 million to build 39 affordable homes in Saint John.

Barrack Green Residences, a four-storey apartment building with a mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom units, will be constructed at 67 Broadview Street.

“One of the key pillars of our provincial housing strategy is a commitment to a safe home for vulnerable New Brunswickers,” said Social Development Minister Jill Green, who is also minister responsible for the New Brunswick Housing Corporation. “Projects like Barrack Green Residences are not only about housing our citizens. They are about support for our most vulnerable. They are about dignity and empowerment. They are about community.”

“Everyone should have a place to call home, and we know that it is becoming more challenging for many Canadians,” said Saint John-Rothesay MP Wayne Long. “Our government is investing in projects like the Barrack Green Residences to ensure the most vulnerable individuals in Saint John and across Canada have affordable and accessible housing.

The project is expected to be completed by November.

From the Editor's desk:

One last time

Lorna Brown, sjcommunitynewspaper@gmail.com

The past few weeks have been very humbling. From the moment I requested stories for the last-ever issue of *Around the Block*, there has been an unsolicited outpouring of kind words from our friends in non-profits, from our volunteers, from current and even former sponsors. It was not until now that I realized just how much *Around the Block* has been valued in our community. The best thing that one can do with that wave of respect and affection is to leave it in your own words, which are shared on the final pages of this issue. I want to use this privileged space one last time for my own thanks. My debts are many, and impossible to repay - or even to tell them all.

Thank you, intrepid proofreaders. The latest team of Cindy Bishop, Jane Hanlon, Mark Driscoll, and Daryl Barton have done all they can to ensure that *ATB* is error-free. All remaining mistakes are my own. I want to acknowledge past members of the team during my stint as Editor: Belinda Kumar, Joanne Britton, and especially Rona Howald,

Goodbye to a fast friend



Grade 8 students Destiny Smith and Lauren Thorpe-Dow help us say “Thank you!” - from us to you for many wonderful years!

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

It is with mixed feelings that I pen this final article for *Around the Block*. In the moment I will confess to more than a little sadness at this turn of events; *ATB* has been a stalwart companion for SJBKE, giving voice to our words and works for many years and, indeed, for all those I've been Community Schools Coordinator here. It has been our - and my - privilege to work with you this past decade and contribute to this most collegial of publications, with an always altruistic mission that tied everyone in our community together with considered and empathetic binds, the strings safely in the consummate hands of first Juanita and now Lorna.

If we are sad at this moment of passing, so too is there cause for levity and joy, as we realize the privilege we've had in having this special entity part and parcel of our work for so long - if it passes on, it is not into nothing, but rather into the minds and hearts of all those this paper has touched for the past many years. The Mamas and the Papas sang: “Nothing is quite as sure as change”, and we are all bound to that reality as the coming years evolve. How fortunate, then, to be able to crest those waves of what's to come anchored with the knowledge of where we've been, keeping *ATB* and the exemplars of collegiality and community it promoted throughout its existence always close to our hearts as we work together to make this community a better place. Farewell, friends! <3

whose keen eye improved my work more than she knew.

Raunak Bagga volunteered his time to take glitches (that had apparently been immovable) out of the design template. The splendid Mary LeSage sold our ads for years with patience and perseverance, but what I treasure most is that I learned so much from her about the community! She has an unfussy way of simply getting things done for others that I admire. And we all owe this community's non-profit heroes our deep gratitude; *ATB* took a subtle turn from Issue 71 onward and became even more the story of the Saint Johners with whom they work. To the publisher, HDC, and the sponsors and advertisers: thanks for sticking with us for so long. And bravo to the delivery team who took 5000 copies of every issue to residents in the priority neighbourhoods.

Most of all, I want to salute *Around the Block's* heart and soul, my friend and mentor, Juanita Black, an indomitable community activist and force for good. She taught me everything I needed to know about how to work on this paper. Thanks, boss.

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

Engage4Change



A youth and New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) volunteers testing robots to get ready for a soccer game (Photo: ONE Change)

By John McLeod

We are excited to launch another ten-week program here at The ONE Change in partnership with NBCC called Engage4Change. This program takes 12 youth ages 12+ and introduces them to a world of coding and technology possibilities. In the past programs, we have started out with Lego Soccer Bots that they build from scratch and code to move in directions and battle each other in an intense game of soccer. We moved all the way up to advanced drone coding which took past equipment such as the Lego soccer field and we ended up coming up with a cool game called Drone Soccer using nothing but code to see how many balls you could get to the other player's net. This year will cover Robotics with some cool new tech and coding abilities for youth in the program. There is something for everyone to enjoy and maybe make a few new friends along the way. If you know a youth who loves technology and seeing their work come to life right before their eyes, contact The ONE Change to reserve your seats, as space is limited.

Winter Camp



By Christa Petts, ONE Change

2023 has been a great year. Now we are gearing up for 2024. Winter Camp 2024 happened in January. We did a weeklong camp in the afternoon. Games and activities made a fun-filled day before our youth returned to school. We have been gearing up for our new programs. Thursday Drop-In and new programs start in February. Please make sure you have completed a new registration for all programs from January until June. Keep an eye on our Facebook for updated programs and information. If you have any questions, please feel free to call 506-658-2980. Above: working on an activity for winter camp (Photo John Driscoll)

Portland United on the Hill says “Thank you” to Around the Block

By Lois Irvine

The folks at Portland United Church would like to extend our appreciation to the *Around the Block* publication for their many years of community journalism. This publication has provided a venue for many groups and individuals to spread timely and important information and stories to Saint John. Those of us in both front-line and behind-the-scenes positions who care about our community members have benefited from *Around the Block's* support. The publication will be missed.

The tables are set! Portland United will be hosting our annual Pancake Supper again this year, on Tuesday, February 13th from 4 to 6 p.m. in our church hall on Newport Crescent off Millidge Avenue. The menu will be pancakes, sausages, and home-made baked beans followed by home-made gingerbread cake topped with whipped cream. And of course, all the tea and coffee you can drink. There is no set admission cost – just whatever amount you are able to spare, and all are welcome. (Photo below: Sue Nickerson)



And the song goes on



By Helen LeFort

Sea Belles is an a cappella group based in Saint John holding rehearsals Tuesday evenings at Portland United Church. From March 2020 until May 2021, we met only virtually. Our first rehearsal back in person was in the church parking lot in the North End. There was a lot of happiness in the group even though they stood apart, wore masks etc., but they could see one another and most importantly perhaps, hear one another.

Fast forward to today. In 2024 the group will be under Ellen Belyea's leadership and invites other a cappella singers to come and join in the fun. Musical leader Joanne Conrad will continue as our assistant director, capable of guidance for any of the four parts making up the chorus. She has been a bass and baritone singer with Sea Belles for 36 years this coming March, providing continuous support in music leadership. Our board of directors handles the business of Sea Belles, overseen by our current President, Jane Trites-Cyr. Jane is excited about starting off 2024 with our new director and visions of a comeback for the Sea Belles! Heading into our 55th year, the Sea Belles are working towards growing our membership and achieving excellence in performing in the barbershop style. We had a lot of performances over the holidays and look forward to more in the future, as we love to brighten people's day by singing for them! So if you are looking to join a fun a cappella group, come see us Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. at Portland United Church! Above: January 9th rehearsal (Photo: Julie Strang)



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

***PULSE stories on pages 4-5 by Lisa Morris
Resident Engagement Coordinator
People United in the Lower South End (PULSE)***

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 & Caregiver 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 (CVITP) 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.

February - Money due February 9th | Pick up February 16th
March - Money due March 15th | Pick up March 22nd
April - Money due April 12th | Pick up April 19th

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 and put in the notes section “PULSE Pay It Forward.”



Connecting through positive stories - thank you!

As we acknowledge the final edition of *Around The Block (ATB)* as we know it, P.U.L.S.E. Inc. would like to say thank you to all of the contributors to *ATB* over the years. This community newspaper has been a way for residents to connect to each other with positive stories – a rare thing in the media!

P.U.L.S.E. Inc. had a busy December and is looking forward to 2024. Mary and Lisa are in the building Monday to Friday and, as always, are committed to helping the residents of the Lower South End by creating a safe space for everyone! Mary is available to refer to services and programs as well as navigate the processes of obtaining support. Lisa is managing the day-to-day operations and often preparing meals or hosting cooking and food workshops.

Our Community Nurse is available at PULSE Wednesday afternoons, and we will be holding tax clinics in the spring. Follow P.U.L.S.E. Inc. on Facebook for monthly calendars and updates!

Creative expressions

**Story and photo by
Destiny LeBlanc
New Brunswick Social Pediatrics**

Social Pediatrics recently concluded a vibrant seven-week Creative Expressions program at St. John the Baptist/ King Edward School (SJBKE) in December, leaving a mark on nine participating students. This dynamic art journey, strategically located at the heart of the school, offered a spectrum of creative activities ranging from holiday-themed projects to engaging Lego building challenges, goal-setting workshops, and hands-on experiences in painting and clay manipulation. The program also integrated mindfulness practices, fostering self-awareness and emotional regulation among the group.

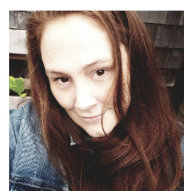


Adding a special touch to the program, local artist Lana Langille Doucette and her daughter Logan Doucette of Lana Langille Doucette Art Studio & Gallery guided the children through a collaborative painting; each child contributed a chosen emotion and colour into the piece. The collaborative artwork is undergoing its final touches by Lana and promises to be a testament to the program's success.

The wholehearted support from SJBKE educators was pivotal in achieving the program's learning objectives, introducing alternative coping strategies, and promoting self-expression through art. The program's success is not only evident in the artistic skills of the participants but also in the blossoming of new friendships and a deeper sense of self-awareness and community.

With excitement building for the completion of the final piece, plans are already underway for another round of the Creative Expressions program in February, reinforcing the ongoing commitment to providing children with a transformative and supportive space for personal growth.

South End Neighbourhood Contacts



Lisa Morris
Resident Engagement Coordinator
info@pulsesj.ca



Mary LeSage
Neighbourhood Developer
pulsedeveloper.lesage@gmail.com

Improving food literacy at PULSE

P.U.L.S.E. Inc. is thankful to have received funding from the Greater Saint John Community Foundation and Friars Sisters Funding for the From Seed to Table: Improving Food Literacy & Accessibility Project which aims to demonstrate how the development and progression of cooking skills and food literacy, in addition to consistent and affordable food sources, can positively impact individuals and the community overall. This project enhances our ability to deliver measurable and meaningful resident-led initiatives that positively impact quality of life and in turn help redefine the principle of working in partnership and collaborating on a collective need that will directly improve health outcomes and helps build capacity among our residents as they learn new skills while deepening a sense of community through food. Learning and eating together creates space for connections to support positive health behaviours.

The Improving Food Literacy & Accessibility Project includes the following food literacy and accessibility programs:

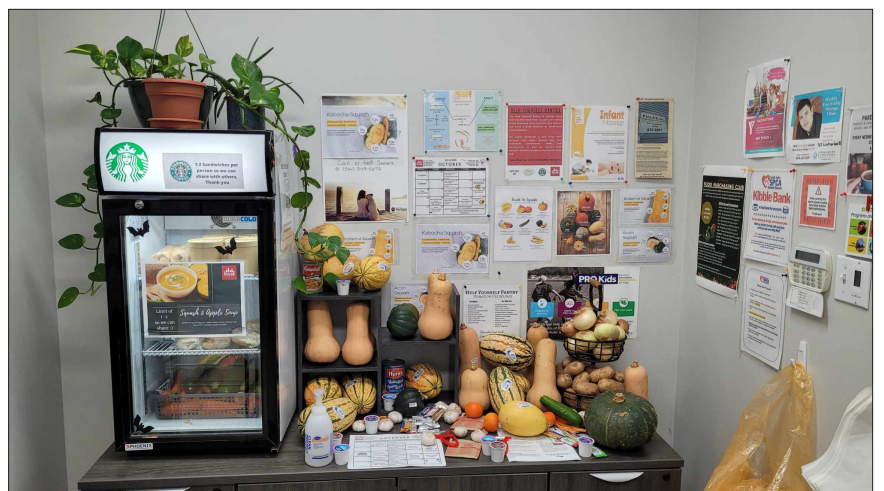
Food N' Dudes: The Food N' Dudes program will provide eight men with access to a barrier-free and consistent food supply each month and monthly information sessions where we will talk about food, try new recipes and learn new kitchen skills.

Slow Cooking Social: a once-a-month program, participants meet at 9:30 a.m. and get everything prepared and started in the slow cooker, featuring nutritionally dense foods. Participants then meet back at 4 p.m. and bring a guest to join us for supper and take home all the ingredients to try making it at home. *Right, top: program coordinator Lisa Morris in front with Roy, Marilyn, and Kathryn from October's Slow Cooking Social (Photo: Lisa Morris)*

Pantry Highlights: once a month our Help Yourself Pantry is filled with our feature produce items, information, and recipes, giving residents a chance to try something new food and share their own recipes. *Right, middle: Help Yourself Pantry squash highlight day in October (Photo: Lisa Morris)*

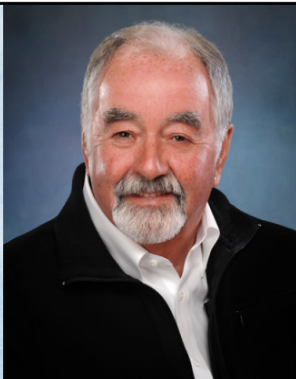
Grab & Go Supper: once per month during our produce highlight week we prepare forty hot meals for the community. Meals are prepared using our feature food item for residents to have an opportunity to try something new. *Right, bottom: hot apple squash soup served at PULSE for a Grab & Go meal (Photo: Lisa Morris)*

Mobile Kitchen Kits: PULSE has created “Mobile Kitchen Kits”. These kits have everything needed for us to visit “community spaces and cook together with residents. *Below: Mary LeSage cooking at Tannery Court using our mobile kitchen kits (Photo: Samara Carvell)*

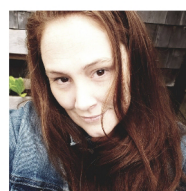


Gerry Lowe
Ward 3 City Councillor

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



South End Neighbourhood Contacts



Lisa Morris
Resident Engagement Coordinator
info@pulsesj.ca



Mary LeSage
Neighbourhood Developer
pulsedeveloper.lesage@gmail.com

Crescent Valley has lost a champion



Barb Dickison

Story and photo by Crescent Valley Resource Centre (CVRC)

Crescent Valley residents, volunteers, and community partners were saddened to hear of the passing of long-time resident and neighbourhood volunteer Barbara Dickison on December 22nd, 2023.

Barb moved to Crescent Valley (MacLaren Boulevard) in 1985 and became active in helping the neighbourhood whenever she was asked. Barb was a long-time member of the Crescent Valley Tenants' Association and contributed to its growth and the many events the CVCTA held for the neighbourhood.

Barb was a regularly active and committed member of the Neighbourhood Development Committee that was run by Vibrant Communities starting in 2005. She attended many meetings and did a great deal of work to help with community meetings. Because of her involvement, she was appointed to the board of the Crescent Valley Resource Centre when it opened in 2008 and became the first secretary of the organization, a position she held until 2011. She stayed on the board as a director from 2012 to 2014. Barb supported all CVRC's events, both social and the Speak Out events.

In her leisure time, Barb liked playing darts and was part of a Sunday afternoon league at the former Buffalo Club. She also liked singing karaoke with her sisters.

Crescent Valley was especially important to Barb - she will be missed. Our sincere condolences to Barb's family.

Bingo at CVRC

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

Many have asked when bingo would resume at Crescent Valley Resource Centre. CVRC is pleased to announce that bingo started Wednesday, January 17th, 2024.

Moving forward, Crescent Valley Resource Centre is hosting bingo from 1 to 3 p.m. every second Wednesday for the next couple of months. Look for dates on the calendar in your monthly Crescent Valley Newsletter.

We always look forward to meeting new neighbours of Crescent Valley, so bring a friend and enjoy an afternoon of fun and laughter. All residents of Crescent Valley are welcome. Please call CVRC to register for bingo the Monday before, at 506-693-8513.

News from Hazen White-St. Francis (HWSF)

Story and photo by Victoria Lawrence
Community School Coordinator, HWSF

Thank you so much to the folks at Operation Feed SJ for your generous support over the years. With their donation we were able to provide food bags to 50 of our families!!



Operation Feed Saint John with some of our HWSF students and the 50 bags of donated food

Thank you to our wonderful and generous partners Stewart McKelvey, PALS, Horizon Health, Innovatia, and Youth Enhancement Program for all of their help over Christmas supporting families with Christmas hampers and providing our students with opportunities that create memories for them that will last a lifetime!

Thank you
to our wonderful and generous partners!

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

Coverdale’s journey



Left to right: Jennifer Megeney - Shelter Director, Natasha Gates and Madeleine Adams - Rose House Coordinators, Hannah Morgan - Community-Based Residential Facilities (CBRF) Acting Director, Mary Saulnier-Taylor - Executive Director, Chanelle Morgan - Program Facilitator (Photo: Taylor Pronyk)

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

Throughout the past few years a lot has changed at Coverdale, and through *Around the Block* we were able to share much of it with our community. We have also enjoyed reading about what is going on in other neighbourhoods and agencies.

When COVID-19 reached our area, and we began to think about how our operations, specifically within our shelter, would have to change, there were many community members and organizations who came to our aid. We’re thankful for those who came to help us move everything we needed to provide shelter to women – three times! And to Bayside Middle School and Social Development for the use of their facilities while our homeless shelter was homeless itself. There were church groups, community groups, individuals and agencies who brought food and supplies to help keep us going as well. Although we were cut off from one another in many ways, Saint Johners found lots of new ways to show us the typical friendliness that we are known for.

We were finally able to move into our own shelter building in November of 2022. We are proud of the space we now have to offer to women, a place where they are safe, warm, and can enjoy calming activities.

Our participation with Second Harvest has proven to be helpful to far more people than we could have imagined. Second Harvest is a Canada-wide organization that connects agencies with businesses who have usable food that would otherwise go to waste. We registered to help women accessing our services with food insecurity, but have been able to help many more, opening up registration to community members from various neighbourhoods. We have also been able to offer some of the extra to other agencies to provide to their program participants.

In February of 2023, we welcomed our first cohort into our brand-new transitional housing program, Rose House. It has been almost a year since then, and it’s been full of excitement, learning, program development, and celebration. There have been women who have moved themselves on to independent housing, and we have been able to continue to support them when needed to make the transition much smoother. Our partnerships with other housing support agencies and with the University of New Brunswick and Horizon have helped tremendously.

The years have not been without loss and some grief as well. We have lost program participants from all of our programs to the opioid crisis and other health concerns. Many of our clients lost loved ones and were not able to attend ceremonies because of COVID precautions. Because of this inability to participate in social rituals that often help people to grieve and not feel alone in their grief, we planted a memorial lilac bush in our shelter yard and hosted a small ceremony where we remembered many of these special people. The bush remains as a place where we can all go to spend a few special moments.

Overall, our commitment to our mission has proven to be the foundation for growth and success, and we couldn’t have done it without community, of which all of you are a part. Thank you for your continued support and interest in what is going on at Coverdale!

Thank you to Lorna for the hard work you have put into *Around the Block*.



Waterloo Village Seniors Supporting Seniors Event

Wednesday, February 21st
from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.



Stone Church
87 Carleton St



- ✓ **Guest Speaker: Mandy Burke Evans**
- ✓ **instructing Chair Yoga**
- ✓ **Snack and Door Prizes**
- ✓ **Music with Delbert**



Sponsored By:
New Horizons for Seniors Programs, Stone Church, Waterloo Village
Neighbourhood Association & Social Development



Expanding service to be
there for everyone in Canada.

Dial 2-1-1 or visit 211.ca



HELP STARTS HERE



**Waterloo Village
Neighbourhood Contact**

Jennifer Hallihan
Community Navigator
Waterloo Village Neighbourhood
Association/ The Stone Church
87 Carleton Street 506-639-6317
wvcommunitynavigator@gmail.com



“Those People”

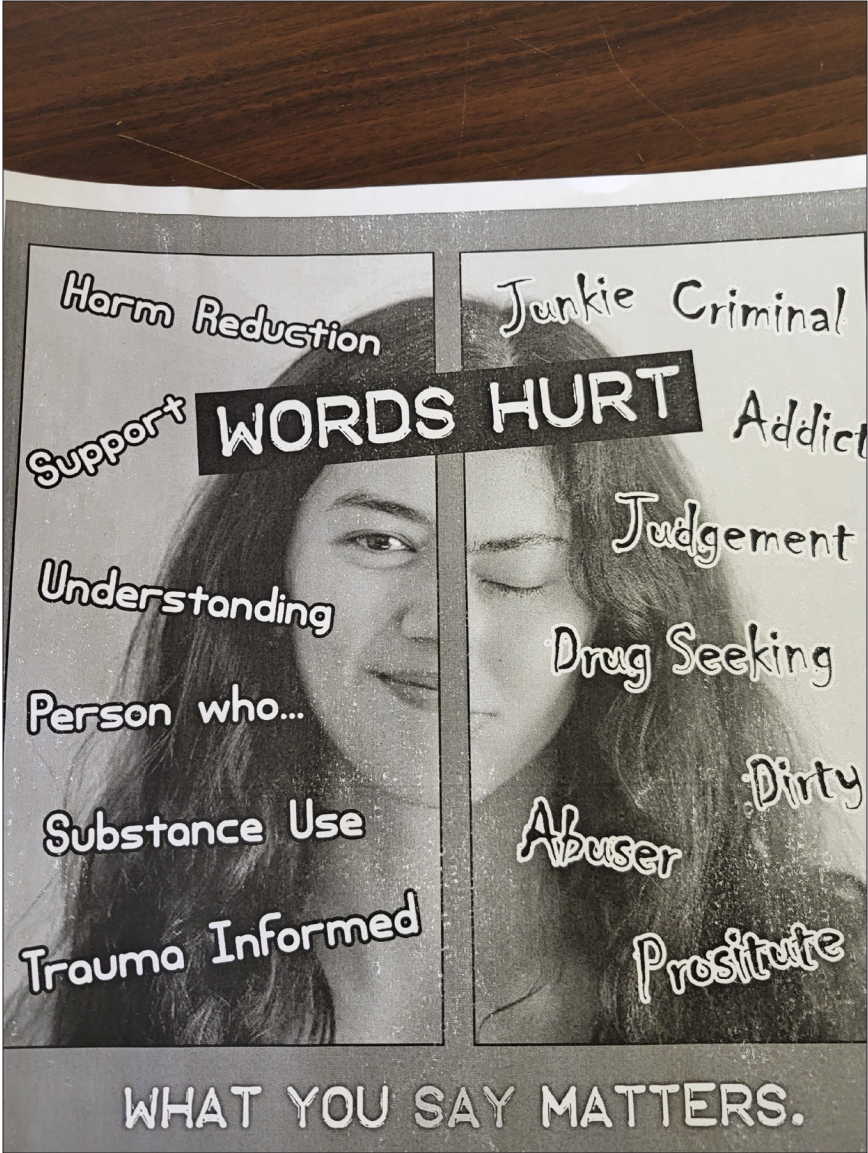


Image supplied by Avenue B

By Diane Kerns, Harm Reduction Program Coordinator
Avenue B Harm Reduction Inc.

Who are “those people”? The people who are using substances, living with addiction, unhoused, walking the streets? We can be quick to use this language to talk about others. Most importantly though, we need to know that “those people” are OUR people. They are human beings, they are from our community, they are hurting, they are family and friends!

We can be quick to talk about others and judge their actions or lack of action. Often, we do so without an understanding of the issues people face each day. We are not interested enough to find out the truth of the matter or the realities of the situation. Our collective fear allows us to think it is OK to judge or treat others disrespectfully.

We can do it differently. We can learn about homelessness, harm reduction, substance use, and the many other challenges that people face.

We can educate ourselves, engage with organizations doing the work, open our minds and our hearts to be in relationships with “those people.” This will change your world and theirs!



New Executive Director at BGC



Louise Dalcourt

Story and photo by Megan Bartlett

In January, The BGC of Greater Saint John was very happy to welcome in their new Executive Director, Louise Dalcourt! The club’s board of directors conducted an extensive recruitment campaign to choose a new executive director in order to find the perfect fit for the club.

Louise stood out as an excellent candidate from the very beginning of the process. Her experiences and caring attitude brought her to the forefront of the board’s candidates. With each interview, they learned that she was very familiar with the non-profit sector, and with each meeting Louise felt more and more like a part of The BGC family.

Louise has an extensive background in the non-profit sector and her passion for it started as a board member for the Military Family Resource Center. She worked her way up and took on many roles such as executive director and other senior leadership positions.

Louise has been committed to spending time getting to know the staff at the club and leading with openness, honesty, and transparency. She has developed and implemented many programs in her career, including a nationwide Veteran Family program that is currently operational throughout the country.

The staff at The BGC have been very excited to get to know Louise and can’t wait to see what 2024 brings under her leadership.



Waterloo Village
Neighbourhood Contact

Jennifer Hallihan
Community Navigator
Waterloo Village Neighbourhood
Association/ The Stone Church
87 Carleton Street 506-639-6317
wvcommunitynavigator@gmail.com



Youth in Philanthropy at Seaside Park Elementary



*Seaside Grade 5 students spread holiday cheer in King's Square
(Photo: Anthony Enman)*

***By Krista Turnbull, Community Schools Coordinator
Seaside Park Elementary School***

This school year some of our grade 5 students have had an opportunity to be involved in a new program. Youth in Philanthropy is a program under the direction of Anthony Enman, a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals New Brunswick Chapter's Board of Directors. The program introduces the students to the importance of philanthropy and ways they, too, can make a difference in their community.

"Our hope is to inspire a lifelong commitment to giving and making a positive difference." ~ Anthony Enman

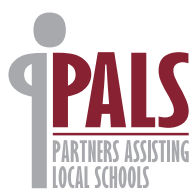
In December we identified a way in which the students could give back to their community. They were thrilled to spread holiday cheer in King's Square one very cold day in December, handing out hot chocolate and candy canes to passersby. They have more in store for the remainder of the school year, with a fundraiser taking place in April which will support a local charity, chosen by the students.

**We greatly appreciate the opportunity
to be the pilot school
for this unique program.**

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!

Help Make a Difference!



Deborah Fisher
Susan Tipper
Victoria Moseley

info@PALS.com



@PALSpartners



@PALSpartners

Happy New Year from PALS!



Dan (PALS En Route to Success student from Saint John High) with Lily's Lakeside workplace mentors Scott and Vita (Photo: PALS)

By the PALS Team (Susan Tipper, Victoria Moseley, Paul Dalton, and Deborah Fisher)

There is lots happening in the world of PALS as usual! Working with the schools in Anglophone South School District (ASDS) continues to be a great pleasure. We collaborate with so many: schools, principals, vice-principals, district office staff, Community School Coordinators, school staff, community and business partners, and many volunteers. Our combined focus is to support and provide positive learning experiences and opportunities for children and youth! What a marvelous team!

As we kick off our 25th year of PALS, we celebrate many initiatives old and new with our partners. What started with Big Brothers Big Sisters In-School Mentoring has evolved into so much more, including, but not limited to: Coaching, Kids on the Go Bus field trips, train rides, in-school support, breakfast and lunch programs, PALS in the Park, Association of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of New Brunswick (APEGNB) Saint John Soap Box Derby, PALS En Route to Success high school program, visiting and virtual readers, sensory rooms, mentor rooms, clothing closets, school supplies, holiday hampers, Bowl for Kids Sake, career guidance, financial literacy, and cultural enrichment.

For many years PALS focused on Kindergarten to Grade 8 schools, but in 2011 expanded to the high school level. One high school initiative, the PALS En Route to Success program, provides students with an opportunity to “learn by doing” outside of the classroom. From Grade 9 to Grade 12, students are provided with work placements and summer employment while acquiring credit hours for graduation.

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge this will be our last contribution to *Around the Block*. Thank you for years of partnership and providing a venue for spreading the good news about our community.

Thanks from Centennial School!



Operation J-Star drops off pajama care packages for Centennial (Mike, Joanna, and their son with Kate MacDonald, right)

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

We at Centennial wanted to take the opportunity to thank our community, PALS and other partners who all worked together helping to make the recent holiday season so very special for our students and their families. Here are some of the amazing initiatives our students/families benefited from.

Operation J-Star provided a gift to every student which included pajamas, a new toothbrush, toothpaste, cozy socks, hot chocolate, and popcorn (see *photo, above*). This is the third year Operation J-Star has offered this incredible gift to our entire school population. Our students then wore the new pajamas to school on the last day before the holiday break, as we had a school-wide movie day thanks to our PAL at Bell. Bell is supporting our family engagement goals by sponsoring several events both during and outside of school hours. Thanks to this incredible generosity, Centennial is hosting a "Family Movie/Pizza Night." We are thrilled to be able to offer such a great opportunity to our families and have had over 320 RSVPs for a plan to attend; thank you, Bell!

This year, we hosted our first whole-school meal in the gym since 2019. Our school had a holiday meal together in our gymnasium, and we are so very grateful for the opportunity. Our friends at Shannex came, providing this meal as well as serving. The atmosphere was warm and inviting, and we were thrilled to be all together partaking in such a special time.

The past few years, we have enjoyed a lovely holiday meal in classrooms, which was very special. To continue with this tradition, we had a school-wide pancake breakfast allowing our classes to enjoy a delicious breakfast, sitting family-style in a cozy environment. We had students' family members volunteer, as well as community friends come to help make this event a success (see *photo, right*).



Family volunteers working to serve a delicious pancake breakfast to our entire school. Left to right: Stephanie McGarrigle, Oluwabukola Olaniyi-Lawal, Ellen Sargent, Kate MacDonald, Stephen McGarrigle)

We are very thankful to all who helped.

One of the highlights of the holiday season for our students is the ability to shop for loved ones at our holiday bazaar. This event is a large undertaking, and the amount of support from our community is outstanding. Our school had 28 volunteers in to help set up, replenish tables, assist students in finding the perfect special token, and then carefully wrap these treasures for them to give a surprise to their loved ones. The donations to our bazaar this year allowed every student to feel a sense of pride as they got to pick out the “perfect something” for their loved ones. We were humbled by the outpouring of support for this event. Thank you for making this such an incredible holiday season full of joyous memories, and lots of glimmers of incredible moments for our entire Centennial family.

Finally, we would be remiss if we didn't mention the benefit some of our families received via holiday assistance. These acts of kindness allowed several of our families to get some relief from the stress this time of year can inevitably bring. Our families were provided with a helping hand, and this was such a welcomed and unexpected gift for those who received it! Our PALS, and community supporters, and other friends helped to lighten the load for so many! We simply could not have done this without your kindness and generosity. Thank you to NB Southern Rail (*see photo, below*), Mariner Partners, Petro Services Inc, JDI, Bell, Kennebec Manor, and our anonymous friends. Thank you all for being a part of our incredible community!



NB Southern Rail donating holiday hampers. Mrs. McClure expresses gratitude on behalf of the whole school.

YEP supports Hazen White-St. Francis

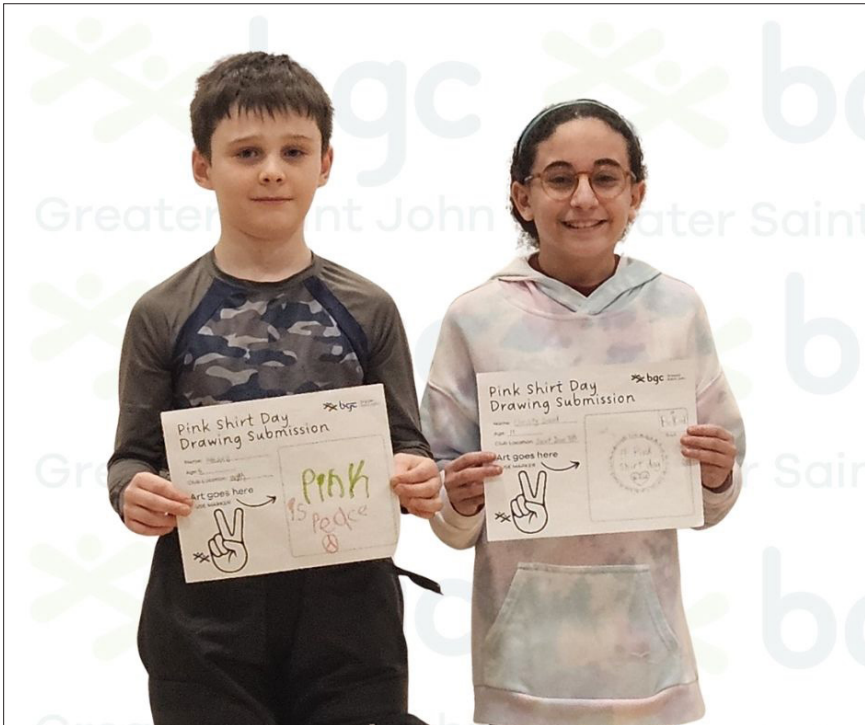


**Story and photo by Ann Barrett-Mazerolle, Secretary/Treasurer
Youth Enhancement Program**

The Youth Enhancement Program Inc. (YEP) is a charitable organization that seeks funding to help supplement the Hazen White-St. Francis School (HWSF) nutritional programs and other supply needs. We have been very fortunate to receive two wonderful contributions for the 2023-24 school year. The NB Children's Foundation granted us \$12,000 to help supplement the nutritious breakfast, to provide two lunches a week, healthy snacks, and emergency food. Also, Octavio Ribeiro, a former HWSF art teacher, donated \$8000 to the ongoing nutrition programs and to purchase school supplies needed by students to enhance their educational programs. The students and staff thank you for your wonderful support.

Above: HWSF students thanking the donors for their wonderful donations.

Pink Shirt Day 2024



Maxwell with the slogan and Christy with the logo

**Story and photo by Scott Mitchell, Volunteer Coordinator
BGC Greater Saint John**

The Pink Shirt Day campaign is growing! Pink Shirt Day is an international initiative to raise awareness of Anti-Bullying across the globe and inspire kindness amongst the population (mainly students).

Pink Shirt day's roots were earthed in Berwick, Nova Scotia in 2007 when a new student was being bullied at school for wearing a pink shirt. Two Grade 12 students then bought 50 pink shirts and encouraged classmates to wear them in support of this child and to raise awareness of the crisis of bullying in their school. The next day when they began to distribute these shirts, they were shocked to find the majority of students in the school had arrived wearing pink to support their fellow student. This act of kindness spread like a wildfire across the country, and year after year schools, youth organizations, corporations, and sports communities adopted the Pink Shirt project, spreading awareness to put an end to bullying.

The marriage between Pink Shirt Day and BGC was a natural progression where BGC's prime objective is to offer a safe, welcoming, and completely inclusive environment to all kids aged 5-17, focusing on wellness, health, mental and physical development, and stability. BGC took action to adopt the Pink Shirt campaign and over the last decade have collaborated with schools, sports organizations, and local businesses across the Greater Saint John area.

Our goal is to surpass last year's total of approximately 1200+ shirts sold, and to spread kindness across the entire community!

As of January 22nd, less than two weeks into the project, we already had 23 schools interested in supporting the campaign, which is nine more than last year, so support for the Pink Shirt message is increasing! We ran a contest for a new slogan and artwork for this year's shirts, with two club kids as winners. (See *photo. above.*)

**Watch out for kids in pink shirts
on February 28th
and give them a thumbs up.**



Bee Me Kidz: it's never too late to sign up!



*Left to right: Liane, Laurien, and Jesahahzas
(Photo: Ampersand Social Co.)*

***By Sarah Johnston, North Program Coordinator
Bee Me Kidz***

What's the Buzz at Bee Me Kidz? Our North Centre, at Centennial School, has been reaching record high attendance numbers! On a typical Saturday, we have about 170 people staying for our full program, and we serve over 200 people brunch. WOW! That is more than double what we have been seeing in previous years!! I want to thank the community for choosing to spend their Saturdays with us. We were excited to start up our regular Saturday programming in 2024. We welcomed our families back in the new year with a PJ party and indoor snowball fights. We also had a lot of fun on our pirate-themed day where the children were challenged with an exciting STEM obstacle, Sinking the Boat! (Stem means Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.) In the coming weeks, we will be making rainbow butterflies, surprise message heart necklaces and pink slime. 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!

Email sarahjohnston@beemekidz.com or call 506-654-1377.

I would like to thank Lorna Brown and all the AmaZZZing people who made *Around the Block* possible all these years. What a great way to keep the community connected. Best wishes to each and every one of you in your new adventures.



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Thank you, *Around the Block!*



Brilliant Labs participant at the Saint John Y 2021

Story by Brilliant Labs, photos by Irene Lee

What a remarkable journey it has been with Saint John's community newspaper, *Around the Block*. Sharing stories and information, engaging residents' voices, and providing advocacy to bind our communities together!

Brilliant Labs is where youth are empowered with innovative mindsets, skills, and today's technology to create a sustainable future for their communities. Thanks to *Around the Block*, we were able to share stories about our community-based programs for youth from all walks of life and learning abilities. We are filled with a profound sense of gratitude and reflection for the privilege of being a part of the rich tapestry of residents, partner organizations, community leaders, and supporters. Through the pages of your publication, we've celebrated milestones, learned from each other's experiences, and forged connections and partnerships to make a collective difference that goes beyond the printed word.

In the spirit of reflection, we acknowledge the countless individuals and residents, organizations, supporters, and community and youth leaders who have contributed to the success of *Around the Block*. Authentic representation and storytelling have been the heartbeat of the publication in showcasing the strength and vibrancy of Saint John's priority neighbourhoods.

As we bid farewell, we view this as not an end but as a transition to new beginnings. As communities continue to evolve, the spirit of partnership and collaboration, supporting residents, and shared growth remains unwavering.



City of Saint John Sunshine Program (Photo: Irene Lee)

To the readers, contributors, residents, supporters, the entire Human Development Council team, and the City of Saint John for sponsoring *Around the Block*, a heartfelt thank you for including Brilliant Labs in this incredible journey. Thank you. Your collective dedication to community development and storytelling has left an indelible mark on the publication's pages.

As we turn the page, we will carry forward the lessons learned, the connections made, and the successes shared in supporting youth education and empowerment. Our community's narrative is an ongoing tapestry, woven by each of us, and we are excited to see what vibrant chapters lie ahead.

Wishing everyone and the Human Development Council continued success, joy, and collaboration.



*Youth busy creating together and learning
in a Brilliant Labs session at the Saint John Y*

JOIN US THIS SUMMER
FOR SURVIVAL CAMP!
KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR MORE INFO



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 - the final edition

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



For this final issue of *Around the Block*, the team at *ATB* is offering a chance to win one of three \$15 fruit and vegetable packages. (Thanks to Saint John Energy for their many years of sponsoring the contest.)

To enter the draw you need to tell us which story in this issue is your favourite and what page it is on!

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 page and title of your favourite story; and
- tell us your name, address, and phone number.

Only one entry per household. Your name will go into a draw for one of the three prizes. The contest will end at noon on March 21st and prizes, if possible, will be delivered on March 22nd (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 92 winners were:
Kathryn Ferris and Rebekah Pearce**



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Reflecting on ACAP Saint John's impact through *Around the Block*



Some of our volunteers during our annual Marsh Creek Clean-Up event (Photo: ACAP Saint John)

**By Peace Omodele, Engagement and Communications Specialist
ACAP (Atlantic Coastal Action Program) Saint John**

Dear Readers of *Around the Block*,

As the final chapter of *Around the Block* is written, we at ACAP Saint John take this opportunity to reflect on the strides we've made together in environmental stewardship and community engagement.

Championing environmental sustainability

Since *Around the Block* began its journey, ACAP Saint John has actively contributed, focusing on the vital role of environmental sustainability in our community. Our articles have not only informed but also inspired action towards a greener Saint John. We've delved into various topics ranging from cyanobacteria to water conservation, sparking conversations and initiatives that have echoed throughout our neighbourhoods.

Through our collaboration with *Around the Block*, we've seen firsthand how information can empower action. We've celebrated stories of individuals coming together to adopt more sustainable practices and help make the city greener, schools initiating recycling and clean-up programs, and businesses taking significant steps toward environmental sustainability. We have also shared eco-friendly tips and news to help our community members. These stories and our community events have helped guide our community toward more eco-conscious decisions.

A tribute to our volunteers and community

The heart of our success lies in the dedication of our volunteers and the community's enthusiasm. Your efforts in beach clean-ups, tree planting, and educational workshops have not just improved our city's environmental health, but your commitment has been a major driving force behind our mission, and for this, we are eternally grateful.

In the heart of our environmental endeavours, ACAP Saint John's clean-up initiatives stand as a testament to collective action and dedication. Over the years, we've organized numerous community clean-ups, each one a step towards a cleaner, healthier Saint John. Within the past six years, we've successfully conducted over 100 clean-up events and engaged about 3800 volunteers, each echoing our commitment to the environment. Through these efforts, we've collected and properly disposed of an astounding 25,660 kg of bags of garbage, removing a significant amount of waste from our beloved city's landscapes.

**But our impact doesn't stop at visible waste.
Together, with 1645 dedicated volunteers, we have
planted over 11,029 trees and 960 plants.**

We have collected samples from various water bodies, uncovering the hidden threat of microplastics. We've also performed over 774 site visits for water quality monitoring activities to provide us with information on the health of waterways and for the management of catchments, water resources, and the environment. We monitor water quality to ensure that it is safe for human recreational activities, as well as to protect wildlife and aquatic life.

This data not only contributes to environmental research but also informs local policy decisions, ensuring a more sustainable future for Saint John. These numbers represent more than just statistics; they are a reflection of our community's resolve to foster an environment we can all be proud of.

Continuing the journey beyond the pages

As we bid adieu to sharing in the *Around the Block* community newspaper, our mission for a sustainable Saint John does not wane. We encourage everyone to maintain the momentum of environmental consciousness in their daily lives. Follow us on our social media platforms and visit our website for continuous updates, tips, and ways to stay engaged in our ongoing environmental initiatives.

Thank you for being an integral part of this journey.

Warm regards,
The ACAP Saint John Team.

Follow us on Instagram & Facebook - @acapsj, Twitter - @acapsaintjohn and LinkedIn - @ACAP Saint John to stay updated on all our upcoming events and initiatives. Website: www.acapsj.org

ACAP
SAINT JOHN

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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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2023 Judi Chisholm Bursary Winner



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

Makayla was timid about coming to see someone to help set up a budget. She is a single mom working in the service industry. She felt she did not make enough money to worry about a budget. However she realized that paying attention to the small details leads to financial empowerment.

In a year Makayla was able to achieve the following financial goals:

- 1) Asked to be cross trained in a different department at work in order to have more hours.
- 2) Started to pay her gym, Spotify and Prime memberships on her credit card in order to raise her credit score.
- 3) Purchased a vehicle to ensure she could get to work.
- 4) Asked about employee benefits and was prepared to start contributing to her work Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) the moment she qualified.

We are so proud to reward Makayla as our Judi Chisholm Bursary winner for 2023.

Remember no matter how large or small your pile of money is, how you spend it matters.



Darlene Jones, Makayla, Seth Asimakos (Photo: Peggy Thompson)

Holiday gifting

By Molly Sheehan, New Brunswick Social Pediatrics (NBSP)

This year, NBSP supported 22 families and 45 children at the Pediatrics on Princess (POP) Centre, along with 37 families and 57 children at the Parent-Child Assistance Program (PCAP), all thanks to generous holiday season donations from friends, family, and organizations including Marci's Salad, Fundy CrossFit, Bayview Credit Union Limited- Uptown Saint John (Oak Holl) Branch, Rotary Club of Saint John, IODE, Tuck Studio, Lakefield School, Pam Munn, the MacDougall family, and book club members. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all contributors, who helped make it possible to support so many families during this holiday season.



Sarah Gander and a representative of Dalhousie Medicine
New Brunswick students with wrapped presents
donated by the students for children at the POP Centre (Photo: NBSP)



The Library and community partnerships



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

The Saint John Free Public Library is known as a book repository.

However, the Library is more than that – it's also a community hub, thanks in no small part to our community partners.

Our partners share their expertise and time to help us offer programs to the city, and we're grateful for our relationships with them.

For instance, our partnership with the Saint John Newcomers' Centre (SJNC) includes our Saturday Socials, which offer newcomers and longtime residents alike a chance to meet and share conversation and coffee every Saturday at noon. The SJNC also holds English classes here Saturdays and Sundays.

With the Seniors' Resource Centre, we offer a periodic series of talks geared at older Saint Johners covering topics from "fake news" to life with chronic illness.

We host the Saint John Historical Society's monthly lecture series, and we are happy to host collections of the New Brunswick Genealogical Society on long-term loan.

We thank them and *Around The Block* for all their support through the years. For more on the latest library programs, follow us on Facebook or Instagram (@sjfpl), phone 506-643-7236, or visit us at Market Square.

Nouvelles de l'ARCF de Saint-Jean

**Par Linda Longon, Agente d'accueil et de mieux-être de l'ARCF
(Association Régionale de la Communauté francophone)
de Saint-Jean**

Sourire et joie à la soirée de Noël des aînés

Le 8 décembre dernier, plus de 80 aînés se sont réunis pour leur souper de Noël annuel. Ce dernier comprenait l'animation d'un jeu d'échange, des reconnaissances aux membres et partenaires suivis du spectacle de Laurie LeBlanc.

Il est à noter que depuis quelques années, un partenariat entre la programmation de l'ARCf de Saint-Jean et le Club Arc-en-Ciel offre aux aînés un forfait comprenant un souper et un spectacle. Bravo pour cette belle collaboration!

Groupe d'entraide et de soutien aux aînés

La Croisée est en recrutement de bénévoles pour venir en aide aux aînés lorsque ces derniers ont besoin d'un petit coup de pouce avec de petites tâches de tous les jours ou pendant une convalescence.

Vous aimez aider? Changer une ampoule, changer les batteries dans le détecteur à fumée, pelleter le perron et autres petites tâches.

La Croisée a besoin de vous pour soutenir les aînés. Vous voulez porter une veste de bénévole avec fierté?

Contacter Linda au 506 658-4600 poste 2004 ou linda.longon@arcf.ca



Vignette : Les cinq dernières personnes à la présidence du Club Arc-en-Ciel. / The last five presidents of le Club Arc-en-Ciel. De gauche à droite / Left to right: Edwidge Martin, Elizabeth Godin, Claudianne Gionet, Agatha Thériault, Clarence Allain (président actif / current president).

News from l'ARCF de Saint-Jean

**By Linda Longon, Agente d'accueil et de mieux-être de l'ARCF
(Association Régionale de la Communauté francophone)
de Saint-Jean**

Smiles and joy at seniors' Christmas party

On December 8th, more than 80 seniors gathered for their annual Christmas supper. The latter included a gift swap and recognition of members and partners, followed by Laurie LeBlanc's show.

It should be noted that in recent years, a partnership between l'ARCF de Saint-Jean and le Club Arc-en-Ciel offers seniors a package including a supper and a show. Congratulations on this great collaboration!

Groupe d'entraide et de soutien aux aînés

La Croisée is recruiting volunteers to help seniors when they need a little help with small everyday tasks or during a recovery.

Do you like to help? Change a light bulb, change the batteries in the smoke detector, shovel the porch and other small tasks.

La Croisée needs you to support seniors. Do you want to wear a volunteer jacket with pride? Contact Linda at 506 658-4600 ext. 2004 or linda.longon@arcf.ca



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 –

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Unleash your inner ally: Chroma NB's Inclusive Allyship Workshops



Chroma's Education Coordinator, Mariah Darling, has delivered their 2SLGBTQIA+ Allyship workshop to over 1500 individuals since the project was launched in 2022. In the photo above, you can see Mariah (standing) leading an open discussion with folks at ACAP Saint John, one of the many organizations to receive the allyship training in 2023. Chroma NB is eager to advance this project and promote inclusive education this year. (Photo: ACAP Saint John)

By Mariah Darling and Arlo Cogswell, Chroma NB

Are you ready to take a stand for inclusivity and broaden your horizons? Look no further! Chroma NB, a Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual Plus (2SLGBTQIA+) organization in Saint John, NB, is about to blow your mind with their Inclusive Allyship Workshops. While you may already be familiar with Chroma from their awesome High School Rainbow Lunch Club, community events, or their support for legal name or sex designation changes, it's time to dive deeper and discover the transformative power of allyship.

Chroma NB understands that true allyship and inclusivity can only flourish with education and understanding at its core. That's why they've curated workshops that will revolutionize your perception of the Queer+ and Trans+ community while being a dynamic and interactive adventure. It's time to put an end to all the confusion and misinformation!

During these workshops, you'll unlock the mysteries of the 2SLGBTQIA+ acronym, and immerse yourself in the vibrant language of the rainbow community. Discover how to communicate, collaborate, and form meaningful connections with individuals from these communities. Through empathy and understanding, you'll gain invaluable insights into their experiences, breaking down barriers and fostering true connection. With Chroma NB's guidance, you'll become a pro in no time, spreading inclusivity with every conversation.

Chroma's dedication to education has resulted in over 50 successful workshops since 2022, inspiring and educating more than 1500 individuals along the way. Our interactive education sessions have been enjoyed by various groups, such as community organizations, businesses, healthcare workers, educators, and more.

So, what are you waiting for? Let's create a community that celebrates diversity, embraces everyone, and stands as a shining example of true allyship. The time to unleash your inner ally is now!

**Join us as we offer a brave space to learn,
grow, and ask questions in our 2SLGBTQIA+
Inclusive Allyship Workshops.
Book yours today.
Contact education@chromanb.ca!**

L'Arche Connects launches new outreach program: call for participants



Gray (left) and April, a member of L'Arche Connects (right), laugh while working on a clay sculpture together (Photo: L'Arche Saint John)

By Jennifer Fabrizi, L'Arche Connects Program Lead

L'Arche Connects, a supported independent living program of L'Arche Saint John, is launching a new outreach program this winter. This program is designed to help adults with an intellectual disability, and their families or caregivers, explore their future options for housing and support, identify key areas for growth, and make connections with others in the community. To express interest in participating in this program, please email connects@larchesaintjohn.org. We'd love to hear from you!

About the program

This program is open to adults with an intellectual disability who are current Disability Support Program (DSP) clients and who have a desire to grow their independent living skills. This program is specifically targeted to participants whose parents and caregivers are decreasing in their ability to provide ongoing support. Our goal is to equip each participant with a toolbox for independent living skills for their future. To build this toolbox, program participants and their families or caregivers will be invited to various workshops, information sessions, and social events hosted on a weekly basis. These events are designed to assist them to plan for their future, identify skills they would like to work on, and build connections and friendships with other people both within the L'Arche community and in Greater Saint John. For more information on the program and to express interest, email connects@larchesaintjohn.org

About L'Arche Saint John

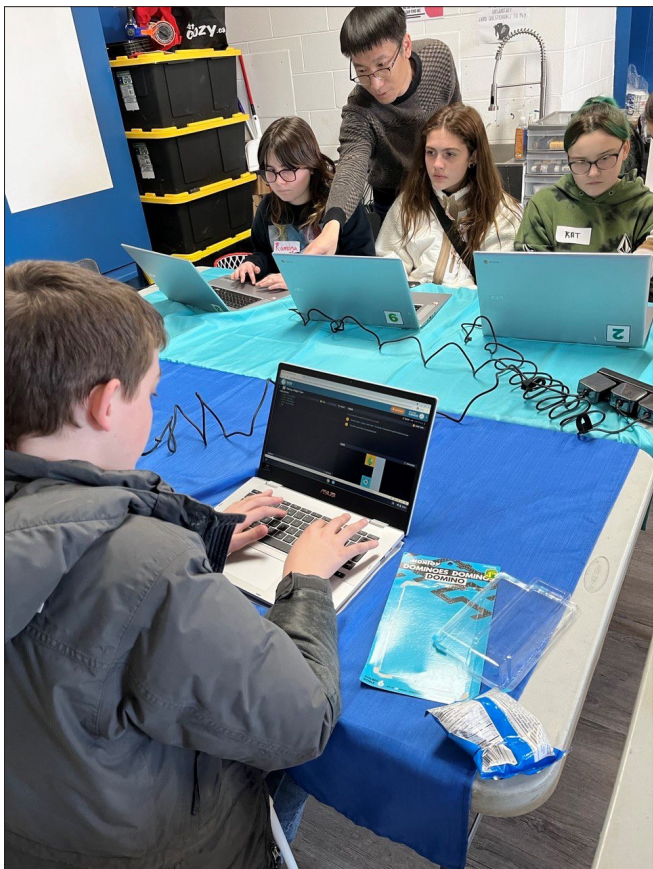
We are a community of people with and without intellectual disabilities, sharing life together in Saint John, New Brunswick. Our mission is to make known the gifts of people with intellectual disabilities, revealed through mutually transforming relationships. L'Arche Saint John is part of an International Federation creating homes and day programs with adults with intellectual disabilities. At L'Arche Saint John, we believe in a world where everyone belongs. When persons with intellectual disabilities take their place at the table, they contribute to a more just, compassionate, and vibrant world for all.

To learn more about L'Arche Saint John visit www.larchesaintjohn.org

***Around the Block* wishes to thank the Saint John Exhibition Association for their support over the years, up to our last print issue in December 2023.**

We appreciate you very much!

EduCode and SJNC: fostering digital literacy through coding workshops



Free code workshop participants
(Photo: Danyan Luo, EduCode Academy)

By Danyan Luo, EduCode Academy and Sochi Azuh, Communications Specialist, SJNC

In a collaborative effort, EduCode Canada Inc, through its online programming education platform, EduCode Academy, partnered with the Saint John Newcomers Centre (SJNC) to conduct training sessions to promote coding education for teenagers in Saint John.

During the two-month training, students learned fundamental coding concepts and skills through EduCode’s online coding courses. Two sessions of free coding workshops were held from March to April and November to December 2023, catering to students aged 9 to 17 in Saint John. Over 150 students enrolled in the “Introduction to Programming” course offered by EduCode.

SJNC will further collaborate with EduCode to provide more coding learning opportunities for the youth in Saint John, enhancing their digital literacy and contributing to their comprehensive development. SJNC partnered with Samuel-de-Champlain to introduce an afterschool program in January 2024 designed for Francophone students to learn coding.

Empowering voices: PRUDE Inc.’s All Women Project paves the way for systemic change



Substance use conversation with Moms Stop the Harm and Avenue B, hosted at PRUDE Inc.

By Margarita Mora Macias, PRUDE Inc. (Pride of Race, Unity, and Dignity through Education) (Photos by PRUDE Inc.)

PRUDE Inc.’s All Women Project concluded its initial phase in November 2023, after 19 months of empowerment achievements, with a committee of about 27 members meeting monthly and organizing more than 300 presentations and outreach events. The project’s goal includes amplifying the voices of diverse women, promoting education and empowerment, fostering collaboration, and facilitating systemic change by removing barriers.

The project committee, led by coordinator Brenda Diaz and formed by crucial community partners, concluded its latest meeting, underscoring that the real work has only just begun. As a result of a survey involving 200 women and gender-diverse people, the project’s final report includes 61 recommendations on housing, addiction, justice, and healthcare at the municipal and provincial government levels.

Henceforth, the goal is to collaborate with government entities and local councils and implement recommendations to address the specific issues raised by women, fostering continued positive change.

Below, top: Multicultural Night at Simonds High School, a celebration of the cultural diversity of our community. Bottom: Participants at an intergenerational painting workshop led by newcomer artists Marwa Abulata and Sarah Elshazli



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YMCA of Greater Saint John transforms into YMCA of Southwestern New Brunswick



Board Chair, Dr. Brian Wheelock, speaking at the name-change announcement

A new chapter in a 170-year legacy

**Story and photo by Simranpreet Singh (Raunak) Bagga,
MBA, BTech (He/Him), Communications Team Lead
YMCA of Southwestern New Brunswick**

This January, the YMCA of Greater Saint John made a big splash by announcing a major shift to celebrate its 170-year history. The YMCA is gearing up for a fresh start as the YMCA of Southwestern New Brunswick to reflect our commitment to better serving the diverse communities from Sussex to St. Stephen.

“This change is not just about a name; it signifies the beginning of a new and exciting chapter that I am thrilled to share with our cherished community,” remarked Shilo Boucher, President and CEO of the YMCA of Southwestern New Brunswick during the announcement. “We are greater than Greater Saint John. Our journey is just beginning, and we invite everyone to embrace this change and join us in building stronger, more inclusive communities.”

Since its start in 1854, the YMCA has been a powerhouse of positive change, shaping lives through sports, education, and community service. Over the years, it has adapted with the times, always staying true to its mission.

Some standout moments include the founding of Camp Glenburn in 1928, the launch of the YMCA Endowment Fund in 1986, and the introduction of the YMCA Child Care Centre in the same year. These milestones show the YMCA's dedication to meeting the evolving needs of families and kids. Despite challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the YMCA kept its spirit alive by opening the Early Childhood Hub in 2021 and starting operations in Eastern Charlotte County in 2022. Now to support the community, this year the YMCA has started construction to open a child care facility at the Glenn Carpenter Centre and another child care facility in partnership with Shannex's Parkland in the Valley, in Quispamsis.

As we set sail into this exciting era, our team sends a huge “Thank you” to the community for your unwavering support. Together, we’re ready to make waves and build a future full of inclusivity and impact.

Celebrating a record-breaking year for the Harbour Lights Campaign!



Story and photo by Port Saint John

Dear Friends and Supporters of the Harbour Lights Campaign,
On behalf of The Harbour Lights Campaign Inc Board of Directors and founding partners, CBC Radio One Information Morning and Port Saint John, we are thrilled to share the incredible progress of our journey together in making a difference. In 2022, we celebrated a significant milestone as the Harbour Lights campaign reached a new record high, raising an impressive \$298,000. However, your unwavering support and generosity have once again amazed us, propelling us to new heights in 2023, as we broke the record yet again and reached \$316,673.51.

These achievements wouldn't have been possible without your unwavering support and generosity. Your continuous support has ensured that 16 food banks in Southwestern New Brunswick receive the crucial help they need. Each donation, volunteer hour, and act of kindness plays a vital role in strengthening our community's foundation. Thank you for your remarkable contributions to the Harbour Lights campaign as we look forward to another year of making a difference together. *(Above: Harbour Light Tree)*

ACPS-SJ hosts Tatreez Art workshops



By Dr Helmi Alfarra; photo by ACPS-SJ

In a collaborative effort with the Saint John Newcomers Centre (SJNC), the Atlantic Canada Palestinian Society of Saint John (ACPS-SJ) organized a Tatreez Art workshop at the Crescent Valley Resource Centre, for four weeks from December 8th, with 14 eager attendees. The sessions were a great success, with many participants delving into the rich history of Palestinian Tatreez Art. A highlight was the voluntary involvement of several participants in a quilt project. This collaboration aims to compile pieces created by attendees from various sessions, showcasing the diverse talents and contributions of the community.

A workshop started on January 27th at the Nick Nicolle Community Center (ONE Change). Interested individuals are encouraged to register by emailing info.acps.sj@gmail.com. You are welcome to join partway through.

The ACPS-SJ extends gratitude to the Art Board of the City of Saint John and the NB Multicultural Grant for their generous support of the Tatreez Cafe project. This initiative aims to educate community members about the artistry of Palestinian Tatreez. ACPS-SJ is willing to collaborate with any community groups in Saint John interested in hosting Tatreez Art workshops, fostering cultural exchange and artistic exploration within the community. *(Above: the December workshop.)*

Councillors' Corner



Safe affordable housing for all in 2024

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

As we end the first month in 2024, let's renew our focus and urgency to take action on housing and homelessness. In January, according to the Human Development Council, 234 people slept on the street and to anyone, like me, that lives in a priority neighbourhood this is no shock. We need more safe shelter space, more housing at every level of the housing spectrum and more services to keep people housed. That means politicians need to meet this issue with the urgency this crisis is calling for. It means all levels of government need to recognize their roles to step up with meaningful funding. But let's ask, what did our politicians do about it?

The City of Saint John has announced its partnership with the Federal Government for \$10 million on the Housing Accelerator Fund that will drive new construction through enhancements at City Hall, new incentive programs for affordable housing, and reduced red tape on zoning to get more built faster. The provincial government announced \$2.7 million for new affordable rental units at Barrack Green, as well as a new homeless hub on Somerset Street. Thankfully, we have many great advocates for this community – our MP, some MLAs and many on council recognize that something needs to be done. The trouble continues, that there's not enough urgency to make transformational differences for our community.

Our neighbourhoods have become the front line of the housing crisis. There is no dignity in homelessness, either for those living in it or the neighbourhoods they occupy.

My greatest wish for Saint John in 2024

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

My greatest wish is for Saint John to grow and be proud and rid ourselves of our terrible poverty. We need the 5,000 federally funded jobs we lost over the years. We need the industrial tax money that we have given the Province each year over the past 60 years - \$9 million a year, times 60, times inflation.



We need far, far more university students and courses. Universities receive 70% of their money from tax dollars, of which Saint John has been the highest contributor, yet we have the lowest number of university students.

211 can help those experiencing homelessness

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

HELP STARTS HERE.

Free | confidential
24/7 | 150+ languages

nb.211.ca





Story by Daniela Fernandez, Director of Community Engagement for 211 NB, adapted from caller testimonials

When people are experiencing homelessness, it can be hard to work on long-term needs. People are looking for where they are going to spend the night and how they will get their next meal. Fortunately, 211 Service Navigators can work on both short- and long-term needs with people experiencing homelessness and they are there 24 hours per day to do that.

A 211 Service Navigator received a call from a woman in her early twenties who was looking for resources. She explained that she did not have permanent housing and she had been referred to 211 by shelter staff. She was seeking assistance with finding housing and advocacy for people experiencing homelessness. She also wanted information on how to complete her income tax.

The Service Navigator listened with empathy to the caller's circumstances and gave her time to feel comfortable. Even though she had been without housing for a while and knew the shelters, the caller did not know about other resources to assist her or about case management for individuals experiencing homelessness. The Service Navigator explained how case management and advocacy could help and told the caller how to reach agencies that offered these services.

The caller was also referred to an agency which offered an income tax clinic and she was given the phone number for the income tax clinics with the Canada Revenue Agency for further information and assistance. The caller said that she was really happy with the resources that she was given and that she would call 211 back if she needed more help.

When you're not sure where to turn to find the help or resources that you need, remember that help starts here at 211. The service is free, confidential, and available 24/7 in over 150 languages to support callers with any type of non-emergency need or information request. The service is flexible enough to allow people to call for themselves or on behalf of others they might be concerned for, whether they're in NB or elsewhere in Canada. Our 211 navigators are able to offer options and referrals to services across the country as our databases are connected, and they are also able to help people address more than one need during the same call, eliminating the extra stress of having callers navigate the myriad of community and government resources on their own.

Next time you or your loved ones need supports, dial 2-1-1 to speak to a service navigator or visit nb.211.ca to browse the listing of programs and services available to support you in your area.

(Photo: redhumy from Getty Images Signature)

Civic Tech Saint John thanks laptop donors - and volunteers!



Kim Coleman, Xerox, left, with Karla Marticorena, Community Coordinator, CTSJ

Story and photos by Civic Tech Saint John Co-organizers

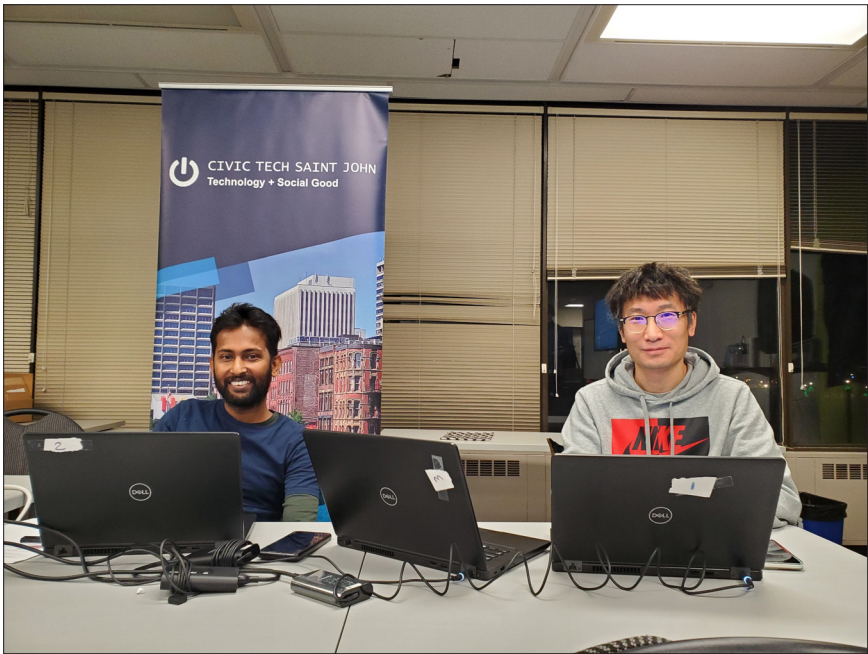
Civic Tech Saint John (CTSJ) was delighted to receive a donation of laptops to our #DigitalEquity project from Xerox. We offer special thanks to: Catherine A. Brun, Director of Sales, Agent Operations, North American Channels; Kim Coleman, XDX – IT Global Infrastructure End User Services Team (ITGI EUS); and the rest of their team. Catherine and Kim responded to our enquiry immediately and expedited the process for getting the computers to Civic Tech. Catherine said, “Thank you so much for always thinking of us and continuing to reach out to us with opportunities for us to give back. We truly appreciate the opportunities you have included us in!” To which we say – thank YOU, Catherine, Kim, and Xerox.

Civic Tech volunteers worked on these laptops during our Fix-IT nights in December and January. 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. A whopping 20 volunteers showed up to help on December 5th, so: our thanks to them as well! (See photos, right). In early 2024 the computers will be donated to community organizations such as Elizabeth Fry NB and in one case to three students from priority neighbourhoods who are attending Saint John Learning Exchange programs but who don’t have access to a laptop.

Thanks also to Randy Hatfield of the Human Development Council (HDC) for special assistance with the Xerox process. Thanks to HDC as well for contributing five laptops to support the CTSJ #DigitalEquity project. Those computers will be used on a loan basis in the sessions that Civic Tech plans to deliver at community organizations such as PRUDE as part of the Digital Literacy pillar of #DigitalEquity.



Civic Tech volunteers working together as they refurbish donated laptops



Amila (left) and Danyan, two Civic Tech stalwarts, at a recent Fix-IT Night

Another popular Civic Tech event is Guest Speaker Night. We have been fortunate to have a variety of experts come and share their wealth of knowledge with us on such topics as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and innovation. Civic Techers have a wide range of skills and interests so our members are eager to ask questions and discuss hot topics! What starts as a presentation always evolves into a fascinating and memorable dialogue.



Above, Dr Sharon Gainforth talked to Civic Tech members about using Artificial Intelligence (AI) for early detection of autism.

Civic Tech Saint John is all about technology for social good. We meet on Tuesdays, 6:30-8 p.m. at ConnexionWorks (and sometimes other venues). Check out our Facebook page for registration links for upcoming events - and come join us!



Around The Block Team (Issue 93)

Publisher: Human Development Council
Editor: Lorna Brown

Old North End: Christa Petts
Lower South End: Mary LeSage and Lisa Morris
Crescent Valley: Anne Driscoll and Char Levesque
Waterloo Village: Penni Eisenhauer, Jennifer Hallihan, and Jasmine Chandra
Lower West Side: Jen Oliver and Kate Worden
Proofreaders: Mark Driscoll, Jane Hanlon, Cindy Bishop, Daryl Barton, and Lorna Brown
Layout: Lorna Brown and Raunak Bagga



Farewell to *Around the Block* - in YOUR words

I'm so sorry to hear this.
***Around the Block* is an essential part of our community connectedness.**

*Sarah Campbell, Research Manager
New Brunswick Social Pediatrics*

Sad, that we have lost another measure of communication to the electronic age.
There will be no record of the good work done by so many agencies for future generations to learn from.
David Goss

I know this newspaper will be missed!

*Jane Hanlon
ATB volunteer proofreader*

Thank you to all the folks at *Around the Block* who have worked so hard over the years to keep us connected to the community. Your dedication to covering local events, sharing community stories, and keeping us all informed has been invaluable.

***Around the Block* has been more than just a newspaper; it has been a source of connection, bringing us together and fostering a sense of community pride.**
The Admin team at Centennial School wishes you well in all future endeavors.

Amy McClure and Willow Briggs

We're sorry to see the paper go!

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

Sad to hear this news, you folks were a great asset to our community.
Thank you for helping us get the information out to our community in need of help at Christmas.
Thanks for your hard work.
*Beth Roy
Saint John Community Christmas Exchange*

What a loss! This is so very sad for our community.
This is one of the few places that we can celebrate the work and successes in our community, raise awareness and get to know each other just a little better.

*Diane Kerns
Harm Reduction Program Coordinator
Avenue B Harm Reduction Inc.*

Sorry to hear that the next Issue of *Around the Block* community newspaper will be the last one.
It has definitely helped a lot in spreading the news to our community! It was a pleasure for us to be part of this project! Thank you for your support.

*Natalia Fedulova
Work Room Coordinator Assistant*

I am deeply saddened to receive this news... **It has been my privilege to have been able to contribute to *ATB* over the past decade, to have your horn give voice to so many of our important works. We will miss that connection very much; I know the spirit of *ATB* will persist in our hearts.**

*Ben Gillcrist, Community Schools Coordinator
Saint John the Baptist/King Edward School (SJBKE)*

Thank you for your support in connecting communities

Around the Block

★

YOU WILL BE MISSED!

Shine On  Southwestern New Brunswick



Farewell to *Around the Block* - in YOUR words

Over the years, we have witnessed the immense value of the world-class community journalism presented by the *Around the Block* editorial team. It is with sadness that we acknowledge the conclusion of this project, which will undoubtedly create a significant void in the Saint John community.

We thank Lorna and the team for their efforts in unifying the community through their **uplifting news about the small deeds that have made an impact and the grand dreams of a welcoming and diverse Saint John.**

*Sochi Azuh, Communication Specialist,
Saint John Newcomers Centre*

What a loss it will be for the community - another example of the lack of funding for initiatives that have a true impact on the actual ground level members of our city.

Lois Irvine, Portland United

I'm sorry to hear the news about *Around the Block* coming to an end.

I always looked forward to receiving it in the mail!

Arlo Cogswell, Chroma NB

Thanks for thinking to include us as you share these sad news; I am so sorry to hear this. I can't express enough gratitude for your support over the last couple of years as we launched our services and worked to raise awareness of 211 across the province.

Hopefully there may be an opportunity for *ATB* to be brought back to life in the future to help **keep community members informed about programs and services that can enhance and support their quality of life.**

*Daniela Fernandez
211 NB Director of Community Engagement*



We are so very sorry to hear about *Around the Block* finishing after this last virtual issue. It has been such a great celebration of the neighbourhoods of Saint John.

The articles profiling the many wonderful members of the community, the events, schools, their partners and special activities were both informative and inspirational.

Thank you for the many years of hard work and dedication. Juanita Black, thank you for your inspiration and vision and Lorna Brown, thank you for carrying the torch! We will miss *Around the Block*.

*The PALS (Partners Assisting Local Schools) Team –
Susan Tipper, Victoria Moseley, Deborah Fisher, and Paul Dalton*

Sorry you will not be continuing with further issues! It has been my pleasure to write articles for your paper!

Julie Strang, Sea Belles

I'm sad to hear this will be the last issue!

Kristen Scott, L'Arche Saint John

Thank you for all you've done to put us out there!

Karen Leger, Al-Anon

Sorry to hear of the loss of the paper.
I enjoyed getting it in the mailbox.

*Pam Thomas, President
Canadian Progress Club Ignite*

...so sad that *Around the Block* will be no longer!!
Thank you for including us in your issues.

*Sarah Johnston (she/her), Bee Me Kidz
Program Coordinator & Teacher*

Sad to hear it's the last edition of *Around the Block* Newspaper.

It's been a great way to stay updated on Saint John happenings.

*Dr Helmi Alfarra
Atlantic Canada Palestinian Society of Saint John*

We are so sorry to hear that this will be the final issue of the newspaper. **We enjoyed contributing to it and would really miss it.** We wish you and the entire team all the best. You were an absolute delight to work with.

Peace Omodele, ACAP Saint John



Farewell to *Around the Block* - in YOUR words

I am sorry to hear that the *Around the Block* paper is no longer going to be funded.

It is unfortunate and perhaps even shortsighted to have any avenue of community sharing of information cut off especially when things have become so tough for so many.

Thank you for your efforts to keep us engaged.

Evelyn McNulty, Romero House.

The Community Foundation serving Greater Saint John recognizes the wonderful work and contribution of *Around the Block*. This publication began with the intention of celebrating neighbourhood action and shining a spotlight on the growth and innovation Saint John neighbourhoods demonstrate every day.

Thank you to the *Around the Block* Team who sourced ‘good news’ stories and gave them a platform. **We have deeply appreciated the unique voice of *Around the Block* and have been very proud to sponsor this work.**

*Kelly Evans, MEd, CFRE, President & CEO
The Community Foundation
Greater Saint John, New Brunswick*

“...c’est une tragédie pour les habitants des quartiers vulnérables de perdre la tribune qu’*Around the Block* leur donnait. **Je ne comprends pas pourquoi ils coupent le financement à un moment aussi crucial où on parle beaucoup de littératie et de pauvreté dans nos politiques.**”

“...it is a tragedy for the inhabitants of vulnerable neighbourhoods to lose the platform that *Around the Block* gave them. I do not understand why they are cutting funding at such a crucial time when we are talking a lot about literacy and poverty in our politics.”

Jonathan Poirier

For years, *Around the Block* has been a connector of people and communities. It has served as a place to celebrate the many successes achieved within those communities, both individual and on a broader collaborative scale.

A heartfelt thank you to all those involved over the years in making the publication such an incredible success. Collectively you have helped to create a legacy of memories which will continue to be shared for years to come.

*Krista Turnbull, Community Schools Coordinator
Seaside Park Elementary School*

I’m genuinely saddened to hear that Issue 93 marks the end of *Around the Block*. **It’s disheartening that there won’t be further opportunities to share community stories through your publication.**

Nevertheless, I understand and appreciate the Human Development Council’s decision to host one last electronic issue, allowing us to bid farewell and honor the accomplishments of our partners.

Danyan Luo, EduCode Academy

...you have just shared a very sad story about the next issue being the last for *Around the Block*. I know you have worked hard to bring each issue to press and have put all your energy into its success. And success has defined each issue!!

All of us at EFryNB thank you!!!

*Judy Murphy, Executive Director
Elizabeth Fry New Brunswick (EFryNB)*

[And as always, the last word goes to a proofreader...]

To lose this resource for community news is troubling. Even more displeasing to me, given the too-frequent absence of knowledgeable and careful writing among professional journalists, is the loss to the community of an example of consistent literateness generated by editorial excellence in a non-commercial publication.

Daryl Barton, ATB volunteer proofreader