

Innovation in Practice:

Making Positive Impact in Communities Across Newfoundland and Labrador



By

Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador



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Lead Organizations

Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador communitysector.nl.ca

The Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador (CSC) is an incorporated charitable organization dedicated to advancing the distinct role of the voluntary non-profit community sector. We serve as an incubator of new programs and as a resource centre for the community sector, fostering voluntarism, social innovation, collaboration, social enterprise, and knowledge building.

Since its founding in 1976, the CSC has taken the lead in bringing new technologies to the community sector. Our website hosts a wealth of resources for sector organizations, and we regularly use webinars to provide these organizations with access to experts, new skills, and networks of their peers.

United Community Services Co-op ucscoop.com

The United Community Services Co-op is a unique business services co-operative owned by over 100 nonprofit and community organizations. They work to strengthen the nonprofit sector by seeking co-operative and collaborative solutions to benefit non-profit and community organizations.

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Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador - Connecting people, organizations and communities

The Community Sector Council of Newfoundland and Labrador is a convener, connector, incubator, promoter and supporter of communities and the community sector. CSC has a long record of pioneering innovative ideas and providing an array of services and resources to people, organizations and communities. By providing leadership around cross-cutting issues affecting voluntary, nonprofit organizations and the people they serve, CSC has helped communities around the province adapt and thrive. By identifying challenges and opportunities, giving profile and voice to the community sector and conceptualizing new approaches to common issues, CSC triggers new thinking when it is most needed.



Community Sector Council NL
CEO Penelope Rowe

“CSC is a capacity builder and catalyst,” says CEO Penelope Rowe. “It differs from other organizations in that our primary role is not to work with a defined or specific client group on an ongoing basis. Our emphasis is much broader. CSC’s mission – to encourage citizen engagement, to promote the integration of social and economic development and to provide leadership in shaping public policies – and all the activities we are engaged in are focused on a vision of a prosperous and inclusive society that supports individuals, families and communities.”

Whether offering training to boards of directors on governance issues, consulting with community and governments to address local priorities, working to reduce poverty in low-income St. John’s neighbourhoods, matching volunteers with organizations or bringing youth and seniors together at community kitchens, CSC is championing communities and the leaders that are making a difference.

From its beginnings in 1976, with a small group led by community leaders discussing the lack of structure for community resources in St. John’s, the Community Services Council evolved into a province-wide leader in the community (nonprofit, voluntary) sector with a national profile, working with organizations from coast to coast. Now called the Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador, CSC has remained true to its philosophy of collaboration and its commitment to *voluntarism, social innovation, knowledge building, social enterprise* and *foresight*.

CSC promotes an approach to planning and delivery that melds social and economic perspectives and has strived to put social policy matters in the public eye through research and

publications, consultations, public forums, media interviews, submissions to federal and provincial governments, community organizing, and participation in multi-organization committees.

CSC has been in the vanguard, pioneering work in many areas such as early childhood training, accessibility and independent living, credit and debt counselling, detoxification services for women, co-operative housing, elimination of school fees, child sexual abuse awareness, family resources, seniors' services, poverty reduction initiatives, volunteerism promotion, employment readiness and more. CSC's impact continues to be felt in every corner of the province.

Thinking Big in the Big Land – Cain's Quest

Labrador is the mainland portion of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Home to just 6% of the province's population, it is twice as large as the island of Newfoundland. Labrador is known for its long, cold winter season and vast rugged landscape. It was these qualities that sparked a group of volunteers in Labrador City to begin thinking about how they might capitalize on the unique beauty and extreme weather of the region. Promoting tourism in a beautiful winter landscape might seem easy enough, but Western Labrador is fairly isolated and travel costs can be an impediment. They knew it had to be something innovative, and it had to generate both economic activity and a lot of buzz.



Committee volunteers began the formation of Cain's Quest – Canada's Longest and World's Toughest Snowmobile Endurance Race. The 1200 km race across Labrador was piloted in 2006 which has since been extended to 3000 km and it has quickly become a premiere extreme sporting event. In just four years, registration increased by more than 300% and now regularly includes participants from outside Canada. Known as "the experience of a lifetime," racers travel in teams of 2 by snowmobile day and night, making their way from checkpoint to checkpoint in, what is more often than not, severe weather conditions and rough terrain.

An organizing committee spends months planning the event and more than 300 volunteers come on board as race day nears to make this event one of the biggest snowmobiling events in the world. Volunteers assist with everything from checkpoint management along the route, communications, registration, sales and everything in between.



There have even been volunteers from outside of the province and the country who travel to Labrador to help with the race. Cain's Quest wouldn't be possible without the countless hours contributed by all the volunteers in addition to the financial support from all levels of government and its many corporate sponsors. The ability to watch the race live from the Cain's Quest website has made the race a "must-see" event for millions of viewers from over 70 countries. Web viewers can watch the race live by a satellite tracking unit equipped to each team.

Media from as far away as Norway have reported on the race. This world-class event is growing dramatically and is nearing capacity.

While many a committee has sat around a boardroom table and wondered how to attract tourism and investment into their community, few have garnered the success of Cain's Quest. Innovative organizations have an entrepreneurial mindset, embracing opportunity when it presents itself, taking risks and thinking big. This is what sets Cain's Quest apart. They have turned seemingly insurmountable challenges (weather, rugged landscape and isolation) into major assets. They have capitalized on their strengths and are continuously striving for success. Using technology to attract sponsors and generate international attention on Labrador, Cain's Quest has garnered enough interest and support from government and sponsor collaboration to result in the successful execution of a more than half million dollar race year after year. The increase in registrations each year has also enabled organizers to increase the prize purse to a whopping \$65,000!



Due to the rapid acceleration of the event, the Cain's Quest committee has decided to take a break in 2013 and put off an even bigger and better race in 2014. This will give the volunteers and sponsors a well-deserved break while giving interested teams more time to prepare financially and logistically for the next event. Cain's Quest 2014 will start on March 1st. The 2014 race will take teams to parts of Labrador not yet ventured into by Cain's Quest. Indications are that the roster will be full for the 2014 event and that it will be the biggest Cain's Quest ever with the biggest purse ever.

For more information and race details, please visit www.cainsquest.com

Like them on Facebook! <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CQSER/>

Or follow them on Twitter <https://twitter.com/cainsquest>

From Bangladesh to St. John's

The Community Centre Alliance in St. John's is taking an innovative approach to reducing poverty in the community neighbourhoods in which it works. CCA has taken a globally known model of micro-lending, typically used to address poverty in some of the world's poorest nations, and adapted it to the needs of low-income residents of St. John's. The original concept of providing micro-credit to the poor was developed by Muhammad Yunus and pioneered in Bangladesh. Yunus' idea has garnered much attention and success in several countries battling extreme poverty. Here in Newfoundland and Labrador, the Federation of Co-operatives wondered how they might use micro-lending to foster social and economic development. Through funding from the provincial government and a partnership with the Community Centre Alliance, the model was adapted to address low income and poverty in St. John's. The concept that the poor are credit worthy and that micro-credit can be self sustainable are not new ideas; Yunus' program was started in 1976 and has been implemented successfully throughout the world. But how might an organization in Canada support entrepreneurship among Income Support recipients while sorting through the myriad government-sponsored Income Support and Social Housing regulations? The first step was to find partners, including those government departments that administer Income Support and Social Housing. The next step was to provide a supportive environment for participants and the necessary tools to achieve success.

The program has financial support from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador through Innovation Business and Rural Development. Other partners include the NL Federation of Co-operatives, which acts as a delivery partner, and Metro Business Opportunities, which provides financial administration. The program operates three 'lending circles' at two sites – St. John's and more recently, in the central region of the province in Grand Falls-Windsor.

The micro-business development group draws on the experiences of peers and is supported by a Facilitator who provides advice, assistance and skills development opportunities. Individuals must meet the basic eligibility criteria, which includes a good business idea supported by the group, a genuine desire to succeed and a willingness to work with others to help them be successful. Participants may apply to the group for a loan starting at \$2,500 and once repaid, can access increasingly larger amounts up to \$10,000. Good credit history is not a condition of the loan provided that participants disclose previous credit problems. Loans are approved by majority vote of the peers in the lending circle once certain conditions are fulfilled. Loans will not be "clawed back" for Income Support recipients and the Social Housing office will work with tenants to be flexible around restrictions on business activities. This direct support by government is a key feature. It lets participants know that they are being supported throughout the process and reduces some of the barriers they would otherwise face as they begin to formulate their business ideas and put them into action.

The program began in January 2009 and initial success led to the extension of the program. The Community Centre Alliance hopes to continue to work with government to provide opportunities for people with great ideas but limited resources. Yunus' micro-credit started with a \$27 loan so that a woman in Bangladesh could make and sell bamboo stools to support her family. More than 30 years later and a world away in St. John's, an innovative nonprofit is adapting this idea and a single mother dependant on Income Support is working to support her family by starting a home-based mobile spa service using her first \$2,500 loan.

Recycling Success

How did one organization employ individuals with chronic unemployment issues, make it easier for people to recycle, have a real impact in the waste reduction efforts of a city and catch the attention of environmental businesses across the country? With some innovative thinking that led to a new idea, a new way of working and an organization-wide increase in productivity.



Ever Green Recycling started in St. John's, NL in 1993 as a "sheltered workshop" model to employ consumers of mental health services to recycle aluminum cans, paper and cardboard. The operations were managed by clinical staff of the Waterford Hospital.

Almost two decades later, the Ever Green Environmental Corporation is a sustainable enterprise with four depots in the St. John's and surrounding area, handling 37 million containers per year - that's 25% of all containers recycled in the province! Through its growth and expansion, this registered charity has never lost sight of its mission to support health programs and advance workplace integration. Each year, Ever Green creates about 60,000 employment hours for people with chronic mental illness, who constitute 85% of its workforce. According to Mike Wadden, President and CEO, there are many advantages to adopting an affirmative business model and hiring people with chronic unemployment issues. "The organizational supports required for a successful affirmative business really just mirror accepted business practices, so the skills and, importantly, the workplace experience gained by employees are transferrable to other workplaces in the public and private sectors; this experience is key to improving employability."

A successful enterprise supporting the needs of its clients while offering a valuable service to the public - how might one build on this success? When growing a business, charitable or otherwise, you need to invest in top talent and be willing to take some risks, according to Wadden. With this in mind, Ever Green turned its attention to increasing productivity, a requirement of regular employment not generally associated with charitable employment programs. Through the development of a new Management Information System, Ever Green has increased its recycling units per day from 80,000 to 120,000, and the system is capable of enabling employees to process up to 160,000 containers per day. Not an easy task considering that many employees have numeracy and literacy issues.

This technology is breaking new ground in the recycling business, so much so that other provinces have come calling. Through a licensing arrangement with a local IT company, Yellow Incorporated, the Ever Green developed Management Information System is expected to be deployed by the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board throughout the provincial green depot network by 2014.

Similarly, under license from Ever Green, Yellow is also entering into discussions with green depots and provincial regulatory agencies throughout Canada to commercialize the system in these regions. “Revenues derived from such sales will help support the employment of our people, making our business more sustainable.”



The system is centered around a swipe card, similar to a reward points card, that provides individuals and groups a single access point to their Ever Green account. Customers returning recyclables have bar-coded stickers placed on their filled bags. The bar-coded containers are then stored for later counting, eliminating the waiting time typically associated with the trip. Card members can then go online and view their account information, choosing to save or redeem available cash or even donate it for an official income tax receipt. “It has proven very popular with customers, with almost 12,000 cards now in circulation.”

Ever Green is working to expand the list of charities that customers can choose from. This initiative makes returning recyclables easier for the consumer, increases staff productivity and reduces the tedious cash management component, saving time and money. “Ever Green works with 350 schools, community agencies, and charities generating significant revenues each year for those organizations. Since launching and accelerating our Recycling Card program, the fundraising number has actually jumped to \$250,000 - \$300,000 annually. That’s because we create special accounts for community organizations and schools, and allow them to accumulate and consolidate their recycled materials through sets of linked Recycling Cards, meaning that all recycling by individual members of these organizations (and school students’ and their parents) can be assigned to an account for each school or organization. So for example, I bring in my recycling, and assign to the school account under the name of my son, and his school gets the monetary benefit.”

As if pioneering a technology that could change the face of the recycling business wasn’t enough for this St. John’s charity, Ever Green is continuing to chart new territory. “Over the past year, we have been piloting a program that will sort and reuse wine bottles for the province’s wine industry, using a cutting-edge industrial process that will allow the recycling and reuse of tens of thousands of wine bottles each year by local wineries such as Auk Island and Rodrigues wineries. “A great deal of testing a refining of the system is required when you are developing new industrial processes, and we are looking to operationalize this system in the fall of this year. Afterwards, once we are established in this market, we’ll begin to look at other markets in Canada.”

It’s all part of the vision for sustainable business growth and employment for Mike Wadden and the team at Ever Green.

For more information about Ever Green Recycling visit them at www.greencan.ca

Continuous innovation – the Student Work and Service Program

The Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador (CSC) has been working to encourage citizen engagement and advance the distinct role of the community sector since 1976. Through dozens of initiatives, programs and services, CSC has touched organizations and individuals in just about every community in the province. No program has had more outreach in communities large and small than the Community Service Component of the Student Work and Service Program (SWASP). While not a new initiative – it has been operating since 1994 – its unique approach and continuous innovation has helped thousands of young people gain career experience in their own community, reduce their student debt load, get exposure to the community sector and learn about the important contribution of volunteers to the quality of life of communities. Organizations of all types benefit from the energy, skills and creative ideas of students.



SWASP, unlike other student summer employment programs, relies on joint applications from sponsors and students. This enables students to seek out in advance, or even help design, a potential position related to their course of study and career goals. An arms-length approvals committee of volunteers then assesses the applications, taking into consideration student information as well as job description and anticipated skills development. Not all placements are directly connected to the student's field of study, but many positions in

small communities provide a first job experience for those just graduating from high school. Students already in post-secondary studies can return home for the summer and have an impact on their communities while earning a stipend and a tuition voucher redeemable at any recognized university or college.

A very important component of SWASP is the 'high tech – high touch' approach that has been a hallmark of a number of CSC programs. A friendly online application allows sponsors to start an application, save it and complete it at a later time. SWASP staff are on hand to guide people through the application if necessary and available to sponsors and students throughout the summer to answer questions, help with any issues that may arise, mediate problematic situations, remind participants if forms have not been submitted in a timely fashion and check on placements through a monitoring process that includes written comments and telephone interviews. Normally feedback is received from all placements. Sponsors and students are very appreciative of this accessibility of staff and the interest taken in their activities. Sponsors also like the fact that the paperwork is minimal. The tuition voucher is seen by the vast majority of participants as a great way to save money for post-secondary studies.

One student, Travis Cassell took advantage of the program in his hometown of Cormack on the west coast of the province. Through SWASP he was able to find work in his community as a library program/heritage research assistant with the Town. Among his many duties were photography, research, computer training, giving tours, and website maintenance. The SWASP program allowed Travis to make a positive impact on his community while gaining a large range of skills that he can now carry with him as he sets out for a career in computer technology.

“I had a great experience with your program and I learned a lot of useful skills from it”

- *Travis Cassell, 2012*
SWASP participant

Overwhelmingly positive comments year after year, and the fact that most sponsors and many students reapply for SWASP in succeeding years, speak volumes to the popularity of this unique program, which has administered between 8,000 and 10,000 placements since its inception. A research project carried out in 2005 showed that many students who had never volunteered in their community had developed an interest through SWASP and continued to be involved after their SWASP experience. SWASP helps to develop leadership and a multitude of skills transferable to many work and life situations.

For more information about the SWASP program, visit <http://communitysector.nl.ca/swasp>

Citizens Voices for Positive Change – Vibrant Communities St. John's



Vibrant Communities St. John's is a multi-sector community-based initiative which seeks to reduce poverty by working collaboratively with community organizations, all levels of government, businesses and especially with people who live with low income/poverty. Vibrant Communities -St. John's, led by the Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador, is one of 16 such initiatives throughout Canada, spearheaded by Tamarack – An Institute of Community Engagement, and working with the Caledon Institute of Social Policy and the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation.

Vibrant Communities, itself an innovative movement, takes a grassroots comprehensive approach to poverty reduction. One of the many Vibrant Communities -St. John's initiatives, which accurately reflects this unique approach, is Citizens Voice. Citizens Voice:

- Was born out of the desire to give people living with low income meaningful opportunities to participate in community life and policy development.
- It is a facilitated forum for people living with low income to learn about community resources and provide opportunities to collectively raise awareness about living in poverty.
- Has grown to almost 140 people, mainly through word of mouth, meets once a month and shares information around topics decided by the group in advance. Speakers and facilitators share resources available in the community and the group shares their own knowledge and perspectives.
- Sessions have been held on health literacy, money management, government services, and political engagement. In fact, many government representatives and agencies have asked to come and present to the group hoping to provide information or obtain feedback.

“The majority of these individuals felt marginalized with no voice,” says Ruth MacDonald, Neighborhood Supporter. “They are finding their voices and working together with positive results.”

Success ranges from individual empowerment to policy change. One single father in the group learned how to read his children's medicine labels correctly with help from a session on health literacy. By connecting with others and building on his own strengths, this father now has supports for his two special needs children, is working a full-time job and going back to school! Many members are attending a community leadership program organized by Vibrant

Communities- St. John's. At a group level, residents are connecting with each other and planning joint neighborhood events through a 'Network for Vibrant Neighborhoods'. Frustrated and marginalized by the process of phoning the general income support line, which often resulted in individuals repeating the same information to various agents, the Citizens Voice group now has a direct line and an assigned client services officer. A provincial government programs and services booklet has been revamped and a staff person dedicated to promoting and supporting it, after feedback received from the group.

Citizens Voice proves that engaging citizens in new ways can effect positive change. But how? Organizations all over the country are working to engage marginalized citizens. What makes it work? It is all in the inclusive approach and enabling environment, according to Macdonald. "You have to work with people where they live and eliminate barriers to participation. Most of the people in Citizens Voice have never been to the Community Sector Council office, but I have been in their communities, their neighborhoods, tenants associations and community centres, and sometimes even at their kitchen tables!" Barriers to participation in the group are addressed and supports are provided for transportation and childcare so that everyone can attend the monthly meetings.

Citizens Voice is helping individuals find their own voices, while collectively helping to shape decisions that can provide solutions and reduce barriers for people living in poverty.

For more information about Vibrant Communities- St. John's, please visit <http://communitysector.nl.ca/vibrant-communities>

A Small Community Thinks Big

The Community Youth Network in Harbour Breton (CYN-HB) is full of ideas about how to enhance young people's participation in the social and economic development of their town. Over the past decade, this vibrant organization has pioneered intergenerational learning, early childhood education, economic development, leadership building, recreation, and support services in this small community of just under 2000 people. Marie Bungay, the Executive Director of the CYN-HB says the organization strives to search out new ways to tackle the challenges and issues that face rural communities like Harbour Breton. "Even in a small community, there are many opportunities for young people to develop their skills while addressing important community issues in new and creative ways," says Bungay.



One of CYN-HB's initiatives was the seasonal Funship Internet Café, an intergenerational mentorship program that ran from 2009-2011. It sold baked goods in addition to providing free Internet and computer use. The program offered an opportunity for youth volunteers at the Funship Café to help senior volunteers overcome their reservations about technology while the older volunteers taught students traditional recipes and shared stories. This partnership included the Funship 50 Plus Club, the Town of Harbour Breton, and Primary Health Care (Central Health).



Another of the CYN-HB's initiatives, the HB-TV television station, provides young people with leadership and entrepreneurial skills while reaching out to community residents. HB-TV provides learning opportunities for youth who may be interested in careers in TV and film, technology, cosmetology, procurement, marketing and business development. It is also helping reduce social isolation and raise awareness about important community issues. The HB-TV initiative, like many for the CYN-HB, is a partnership. The CYN-HB works with the Town of Harbour Breton, Harbour Breton Recreation Commission and King Academy High School's Crown Enterprises (a school-based local community channel and social enterprise). "Collaboration is key," says Bungay. "I attribute much of our organization's success to the many partnerships we have created and sustained. Success requires teamwork, the contributions of a dedicated staff and volunteers."

Ever-determined to think outside the box, CYN-HB proactively seeks out unmet community needs. Lack of early childhood development in the area, for example, saw the creation of the Building Blocks Quality Child Care Centre. The ability to think outside the box

and meet the needs of the community has allowed the programs at the CYN-HB to thrive again and again.

Bungay has some advice for other organizations wishing to tackle big challenges in creative ways. Be patient. “Innovation doesn’t happen right away. Things may not work out exactly as planned at the start; it is important to allow time to adapt and refine processes over time.”

Visit the CYN-HB website at <http://harbourbreton.thecyn.ca> to learn more about the organization.

An innovative gathering place

Innovation is often born out of necessity, in an effort to be more efficient or come up with new products, programs or ways of doing business. During the past several years, the nonprofit, community sector has responded to economic changes and an increasingly fragile funding base by working together – sharing resources, space and even staff. The benefits of shared services and space include not only savings on money and time but forging an environment for creativity and continual information sharing.

Protected Areas Association (PAA) of Newfoundland and Labrador first began thinking about sharing space and resources after facing its own crisis – a demolition order in 2002 on the building they previously occupied. “The Gathering Place seemed like the perfect place to set up shop”, says Ruth (Godden) French, Development and Outreach Coordinator for the PAA. Founded in 1994 by the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of Presentation, The Gathering Place is a nonprofit organization supported by two Roman Catholic parishes and three Anglican parishes in the centre of St. John’s. “We had the idea that like-minded organizations working together in the same space, sharing and collaborating could promote ecology and social justice and make a positive impact in the community,” says French.

The Gathering Place rents the top floor for of the building to the PAA who then sublets to the Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Network (NLEN), the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS-NL), and the Northeast Avalon Atlantic Coastal Action Program (NAACAP), creating The Environmental Gathering Place. They also sublet to the Sierra Club of Canada and the NL Environmental Educators. It is a place where organizations share both values and the long-term goals of environmental responsibility and sustainability. Passionate people with a willingness to learn and share make for an educational, creative and thought-provoking environment. The organizations at the Environmental Gathering Place are not in competition with one another; rather they take advantage of the opportunity and space to work together on a regular basis. Aside from the obvious cost savings of a shared boardroom, copiers, projectors, and library, and communicative supports such as joint presentations and meetings, sharing information and collaborating on program initiatives makes nonprofit life a little less lonely for these organizations, most of whom have only one core staff person.



“The camaraderie and collaboration that exists between the staff and volunteers of our organizations is really beneficial,” says Don Quigley, former Executive Director of NAACAP. “As a professional in the nonprofit sector, sharing space really reduces isolation, and the impact of sharing our ideas, challenges, and successes is immeasurable.”

Similarly, organizations can act more quickly and efficiently due to their shared location and access to the historical knowledge of each group. “When you’re applying for funding, promoting a project, or making an official statement about an issue of importance, it makes a difference if you are a united front rather than one organization,” says French.



Whether it is providing letters of support, having an impromptu roundtable discussion or nurturing the environmental passions and careers of the many interns and young volunteers that use the joint library, it is all about creating positive change.

For more information about the organizations of the Environmental Gathering Place visit:

Northeast Avalon Atlantic Coastal Action Program www.naacap.ca

Protected Areas Association www.paanl.org

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society NL www.cpawsnl.org

Newfoundland and Labrador Environment Network www.nlen.ca

Bringing Together Artists and Community



Eastern Edge Gallery is a local, nonprofit, artist-run gallery, located on Harbour Drive in St. John's. Since 2000, the artists have been developing and delivering a 24-hour art marathon to display talented artists from our own province and across the country. The marathon started as a showcase of live art making as well as one of Eastern Edge's most important annual fundraisers. In 2008, the marathon went from a one-day event to an entire festival and changed its name to the Art Marathon Festival. The festival is no longer a fundraiser; the proceeds go to funding the festival itself.

During the festival there are barbeques held in different locations around the city. Each barbeque is hosted by a different community organization and the proceeds are divided between the nonprofit groups and Eastern Edge. Some of the organizations which have been involved in the past include; Canada World Youth, Oxfam, Happy City St. John's, the NL Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre, and Visual Artists NL among others.

The festival and the marathon showcase both local and national talent using a variety of media. The festival begins with an official launch party at the beginning of the week. During the week, there is a variety of scheduled events, workshops, performances, and even a "fancy artists talk" where local and national artists give a 15-minute presentation on their work. Drinks, inspired by the artist's style, are served following the presentation.

The main event, however, is the 24-hour art marathon which is typically held on a weekend towards the end of August. The 24-hour period begins at noon on Saturday and ends at noon on Sunday, culminating with an exhibition and auction of all the art created during the marathon. Proceeds from the auction are split between the artists and the Art Marathon Festival.



This is a truly collaborative event. As well as partnerships with other community organizations, the festival includes visual artists, musicians and writers. It has also included local film festivals, such as the Nickel Independent Film Festival and the St. John's International Women's Film Festival. Eastern Edge has also partnered with local galleries to create the "Summer Saunter," a self-guided tour of local galleries. Government agencies are getting

involved as well; Eastern Edge has received funding from Canadian Heritage: Canada Arts Presentation Fund, the City of St. John's, The Canada Council for the Arts and the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council.

Eastern Edge has succeeded in forming a community of creative, artistic individuals and put them in contact with the people and organizations that are most interested in their success. The-24 hour art marathon festival continues to deepen these ties and remind the community how much is gained when we have brilliant local artists creating in our midst. Creativity breeds innovation , and thanks to Eastern Edge, St. John's has a breeding ground.



For more information visit the festival blog at artmarathon.wordpress.com or their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Art-Marathon/198621500185312>

Ask Nan: Using Old World Knowledge to Solve Today's Challenges

The word “innovate” comes from the Latin *innovatus*, which means to renew or change. Often when considering how we might improve we focus on the renew aspect; but innovation is not always about a new idea. Sometimes the most positive change comes from taking a new approach to a tried and true classic. This is the case for the Bonavista Peninsula Regional Waste Management Committee (BPRWMC)'s “Ask Nan” initiative. “Ask Nan” is about using old-world knowledge to solve a new world problem - reducing our environmental impact.

“The concept is that throughout the centuries Newfoundlanders had to be resourceful and innovative with what they had, in order to provide for themselves and their families. What we call recycling they called thrift, what we call zero-waste (the latest trend in waste reduction ideology) they called "making do". We have the knowledge available. We just need to rekindle it!”

- Regional Coordinator Sarah Morgan

The BPRWMC is a nonprofit group implementing a strategy that will see the regionalization of a sustainable waste management system. In addition to facilitating the consolidation of ten local waste disposal sites to three, the Committee is working to encourage residents to reduce, reuse and recycle. The BPRWMC has launched two websites, a facebook page and a newsletter to reach a broad and diverse audience. Through innovative partnerships with local businesses and community organizations, residents are encouraged to attend information sessions and educational community events.

Nan knows best

How does “Nan” help reduce, reuse and recycle? Nan knows about everything from sewing quilts to home cooking and she shares her knowledge online at www.wastenotwantnot.ca. She has advice about how to compost, including Pop's Page, complete with instructions on how to build a composter. She gives tips about repairing household items that are discarded nowadays, but would have been fixed and reused in the past.

The “Ask Nan” campaign encourages us to ask our own Nans, Nanas, Grandmothers and Grannies what wisdom and experience they have to share that could make Newfoundland and Labrador a stronger, cleaner and safer place to live and raise our families.



Don't Waste the Rock

In the summer of 2011 the BPRWMC hosted an environmental youth summit called “Don't Waste the Rock” in partnership with the Bonavista Peninsula Community Youth Network (BAYNet), Conservation Corps Green Team and MI Ocean Net Friends of Beaches. The summit was a great **success** and consisted of ten community events (Port Rexton, Trinity, Charleston, Musgravetown, Port Blandford, King's Cove, Newman's Cove, Bonavista, Elliston and Trinity Bay North) centered on waste reduction. Each event was organized to include an information session on the effects of litter on local ecosystems and marine life, followed by a clean-up of a town beach, park or trailway, and the day ended with a community bbq and prizes.

The summit culminated with the Don't Waste The Rock Environmental Festival held in Trinity Bay North on August 7th, opened by Hon Ross Wiseman and other local dignitaries. The festival, modeled after a traditional garden party, featured booths from eleven provincial environmental organizations with information on waste reduction and conservation. There were seminars and workshops on waste reduction, conservation, composting, food security & climate change, in addition to games and activities, prizes and giveaways, live music and a complementary waste-free lunch of local produce featuring disposable cutlery that is made from cornstarch, not plastic, and therefore compostable.

The festival was a true labour of love, as it was put off entirely through donations from local businesses. Not only did the presenters provide giveaways and prizes, but companies such as Country Ribbon, Dominion, Browning-Harvey, Bonavista Foodland and Miffen's ValuFoods of Catalina donated enough food to feed two hundred. Local strawberry growers in Lethbridge provided fresh strawberries that were served with yogurt in edible waffle cone bowls. The compostable cornstarch cutlery was donated by a Toronto company GreenShift, who carries a complete line of take-out and disposable tableware made from cornstarch, sugarcane and other biodegradable materials.



Local volunteers made the day by providing necessary services, such as the Trinity Bay North Fire Department setting up a First Aid Station, SPABA (Senior Advocates of Bonavista Area) manned the kitchen and prepared the fruit bowls, and NL Power volunteers manned the BBQ, grilling the chicken burgers supplied by Country Ribbon. BAYNet youth acted as Festival Staff greeting people, handing out programs and providing information.

The Festival also saw the awarding of the Don't Waste The Rock Environmental Awards. These awards were presented to a youth, family and community organization that demonstrates a commitment to community sustainability through waste reduction, and were presented by area MP Scott Simms.

Of course Nan was represented, as the Women's Institute was on hand with traditional waste reduction techniques, and featured homemade jams, rug-hooking, quilting and hats and rugs crocheted from plastic bags! They also had lunch totes made from old Kool-Aid jammer packs sewn together!



For more information, a list of presenters and bios on the DWTR Award winners, visit the festival website www.dontwastetherock.ca.

For more information about the "Ask Nan" initiative visit:

Ask Nan www.wastenotwantnot.ca

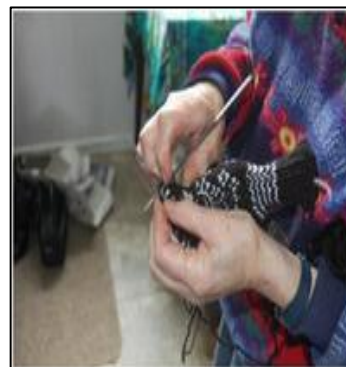
Bonavista Peninsula Regional Waste Management Committee <http://bprwmc.com>

BPRWMC on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=113252365400357&ref=ts>

Bridging the Past and Future on the French Shore

Part museum, part learning annex and certainly a tourist attraction, The French Shore Interpretation Centre in Conche on the Great Northern Peninsula launched its Centre for Textile Art in 2011.

The French Shore Historical Society has been showcasing textile work by local artists since its inception in 2000. Textiles have always been an important part of Newfoundland history from pen wiper rugs and Grenfell mats made by industrious housewives to fishing nets mended and made by the fishers who worked along shore.



Historically, textile work has been borne of necessity. Women made mats and quilts for the house because they provided warmth. Baskets were woven to carry everything from potatoes to newborn babies. This mentality of necessity remains to this day. Many people who engage in this kind of textile work don't consider it an art or even a craft but simply "something they do." Joan Simmonds, a representative for the Centre for Textile Art explained how one of the goals of the center is to change this perception.

"We want to show [the people doing the work] that it is an art and it is valuable. People don't want to put a price on their work; mostly they just make it for family and friends."

- Joan Simmonds

The shop component of the center is a wonderful opportunity to bring together textile work from all over the French Shore and offers a location where artists can sell their wares. The educational component offers locals and tourists the chance to learn traditional skills such as basket-weaving, embroidery, knitting and crocheting, among many others. The French Shore Historical Society has had to be innovative when it comes to space. The space available in the French Shore Cultural Centre is limited so when it comes to classes like basket-weaving and embroidery they have had to be a little creative.

"We are using spaces within the community. If there is room in an old house, we'll use an old house, or an old store, we'll use an old store. If the project is environmental, we'll find a place in nature. We use what we have." - Joan Simmonds



Using what they have does not stop at the use of space. In 2010 Memorial University student Lisa Wilson assisted the French Shore Historical Society by gathering together samples of textile work and making them accessible via the Memorial University digital archives.

The center for textile art will serve as an environment to build a community of artisans and craftspeople on the French Shore. It also offers an opportunity to share Newfoundland and Labrador history and culture with a new generation of citizens and tourists.

To learn more about the French Shore and the French Shore Historical Society visit their website <http://www.frenchshore.com>

Find them on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/81949647728>

To learn more about the MUN digital archives visit <http://collections.mun.ca/index.php>

At the Heart of the Community

The Baccalieu Trail Seniors Outreach Services is always looking for new ways to include its senior population into the community and has done so time and time again. Working under the umbrella of the Seniors Resource Centre NL, The Baccalieu Trail Seniors Outreach Services serves residents of over 68 rural communities along the Baccalieu Trail. It is the only Seniors Outreach Services office in Newfoundland and offers services that focus on seniors, family members, and caregivers.

Two innovative programs which have showed the resourcefulness of the seniors in the Baccalieu Trail area have been; the 2010 Healthy Cooking Sessions and the 2011-2012 “Making the Connection” programs. Both programs aim to help seniors, albeit in different ways. While one program has drawn on the existing skill set of the seniors in aiding the community, the other has expanded the skill set of seniors.

The Healthy Cooking Sessions took place over the course of January to May 2010 and aimed to teach seniors, young mothers, and children how to cook nutritious meals on a budget. The objectives of the program were to:

- To increase nutritional education and promote healthy eating for seniors, single parents, and young children
- To improve intergenerational communication between the generations
- To educate the different age groups on how to prepare healthy meals on a fixed income
- To encourage participants to buy fresh local food
- To improve future eating behaviors of all participants



Drawing on the success of the intergenerational Healthy Cooking program, the Seniors Outreach Services developed the “Making the Connection” program in 2011. The “Making the Connection” program paired local high school students with seniors for one-on-one technology tutorial sessions. Seniors, with the help of the students, were given the opportunity to learn how to use a variety of technologies, including but not limited to; computers, digital cameras, hard drives, flash drives, printers, and cell phones. The seniors were given a choice of tasks and equipment which they could focus on during their time with the students. The students then assisted their partners with their chosen tasks during their time together.

The partnership between the students and the seniors not only increased the senior's competency with these new devices but also increased their confidence in using such equipment. However the learning experience was not one-sided, the students also gained valuable skills in the process. Students were able to take on leadership roles and develop their communication skills as they worked with the seniors.



The Baccalieu Trail Seniors Outreach Services has successfully used intergenerational communication and social inclusion as building blocks for its programs. The integration of seniors into the community allows rural communities to come closer together. By constantly renewing programs which focus on the needs of the community and its senior population, the Baccalieu Trail Seniors Outreach Services has helped bring their work to the heart of the community.

“It was so enjoyable! The student instructor I had was excellent! I learned what I hoped and did not think I would ever learn”

-Participant

For more information on the Baccalieu Trail Seniors Outreach Services visit <http://www.seniorsresource.ca/Baccalieu.htm> or contact Regional Coordinator Marie A. Ryan, at 709.786.4630 or seniorsinfo@gmail.com or marie.ryan@gmail.com

Catching the People Who Fall Through the Cracks

Individuals with complex needs face a multitude of issues and are often dealing with several agencies to access services and supports. A lack of coordination amongst these agencies can result in service gaps and even more barriers for those who need the most help.

According to a 2008 research report, individuals with complex needs are facing a revolving door of services in the St. John's area and some basic needs, such as housing, are not being met. Delivery agencies decided that things needed to change.

A coordinated committed approach

A coordinated, holistic approach by both government and community groups is necessary to serve individuals with multiple and complex needs. Navigators and Networks (NAVNET) was born of this necessity. This initiative is working towards finding innovative solutions to address system barriers affecting individuals' complex needs.

Coordinating services for individuals with complex needs may seem like a common sense approach, but it is no simple task. Streamlining and sharing information among government departments such as Human Resources, Labour and Employment, Eastern Health: Mental Health and Addictions Program and Community Supports Program, the Department of Justice, Health and Community Services and Newfoundland and Labrador Housing are no small feat. Add community-based agencies like Stella Burry and Choices for Youth, and coordinating services becomes a logistical challenge. The first major barrier is to find a way to share information about individuals across different departments and with community organizations in ways that are in line with existing Privacy Legislation.

Find something to build on

Lisa Zigler, NAVNET Project Coordinator set out to find a solution to these challenges and was surprised at the lack of information available. Although there has been some innovative work done in moving towards a model of coordination and integration in other provinces, many of these initiatives involved a small number of services working together. None of these included having both Government Departments and Community Organizations as partners at the decision-making table.

"There really wasn't an existing model that included all the Departments and key community agencies that needed to be involved," says Zigler. "We didn't want to reinvent the wheel, and we were determined to find something we could build on."

Learn from others

Zigler's search led her to a program in Victoria, Australia. With support from the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador's Poverty Reduction Strategy, funding was provided for two individuals representing the jurisdictions of Victoria State and New South Wales (Sydney) to travel to St. John's for a 2009 conference called "From The Outside In". The representatives from Australia gave the keynote address on how they transformed their service delivery system from a fragmented and complex system to an integrated and coordinated one, just eight years prior. The Australian government in these two States was so eager to share what they had learned that they sent two additional people to St. John's for the conference and meetings with senior officials.

Identify early success

The Victoria State service model focuses on care plan coordination, assessment and case management. Assessment is a particularly crucial component in ensuring that clients get the best possible care, according to Zigler. NAVNET has modified an assessment matrix, used in Seattle, Washington and Red Deer, Alberta. This matrix includes traditional components like rating an individual's physical and mental health. It also includes more comprehensive components like "social connectedness." NAVNET has adapted the model used in Victoria, Australia to fit St. John's; using it to coordinate a systems response across several government departments and community organizations and also to address barriers faced by individuals with "complex needs". NAVNET is creating even stronger connections by sharing this knowledge with their Australian colleagues, and with other groups and organizations who are also working towards improving their response to this population. The work that NAVNET is engaged in also has caught the attention of the Mental Health Commission of Canada and NAVNET remains committed to a process of knowledge transfer.

From ideas to action

NAVNET is now nine months into a one-year demonstration project of the implementation of its service model. A mid-term report has shown some early positive indicators both in client outcomes as well as the benefits of working collaboratively across different systems. Zigler comments "based on the outcomes that are coming out of other jurisdictions such as Australia that have been engaged in this system coordination work, we are hopeful that this service model will make our current system more responsive, will result in better outcomes for these individuals and over time, will become more cost effective."

Transforming the way systems operate to increase positive outcomes for individuals with multiple and complex needs is a huge undertaking. Using an evidence-based approach and looking to other innovative models has helped this network move from conception to a new model for service delivery in less than two years.

For more information about NAVNET visit www.navnetnl.ca.

Local Charity Looking for Superheroes

Finding enthusiastic volunteers to canvass for donations is not always easy for many charities. However, those donations are vital to organizations that are providing essential services, helping those in need and increasing our quality of life. Volunteers who raise money for our local communities are the unsung heroes of many charities and nonprofit organizations. With that in mind, Easter Seals NL is giving its volunteers a chance to become a superhero for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians with physical disabilities.



Challenge yourself and change lives

“Drop Zone” is an innovative fundraising initiative that marries raising financial support with current trends in adventure tourism and extreme sports. Canvassers who raise a minimum of \$1000 will get the opportunity to rappel down the face of the Atlantic Place building on Water Street in the heart of downtown St. John’s. Not only do these volunteers get to zip down the building like Spider-Man, they can dress like him too! Participants are encouraged to wear a superhero costume as they descend the structure. This inclusive event challenges the norm and gives people with disabilities the opportunity to join in as well. People with little or no upper body mobility can be accompanied down the building with a trained instructor.

St. John’s volunteers in high gear



Kirk Leach, Fund Development Manager for Easter Seals NL, described some of the ways that registered participants can fundraise the minimum \$1,000. Those well connected in the business industry may send out emails to colleagues. Other participants may choose to sell tickets on prizes, or just ask their families and friends for support. Donations are also accepted online at the national drop zone website at www.thedropzone.ca.

Drop Zone has been an annual national event for Easter Seals Canada for the past several years and 2012 will be the second year that the Newfoundland and Labrador chapter will be participating. In 2011, Easter Seals Drop Zone participants in Canada raised over one million dollars for children with disabilities! All funds raised through the Drop Zone event in St. John’s will stay in Newfoundland and Labrador.

For more information about Drop Zone in St. John’s contact Kirk Leach at (709) 754-1399 or email kirk@eastersealsnl.ca. or visit them on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/eastersealsnl.eastcoast>

Encouraging People and Ideas

Everyone has skills to contribute, and good ideas can come from anywhere. That's the philosophy of Public Legal Information Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (PLIAN), a nonprofit agency in St. John's dedicated to educating people about legal issues. Now in its 28th year of operations, PLIAN, the Newfoundland and Labrador component of Public Legal Education Association of Canada (PLEAC), offers a diverse set of community programs and events with a goal of increasing access to justice.

With a small budget and only two core staff, the organization has made it a point to create an environment that encourages innovation. In fact, the organizational culture is a selling point for potential staff. "As a nonprofit organization, we cannot always pay as much as government or the private sector," says Kristen O'Keefe, Executive Director. "So right from the interview process, we make sure people understand that this is a place where ideas can flourish and everyone's skills are valued. Our staff and volunteers really appreciate it." Family-friendly policies, regular staff meetings and fun brainstorming sessions add to the supportive culture.

No idea is discarded outright at PLIAN and new ways of thinking are encouraged. One of the group's most successful initiatives came from an idea brought forth by a volunteer who was severely bullied in school. A presentation outlining the legal implications of bullying was developed and delivered to 2000 people and counting at schools, conferences, and youth camps around the province. PLIAN believes that educating young people on the legal consequences of bullying behaviour will prove to be a key component in the decline of bullying. A new take on an old issue is just the kind of work that the board, staff and volunteers at PLIAN love to get involved in.

PLIAN's Youth Justice Summer Camp is another successful program, initiated as a fun way to inform young people about their rights and responsibilities under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. This inclusive, accessible approach to youth justice education involves young people visiting police stations and the provincial courthouse and taking part in workshops, presentations and even a mock trial. The Camp is offered in locations throughout Newfoundland and Labrador and has been adapted for delivery in other provinces such as Quebec, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

"The delivery of public legal information in Newfoundland and Labrador is an exciting and challenging endeavor. Our population is spread over a large area with many rural communities," says O'Keefe. This reality was the basis behind implementing PLIAN's newest information delivery format, webinars.

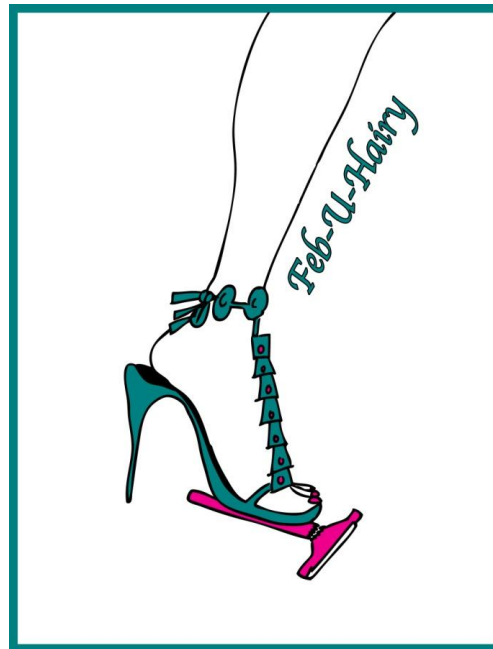


Limited resources mean that touching every community in person just isn't feasible for groups like PLIAN. Therefore, new ideas and approaches are important to meet community needs. According to O'Keefe, that's all about empowering people, building relationships and never giving up on a good idea. An innovative way to educate victims of domestic violence in Ontario might not work in a northern community in Labrador. But the willingness to share approaches and adapt them to regional and cultural sensitivities enables innovation to flourish.

For more information about PLIAN visit <http://www.publiclegalinfo.com/>.

Unique Fundraiser 'Growing' Each Year

Would women go an entire month without shaving their legs? What if it was for a cause? Medical students Kathleen Callanan and Angelique Myles thought so and they approached Planned Parenthood NL – Sexual Health Centre with an idea. Ask women in Newfoundland and Labrador to go an entire month without shaving their legs and raise money to increase awareness and support of cervical screening initiatives. Women in Newfoundland and Labrador have some of the highest rates of cervical cancer and some of the lowest national pap screening rates. The staff and volunteers of Planned Parenthood NL were to try a new approach to supporting their cervical screening initiatives and also raise awareness about cervical cancer in the province. In 2010 Feb-U-Hairy was born.



good
and

and
eager

The success of the campaign continues to grow each year; the 2011 campaign raised over \$4500 and the 2012 campaign raised more than \$7500 for the Thursday evening pap clinic. The clinic is staffed by local physicians who take time from their own busy family practices to serve women who may feel uncomfortable in a highly medicalized setting or with their current doctor, and those who may not have a family physician at all.

Costa Kasimos, Executive Director of Planned Parenthood NL says that the Thursday evening pap clinics offer women the services they need in a time and place that is most convenient and comfortable for them.

Volunteers take ownership

Taking on a new fundraiser can be a risk for a small organization like Planned Parenthood NL, with just three full-time staff. They depend on the volunteer work of Callanan and Myles to plan and implement much of the fundraiser. "Our volunteers are very passionate and energetic," says Kasimos. "We provide them with the support they need to carry out their good ideas." Allowing people to take ownership and run with a good idea is crucial to innovation in an organization, according to Kasimos. Knowing when to offer support and advice and when to step back is both a balancing act and integral to success.



“The importance of cervical screening is something that all women can relate to,” says Feb-U-Hairy participant Louise Woodfine of the Community Sector Council NL. “A group of co-workers and I signed up as a corporate team. We had lots of fun and raised \$600.”

The clinic is open from 5-7:30 pm on Thursday and it is located at 203 Merrymeeting Road in St. John’s. Call 579-1009 or 1-877-NO-MYTHS for an appointment or for more information. Other appointment times are also available. Visit Planned Parenthood NL’s website at www.nlsexualhealthcentre.org for more information about their programs and services.

Global Change Through Local Solutions



Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) is the largest student-run, nonprofit organization in the world. SIFE Memorial, the team based at Memorial University, has a focus of affecting global change through local solutions. Many of its projects are characterized by community outreach and development, establishing financial literacy and inspiring entrepreneurship.

In 2011, the 64-member team at SIFE Memorial boasted more than 22,000 volunteer hours. Many of these volunteers had the opportunity to participate in the SIFE World Cup; a showcase of the impact that SIFE teams are having around the world. The Memorial University branch of SIFE has experienced resounding international success in the past few years. In 2009, they placed third in the World Cup and the year before that, they took home the gold! The organization has also been named the best SIFE team in Canada 6 of the past 7 years.

Originally geared to business students, SIFE Memorial increased their volunteer numbers and now has participation from all faculties at the university. Several of SIFE Memorial's innovative projects have garnered attention and led to their success. "Launch Pad," an office space complete with business accessories located on Memorial's campus, is one of SIFE Memorial's initiatives for aspiring student entrepreneurs. An annual Innovation Challenge held by SIFE Memorial and Cox & Palmer awards the winning student with a year's office space. The ultimate goal of the project is to foster a sense of value for peer collaboration, a well-maintained workspace and a space where innovation can thrive among young entrepreneurs.

Memorial's SIFE chapter supports community growth at the national and international level through programs such as "FLAGS" and "Based in Business." These programs range from dispensing financial advice to seniors, in partnership with Scotiabank, to leading intensive business training for ex-military personnel interested in entrepreneurship, in partnership with the Prince of Wales's foundation in Canada, Prince's Charities Canada. Whether SIFE Memorial is teaching business and instilling leadership characteristics in school-aged children throughout the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada national network through the "Be Green" program, or helping individuals with disabilities find employment opportunities through their "Bright Futures" project, the organization is dedicated to ingenuity.



Shane Skinner, President of SIFE Memorial, credits their success to an organizational structure that encourages participation, knowing which ideas match current capacities and resources, and understanding of the impact of their work. “Innovation is about more than just new ideas, it’s about understanding how to implement ideas to address complex problems in a way that produces real impact,” says Skinner. SIFE Memorial provides students with a level playing field and the opportunity to discuss, engage and collaborate. The result is about more than generating local economic activity, it’s about having genuine impact in the communities in which Memorial graduates will live and work.

To find out more information about SIFE Memorial visit their website at <http://www.sifememorial.ca/>

Connect with them on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/SIFEMemorial>

Follow them on twitter: https://twitter.com/sife_memorial

Inspiring Ideas in St. Mary's



Newfoundland and Labrador rural communities are facing times where demographic trends such as out-migration and an ageing population demand new and avant-garde programming to meet community needs and enhance the quality of life for its citizens. The Father Val Power Learning Centre Complex (FVPLC) in St. Mary's, NL has taken a holistic and innovative approach in providing its residents, most of whom are seniors, with a wealth of opportunities to learn and participate fully in community life. Innovation demands a legion of varying circumstances before it can take form, and this small community centre has harnessed the power of creativity and resourcefulness to bring about healthy change to its own and other neighboring towns.

It all starts with an idea and creativity is readily flowing at this centre where regular brainstorming sessions allow time for thinking, collaborating and experimenting with new approaches. Residents can take part in sessions on healthy eating with a nutritionist, learn about organic farming and contribute to a community garden. The FVPLC has an established community garden and greenhouse in the community of Riverhead where the Centre is located in addition to two gardens and four greenhouses in neighboring communities.

In an effort to serve an eclectic community, the Centre has a multitude of services. It features a state-of-the-art fitness room which is popular with both older and younger residents. People can drop by the Centre to take part in a reading club, borrow a book from the small library, listen to guest speakers on a variety of topics, or learn to use one of the public computers. The Centre also focuses on using the arts to increase individual capacity and educate residents about timely issues. An Irish rug hooking session and a sewing club are available free of charge, as are almost all the Centre's programs. The Centre has also founded a performance troupe, the Puncheon Players, who have put off a play called *Spancel*. *Spancel* was developed with a powerful message about elder abuse to educate the public about the dangers and issues associated with it. According to Chairperson Sheila Lee, "All of our programming, no matter how wide-ranging, is aimed one thing - helping our community and its residents thrive."

Sheila and her team are inflexible with their goals but malleable in their methods. Residents come to socialize and be entertained. An on-site Tea Room, a friendly game of cards or an afternoon of music is coupled with educational information such as the benefits of healthy eating and exercise as well as many issues specific to seniors. "Each idea inspires another in someone else and the cycle continues," says Lee. "Knowledge is power and we investigate and seize opportunities that will empower our community and its residents."

Whether it's finding unused fields for gardening projects, keeping an eye out for new grants or running a Green Depot to generate revenue and promote environmentalism in local schools, there is always an opportunity on the horizon for the FVPLC, which serves a surrounding population of just 2000. Ideas are not discarded because of budget and staffing issues – resourcefulness is in high supply. The Father Val Power Learning Centre Complex is leading positive change in its community by being attuned to the needs of residents, looking to the future and having a willingness to try new things.

For more information please visit

<http://www.nlwebsolutions.com/Fitness%20Center/index.htm>

“We’re Talkin’ About It”

Consumers’ Health Awareness Network Newfoundland and Labrador (CHANNAL) works to combat the isolation that often surrounds people living with mental illness. Because of the stigma surrounding mental health issues, individuals with a mental illness often feel lonely and ashamed. This is part of the reason why although one in five Canadians will experience mental illnesses in their lifetime, only one third of those affected seek help.



CHANNAL wants to change that by encouraging people to talk about mental illness. They are working to create a community of understanding and encourage a culture of communication. Advertising, media releases, websites and brochures can all be effective methods to disseminate information and raise awareness. But how do you get people to talk about something that has been typically been treated as a taboo subject? You think ‘outside the box’, pique people’s interest and start the conversation.

Beginning in October 2012, CHANNAL will launch a campaign called “We’re Talkin’ About It.” The campaign will take place during Mental Illness Awareness Week, which falls on the first week of October each year. The phrase is meant to encourage people to start a conversation regarding mental illness and its impacts. But CHANNAL doesn’t want to start conversations just anywhere. No, they’re targeting conversations in the workplace!

To facilitate conversations in the workplace, CHANNAL is developing an “employer’s toolkit” which will give employers a ready-made kit for organizing a 60 minute workplace discussion about mental illness during Mental Illness Awareness Week. CHANNAL is doing the necessary legwork to allow employers an easy mechanism to stimulate the conversation about mental illness in their place of work. The kit will include a discussion guide which will allow employees to lead the conversation as well as employers in addition to invitations to the session, reminder notes, thank you cards for attending and session feedback sheets. CHANNAL will reach out via phone calls and media displays to allow potential employers the opportunity to take advantage of the kit.

“We know that both employers and employees have a new awareness of the impact of mental illness in the workplace - but we also know that there is confusion around how to get the conversation going. There’s still a lot of fear around opening up dialogue because of stigma and discrimination. Our goal with “We’re Talkin’ About It” is to provide a template that can be used by employers and employees to get the conversation started in a way that feels safe for everyone.”

Karen Ann Parsons, Executive Director

The kit will provide employers and employees with all of the necessary materials to start a conversation and keep it going so that

everyone feels that they are working in a comfortable, mental-illness friendly work environment.

The concept for the “We’re Talkin’ About It” campaign came from an earlier CHANNAL anti-stigma initiative, “Let’s Talk About It.” In 2010, CHANNAL started the “Let’s Talk about It” campaign by printing t-shirts with the words “let’s talk about it” written on the front. The phrase was meant to encourage a question, “let’s talk about what?” The answer- mental illness. The campaign was launched during the 2010 Mental Illness Awareness Week.



CHANNAL encouraged anyone who knew or cared about someone with a mental illness to wear one of these t-shirts and to share their knowledge and experiences with anyone who asked. Over the course of the campaign, 2000 shirts were sold to 60+ locations around Newfoundland and Labrador in support of mental health awareness. The success of the two-year campaign led CHANNAL to consider what new endeavors they could pursue to encourage a healthy discussion of mental illness.

Employment plays an integral role in one’s sense of self and as such, one should feel comfortable discussing mental illness if it is affecting them or others in the workplace. By creating comfortable environments in which consumers or their loved ones can openly discuss mental illness CHANNAL hopes to decrease the social stigma attached to mental illness. With a little innovative thinking, a dedicated staff and volunteers, and a desire to affect positive change, CHANNAL illustrates that mental illness is something that affects many families and strives to open up the lines of open and honest communication within our communities.

For more information on CHANNAL and its programs/ services please visit <http://channal.ca>

Visit them on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/CHANNAL-Consumers-Health-Awareness-Network-Newfoundland-And-Labrador/215103361844127>

Or follow them on Twitter: https://twitter.com/CHANNAL_NL

Helping Our Communities Transcend Borders

Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF) is one of the world's most well-known and far-reaching charities.

All around the world, MSF personnel provide primary care and long-term support in the face of war, disaster, and deprivation. In September 2011, the organization held a three day interactive learning experience in Bannerman Park where the green lawns of this historic park hosted a model refugee camp for people to tour, free of charge. The camp had all of the necessities of survival that exist in an actual refugee camp including:

- Shelter area
- Food distribution area
- Latrine area
- Water supply
- Health clinic
- Nutrition treatment centre
- Cholera treatment centre
- Vaccination tent

Trained MSF staff – amongst them residents of St. John's who've worked with MSF overseas - guided onlookers of all ages through on a tour that explains the crucial elements of survival in a refugee camp. The tour was an attempt to give the public some insight on what life in a refugee camp really entails. Visitors were asked to imagine that they have arrived after a long and arduous journey through their war-torn country. They must then try and figure out things - like where to get water and food - with the help of the MSF staff. This innovative use of



a physical meeting place and live action role-play encourages the growth of learning networks. The tour offered an opportunity for connections and a community of understanding to flourish among the people involved.

Despite the uncooperative weather, the refugee camp proved to be a huge success. In the information tent at the exit, visitors could talk to the staff and leave comments in a guestbook:



"This is a tour everyone should take!"

"Nothing puts it into perspective better than a real-life example that you can see and touch."

Historical Significance

This is not the first time that Bannerman Park has been used to house internally displaced persons. After the great fire of 1892 in downtown St. John's, Bannerman Park served as a tent town to those citizens displaced by the destruction.

Interactive Education

The MSF website has an interactive, virtual refugee camp that explains much of the background that leads to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) seeking asylum. The website also contains an engaging online role playing game wherein the gamer controls an avatar living in a refugee camp. There is an interactive map that allows visitors to explore and learn about the different areas of camp as well as a Flickr photostream with pictures of actual refugee camps and model camps from previous years. In so doing, MSF combines the useful and creative aspects of online learning with the direct and arresting nature of a face-to-face experience.

For more information visit the Doctors without Borders "Refugee Camp in the Heart of the City" website: www.refugeecamp.ca

"A brilliant idea and so well executed! It really brings home to us the need of others and how we can help."

"Eye opening, sad and very informative!"



Risks and Rewards: Young Volunteers Lead the Way

There's a common story going around about today's youth: that they're busy and self-absorbed, noses buried in a textbook and hands frantically texting all day long. Kids like this, or so the story goes, are too busy with themselves to get involved in their communities. Thankfully, nothing could be further from the truth.

Young people *are* volunteering

Research shows that young people aged 15-24 have the highest rate of volunteering in Newfoundland and Labrador: an incredible 66.3%. Some are contributing to established community organizations while gaining valuable skills and experience. Others, like those in the Global Citizenship Initiative, are creating their own space to meet community needs and affect positive change.

The Global Citizenship Initiative, a group conceptualized and led by young people, "brings a new perspective, a new way of thinking to connecting, acting and learning in Newfoundland and Labrador and our place as citizens in the world at large." Their vision is to encourage a holistic understanding of global issues, social justice, and active citizenship by encouraging meaningful participation by young people.

Innovation leads the way

Innovation leads the way at the GCI, where typical organizational hierarchy and procedures are rejected in favour of a more open and horizontal approach. Robert's Rules of Order stay on the shelf at GCI meetings, which are held when needed, not only when scheduled. Anyone can attend directors' meetings and the use of new collaborative online technologies helps the group stay connected, open and transparent. Formed in 2010, and based at Memorial University, GCI's members are university students, young professionals and educators with limited free time and a desire to get things done. This nimble approach enables the group to move on good ideas and learn swiftly from mistakes.

Risk and diversity reaps rewards

New members are encouraged to take ownership of projects. While this poses some risk, the benefits are more than worth it says Andrew Harvey, GCI's former Director of Community Outreach and Advocacy. "Innovation and success comes with risk," says Harvey. "We support members who have good ideas and are willing to take responsibility for their implementation." The GCI also encourages diversity in its membership, another key component to the group's success, according to Harvey. About one-third of the group is comprised of international students.

GCI's comprehensive efforts to connect directly with young people around the province, as well as the schools and community groups that serve them are impressive. They are embracing a myriad of opportunities and methods to increase knowledge about the importance of volunteerism and global citizenship. The GCI Initiate program is a semester-long course for high school groups that's focused on aspects of social justice, global issues, and active citizenship for those wishing either to begin programming in their schools or to expand their current capabilities. It currently takes the form of a series of workshops, presentations, and resources administered by the GCI.

During March 2012, Global Citizenship Initiative and MUN Oxfam hosted the first Memorial University International Development Symposium. The purpose of this day was to bring together individuals exploring issues in international development through their research, teaching and community activism, and to allow students, professors and members of other organizations to share their work on the issues they are passionate about.

From hosting events at local high schools to collaborating with off-campus groups to share knowledge and expertise, the GCI has proven that with a good idea, a group of dedicated volunteers and the willingness to take some risks, a lot gets done – and fast.



For more information about the Global Citizenship Initiative, visit www.globalcitizenshipinitiative.ca

Find them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Global.Citizenship.Initiative>

Follow them on Twitter at https://twitter.com/g_c_i

Survivors in Action!

Innovative ideas sometimes emerge from devastating news. This was certainly the case with Geoff Eaton and Young Adult Cancer Canada. In 1998, at 22 years of age, Geoff was diagnosed with cancer. During this time the internet was rapidly increasing in popularity and Geoff decided to set up a mass email list to keep his friends and family up to date on the course of his treatments. Throughout his treatment Geoff noticed that he often fell through the cracks. He was not young enough to benefit from any of the programs offered for children with cancer. Nor did he feel that his needs were being met in cancer programs and support groups for adults—they mostly catered to retirees and other older patients with very different concerns and life situations.



Out of this void in the continuum of care, Young Adult Cancer Canada (YACC) was born. YACC is a Newfoundland based, non-profit community agency dedicated to providing a space for young adults with cancer to build connections with each other, take advantage of healing opportunities and—most importantly—get well. YACC puts the focus on the psychosocial issues associated with treatment, not necessarily the medical or research issues. Isolation is the number one issue faced by people in their 20s

and 30s who are suffering from cancer as determined by Dr. Brad Zebrack's cancer survivorship research. YACC aims to end that feeling of isolation with a series of programs that builds a community of young adults dealing with cancer in Canada.

YACC runs both face-to-face and web-based programs which have resulted in hundreds of people finding the support they truly need through different avenues. People may spend four days in a rural setting at Retreat Yourself where they participate in small group discussions, attend the national Survivor Conference where they attend workshops and lectures, or test their mental and physical boundaries by going on the Retreat Yourself Adventure. For those who are not yet ready or able to go to an event, they can find information, resources, and connections through the YACC website and survivorship care programs like Goaltender.



As a nongovernmental organization, YACC funds most of its programs through the Shave for the Brave initiative which started in 2005. The Shave for the Brave was primarily a Newfoundland and Labrador event until 2010 when YACC organized a Shave event in Calgary as well. In 2012, people were shaving their heads from January to June and raised more than \$700,000 in support of those suffering from cancer. 2012 also saw the involvement of additional cities as Halifax, Ottawa, Red Deer and Corner Brook all participated.



YACC has now been in operation for 12 years. It employs nine full-time staff here in Newfoundland and one full-time staff person in Calgary and Halifax. If the past decade is any guide, they will continue to innovate for years to come.

For more information visit the YACC website at <http://www.youngadultcancer.ca/>

For more information on Shave for the Brave, visit www.shaveforthebrave.ca

Become a fan on Facebook! <http://www.facebook.com/youngadultcancercanada>

Or follow them on Twitter <http://www.twitter.com/yacancercanada>

Texting for Success



Community organizations are constantly looking for new ways to meet their mission, recruit new members and spread the word about the work they do. In the past few years, it has become common practice for organizations to develop websites, embrace social media, communicate via online newsletters - utilize every technology available to get the message out.

Recently, the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association Newfoundland and Labrador Chapter (CHHA-NL) has tapped into another mode of promotion even more ubiquitous than email, Twitter or Facebook: texting.

The organization's mandate is to improve the quality of life of hard of hearing people of all ages in Newfoundland and Labrador; to promote understanding of the prevalence, causes, and prevention of hearing loss; and to advocate for accessibility in public places. In an effort to reach out to a wider audience and become more accessible, CHHA-NL has set up a process wherein they could receive questions and comments via text message. This makes it easier for those experiencing hearing loss to connect with the organization, especially younger people with whom texting has become commonplace.

After the idea was pitched and approved, the CHHA-NL purchased a phone and a data plan for the initiative. One person in the office is assigned to "Client Services" and is responsible for answering all the texts that come in. Executive Director, Leon Mills, says it's part of their ongoing communications strategy to use media in various ways to connect with clients and members. He says that staff came up with the idea and he thought it was a fantastic new approach to try. Since the association deals with many different age groups, it's important to use a segmented approach when communicating with clients, members, funders, etc., as using the same approach with everyone doesn't work well. Currently the association is almost ready to begin implementation of a formal communications plan that will see the development of a new website, the using of social media, some rebranding and the use of a professional agency to help with their ongoing media efforts during the year and texting will be one of the communication tools to be used by the association.

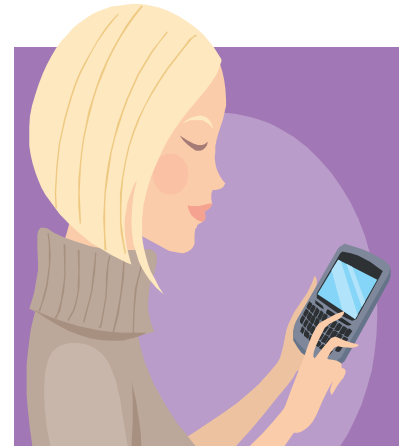
The texting initiative is still in "phase one" of its development. Ultimately, the CHHA-NL hopes to be able to send blasts via text, similar to a tweet or a Facebook status update.

The CHHA-NL gives out the number to text on promotional posters as well as in email signatures. This has been resoundingly effective so far, and they are also considering an online

survey that would allow interested parties to sign up for outgoing text blasts from the CHHA-NL.

Although the texting initiative is still getting off the ground, the CHHA-NL is pioneering a new and innovative means of communicating with the community. The number to text is 709-725-3224.

For more information about the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association Newfoundland and Labrador Chapter visit their website at www.chha-nl.ca or follow them on Twitter <http://twitter.com/betterhearingNL>



Making Connections: The Cabot Loop Skills Inventory

The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches but to reveal to him his own. ~Benjamin Disraeli

Everyone has something to contribute to community life.

These contributions might come through art, recreation and sports, raising funds, community beautification, providing essential services or helping a neighbor in need – all of these play a part in building communities that work. To make a community work, of course, takes work. Vibrant communities are built on many people’s contributions - especially those of volunteers. Looking around at communities across the province, it’s easy to see that volunteers in rural Newfoundland and Labrador have laid much of the groundwork for our well-known and much-admired quality of life

Demographic changes such as an aging population and increased urbanization are leaving many rural community groups concerned about a declining pool of volunteers. The role of volunteers is also changing, with people preferring short-term episodic volunteer opportunities to longer-term commitments.

Making meaningful connections

In 2003, Fraser Warren and Eliza Swyers, through the Tip Performing Arts Association (now Tip-a-Vista Wellness Foundation Inc.) began looking at new ways to make meaningful connections between potential volunteers and the organizations that need them by creating an inventory of volunteers. In 2010, the Cabot Loop Clusters Project, with Eliza Swyer’s guidance, built on this idea and began a skills inventory of community residents. According to Swyers, herself a long-time community volunteer, it is time to change the way rural communities look at recruiting volunteers. “No longer can we just expect people to come forward and get involved in whatever we want them to do,” says Swyers. “We need to find better ways of working and adapting to the reality of people’s lives.” Her own experiences in many organizations and witnessing volunteer burnout first-hand led her and the Clusters team to adapting this idea.



Swyers saw that many individuals in her small community of Bonavista were not involved in community life. Anecdotal evidence pointed to either a reluctance to dedicate time to activities outside of personal interests or a lack of confidence in one’s skills. Swyers, with the support of the Cabot Loop Clusters Project, led by the Community Sector Council NL, decided to try and change perceptions about volunteering by focusing solely on the individual’s interests and skills and how volunteering can add to their personal development and quality of life. This is a change from the traditional ‘call to action’ recruitment methods that rely mostly on

people's altruism; and for Swyers it was a chance to reinvigorate the directory of volunteers started seven years prior.

A personal touch

Swyers and the Cabot Loop Clusters Leadership Team created a detailed interview form that identifies a wide range of personal interests: cooking, reading, gardening, socializing, arts, and more. Time available and special skills are also identified. What makes this process so unique are the personal relationships built during each interview. Swyers conducts the interviews one-by-one and begins by letting people know that this is not about how much time you have to give or what you can do for your community, it is about *you*. Your interests, your skills and how you can find something that benefits you and your life.

While a one-on-one volunteer recruitment campaign seems onerous at first glance, research has proven that most people volunteer because they were asked. And Swyers has been asking, knocking on doors and phoning residents all around Bonavista. She is taking the time to get to know each individual and works to find an opportunity that is mutually beneficial to the volunteer and the community. The spin-offs have been notable. She identified skilled gardeners in the community and put them in touch with the Horticultural Association. She has encouraged some amateur photographers to put together an exhibit, and one has even started her own photography business. One person's talent for joke-telling led to a first-time performance at a local theatre's fundraising event.

"Everyone has a talent or a skill that can be shared with others," says Swyers. "Do you enjoy talking on the phone? That skill is beneficial. Love playing cards? Join a card club to connect with isolated seniors. Some people just need a little help in identifying how they can best contribute."

One person at a time

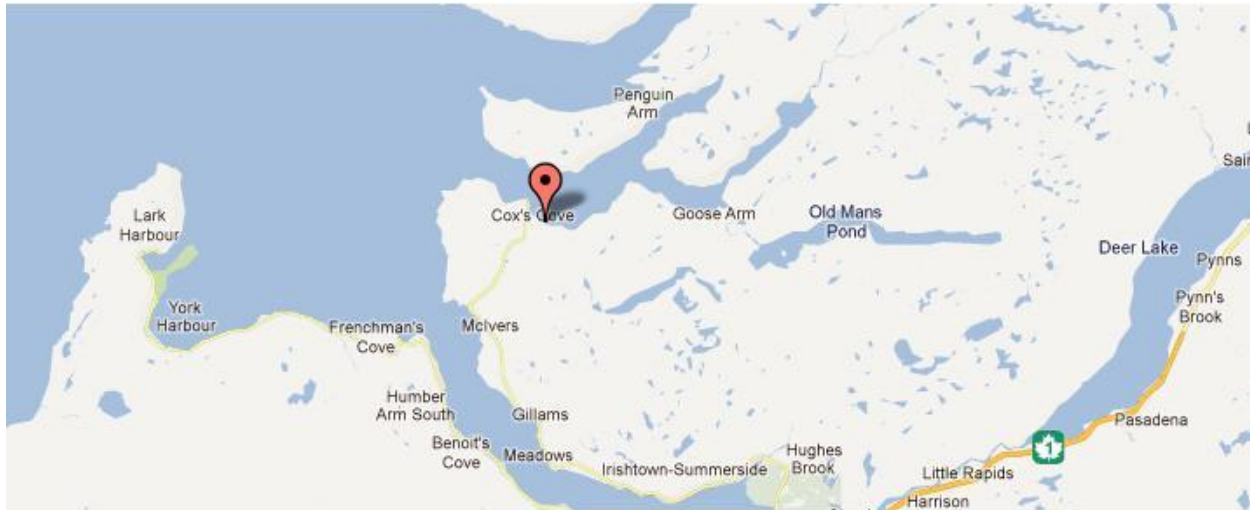
How does Swyers describe her passion for this project? By using her love of poetry and music, of course, by putting her thoughts to song. With help from another community resident and her songwriting partner, Craig Pardy, '**One person at a time**' describes the importance of each individual's talents to encourage connections, one person at a time.

It has been said that our people are our greatest resource, and Swyers agrees. In order to move forward as a province, we must take the time to get to know our people and help them discover their own talents and skills so that they can contribute to society in a meaningful way. And Eliza Swyers intends to do just that, one person at a time.

'One person at a time' was written by Craig Pardy and Eliza Swyers. It was produced and recorded at CATTa (Community Awareness Through the Arts) Productions Studio in Bonavista. Craig Pardy contributed the music and was producer and recording engineer.

For more information about the Cabot Loop Voluntary Clusters Project contact Barry Pearce at barrypearce@cscnl.ca or visit <http://communitysector.nl.ca/clusters>.

It Takes a Village



Small-town Newfoundland is known for an “all for one and one for all” attitude; in many ways, towns work just like families. When someone is in crisis, small towns will band together to support their most vulnerable. However, not everyone has the same level of skill or connection when it comes to fundraising and that can mean that some community members have to go without.

Gus Mullins and his brother, Silas, noticed that there were a number of fundraisers for people who were ill. The fundraisers were meant to raise the necessary funds to pay for transportation St. John’s for medical assistance. The Mullins men also noticed that the funds raised often directly correlated with the popularity of the community member affected. Gus and Silas did not think this was fair. In 2004 Gus started the Cox’s Cove Wellness Foundation as a solution. Personal supporters pay \$20 a year to be put into a pot reserved to help any resident with a medical issue. Since then the Cox’s Cove Wellness Center has raised over \$50,000 to benefit the citizens of Cox’s Cove.

“Thanks for the help when we needed it most.”

From local recipient

The Wellness Center’s innovative structure requires a dedicated set of volunteers. 100% of the funds they raise go to benefit those struggling with medical ailments. This means that no one is paid to participate and all necessary expenses, such as office supplies, come out of the pockets of the volunteers.

The Cox’s Cove Wellness Foundation participates in many different fundraisers in tandem with other local not-for-profit organizations such as the Cox’s Cove Cultural Committee. The Wellness Foundation has received funding from private businesses and government agencies including VOCCM Cares, the local mink farm and, in previous years, the Danny Williams Foundation.

Gus has noticed that there is a lot of illness in his community, “In previous years it was cancer, cancer, cancer. Three years ago I had a heart attack, and I think it started a trend because there have been a lot of heart problems in town since then.” The local hospital near Cox Cove does not have the specialists or the equipment to deal with such serious and complex cases, leading Gus to dream two dreams for the Wellness Foundation. First, that that the foundation can raise enough money to purchase a house for the sick people of Cox’s Cove to use in their time of need along with a taxi service to get them back and forth. Second, that the Foundation will assist in attracting and financing more specialists and equipment so the people of Cox’s Cove won’t have to travel at all.

For information on how to donate contact Gus Mullins: sandy_gus53@live.ca

Bike Skills to Thwart Hills

Self-sufficiency is something we all strive for. Unfortunately, in a world full of complex machines that many of us use but few understand, becoming self-sufficient can seem like a pipe dream. The ordinary folks at Ordinary Spokes are making an effort to change that perception and inspiring the citizens of St. John's to take charge of their transportation needs.



Ordinary Spokes is a bicycle-focused collective. They refurbish donated bikes and sell the “good-as-new products” for a very reasonable cost from their new storefront at 576A Water Street. They also operate open hours from 6pm to 9pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays during which people can bring in their bikes to be repaired. Ordinary Spokes operates on a pay-what-you-can basis: there is a base cost for the mechanic’s time and parts, and beyond that a customer is encouraged to contribute as much or a little as they feel is fair. They support themselves with the proceeds from its bike sales and open hours, along with sporadic funding from granting agencies.

Ordinary Spokes is very vocal about how much they appreciate their volunteers. They are operated entirely by volunteers and anyone who is interested can get involved and volunteer. Volunteers can come contribute at meetings, work on bikes, help at events, or work on promotions. Anyone is invited to volunteer their time, whether or not they have any experience in bicycle maintenance. Meetings are usually held on Mondays at 5:30pm at Rocket Foods (in the old Auntie Crae's building) and any interested person is encouraged to attend.



***“We will train anyone;
we all have to start
somewhere”***

***- Melody McKiver,
Collective Member***

Melody shared a great story about how bike repair skills can come in handy in a variety of situations. While attending an art installation exhibition/concert in Toronto a desperate looking man ran into the crowd yelling “Does anybody have a wrench?!” Lucky for him Melody had a small wrench with her that she uses to tune up her bike. It turns out that a generator for the concert had broken down and with Melody’s assistance (though she insisted she knew nothing about engines) the technicians worked out the problem and the concert went ahead hitch-free.

Many of the founding members of Ordinary Spokes came from other provinces that already had similar bicycle collective organizations. St. John's presented many challenges to this kind of endeavor, including a pervasive car culture and the hills...oh my, the hills. Ordinary Spokes is working to change these attitudes and present bicycling as a viable alternative to driving or public transportation. Accessibility, environmental sustainability and promoting a healthy lifestyle are among the objectives of the collective.

"You don't need a lot of money to maintain a bike; you also don't need a license or insurance"

- *Melody McKiver,
Collective Member*

Through collaborative efforts and community outreach Ordinary Spokes is opening up possibilities for the citizens of St. John's and across Newfoundland and Labrador.

For more information about Ordinary Spokes visit their website: <http://ordinaryspokes.org/>

Connect with them on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/ordinaryspokes>

Follow them on Twitter <https://twitter.com/ordinaryspokes>

Getting Crafty

For the past 10 years the College of the North Atlantic's Textiles program in a joint effort with the Anna Templeton Center and the Craft Council, hosts an annual craft retreat. Students, teachers and people from the community pack up and ship out for three days of workshops and presentations based on the crafting lifestyle. The retreat began as a way to inspire first-year textile students by giving them a taste of some of the things they would participate in during their second year of study. Since then it has evolved, and it now teaches new crafting techniques, photography and art of all kinds. Workshops are also offered on healthy living and the business of being a craftsperson.



"This is no conference"

- *Katie Parnham,
Manager*

This year the retreat will be held at the Brother Brennan Centre on Salmon Line and will run from September 14th-16th, 2012. The seats on the bus are reserved for textiles students but any leftover seats are offered to people from the community on a first come, first serve basis. Community members are invited to come via their own transportation. Beds are available but participants are encouraged to bring their own tents if they wish to camp. Best of all, the retreat is totally free of charge due to generous funding from the Newfoundland and Labrador Craft Council and the College of the North Atlantic as well as support from the presenters and workshop facilitators who are volunteering their expertise free of charge.

Making Dreams a Reality

For many the idea of being a professional artist or craftsperson seems like a lovely, but impossible dream. The challenges that artists face when it comes to making a living can seem insurmountable. The organizers of the craft retreat wish to shed new light on the life of the professional artist as a viable and satisfying career path. The retreat has included workshops on running a craft-based business, web design and social media promotion. This retreat brings together established artists with burgeoning artists as well as business people and the community members who will contribute the most to the success of new artists and craftspeople.



The craft retreat has succeeded in creating a supportive community. Perhaps one of the most innovative aspects of this retreat is in connecting this supportive community with 3 days of shared experiences and shared knowledge.

Health is an art

The textile retreat also emphasizes wellness and a healthy lifestyle. Workshops on making healthy meals are held in throughout the weekend and the delectable results are served to the participants. The “learn to make sushi” workshop was particularly memorable for Katie Parnham, one of the retreat organizers. The craft retreat takes steps to include physical activity in its agenda with a morning yoga class.

For our littlest artists

Anyone with a good attitude and a willingness to participate is invited to attend the retreat. Children are welcome and one child even serves as a workshop facilitator. Last year’s workshop involved taking photographs of toys in nature and turning them into a slideshow to display to the retreat participants. There have also been workshops in kite flying and Lego building.

With a lot of cooperation and creativity, this retreat has found new ways to nurture the artist in all of us. For more information and to register e-mail sarahminty@gmail.com. Check it out!



For more information about the Anna Templeton Centre visit www.annatempletoncentre.com

For more information about the craft council visit www.craftcouncil.nl.ca

A Joyful Noise



Since 2007, members of the Stella Burry Inclusion Choir have been getting together at least once a week to sing, practice and perform. The 50-member, non-audition choir is made up of staff, participants and volunteers from programs operated by Stella's Circle. The Choir performs at a variety of conferences, meetings, and community events. They also performed for Prince Charles during His Majesty's visit to St. John's in 2009 and at Festival 500 in 2011.

This is a choir with a message, so they tend to perform at events that promote issues close to the hearts of the participants. They perform at meetings of organizations that address issues such as mental health, affordable housing, employment and literacy. One of the choir's most requested songs, "If I Had a Grant", adapted from Pete Seeger's "If I Had a Hammer" with lyrics written by members of the Inclusion Choir to highlight the need for more affordable housing.

The choir focuses on the joy and fun of singing. It creates a space for people, including those without the formal music skills required by other choirs, to express themselves through song. The auxiliary benefits of the choir have surprised both the choir members and organizers.

The Inclusion Choir has also created a supportive community that allows Stella's Circle participants and staff to work towards a common goal of giving the best performance they can give. Group members are empowered by sharing messages of social justice with audiences; their voices are heard and acknowledged by audience members who are often moved by the message and performance of this enthusiastic community choir.

For more information about Stella's Circle and the Inclusion Choir, visit www.stellaburry.ca or on their Facebook page: www.facebook.com/pages/Stella-Burry-Inclusion-Choir/10150129987020417

"You could watch as [choir members] became more confident. People would literally take up more space. It's not uncommon to see people using the benefits of choir, such as increased confidence, to help in other aspects of life such as education and employment."

Rob McLennan, Choir Manager

A Place for Families

From St. Anthony all the way to their new location in Bird Cove, the Northern Peninsula Family Resource Centre is making a difference for families in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. The Centre is run by a board of directors comprised of representatives from the community and the government: 4 parents who attend the centres and programs on a regular basis, a member from the health department, a member from the education department, a member from the justice department and a representative from Child, Youth and Family Services. Altogether, the Northern Peninsula Family Resource Centre operates 4 full-time and 4 part-time centres for parents and children.



Programming varies depending on the centre and the time of year. Programs are designed to assist families with young children, from the “Healthy Baby Club” for pregnant mothers to after-school programs for children as old as 12. One particularly successful program is “Little Chefs.” Through the 6-week program toddlers, under the supervision of their parents, make their own chef hats and aprons. They then learn, hands on, how to make healthy snacks. A similar program is offered called “Little Scientists” which encourages children to inquire into the scientific world through simple and fun interactive scientific experiments. For example, in previous years the “Little Scientists” organizers have filled up wading pools with a mixture of corn syrup and dish liquid. A child is then placed on a chair in the centre of the pool. Using a hula hoop, an organizer then puts the child inside an enormous bubble! Needless to say, the children are absolutely thrilled while simultaneously discovering the science that is all around them.

“No one is ever turned away.”

***Charmaine Cull,
Executive director***

The Family Resource Centres (FRCs) provide programs for parents as well, including the “Nobody’s Perfect” Program that helps give parents guidance, support and contacts. It also helps parents be the best they can be without expecting too much of themselves. They also host a semi-regular “Dad’s Night,” which has been growing in popularity, particularly around mothers’ day when the fathers and children can work together on a hand-crafted gift for Mom.

In addition to their many programs the Northern Peninsula Family Resource Centre provides nutritious snacks for all of their participants as well as funding transportation to and from programs for those who need it. Over the past few years, the Northern Peninsula Family Resource Centre has served 521 families, including 499 parents and 692 children.

Space is always a challenge but through partnerships with local businesses, town halls and schools they have been able to maintain all 8 locations. 6 out of 8 FRC's are operated on an in-kind manner.

For more information on the Northern Peninsula Family Resource Centre visit the website at <http://www.norpenfrc.ca/>

Illuminating LGBT Issues



Planned Parenthood - Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Health Centre has been keeping our community healthy, informed and connected for many years. As of late, a wave of innovation in this organization has led to the successful coordination of volunteer run programs that are having a serious impact. One such program is Camp Eclipse: OUT in the Woods. Camp Eclipse, which started in 2009, is an annual leadership retreat and information session for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth

and those who are LGBT-friendly. This camp is run by dedicated, local volunteers who serve as teachers, students, and mentors to the youth who attend.

How is Planned Parenthood able to retain such dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers? Executive Director Costa Kasimos credits the personal stories and direct interaction that is a major component of Camp eclipse as one of the reasons.

This open forum style of management gives participants and volunteers the sense that they are each an integral part of the camp as a whole. It is this sense of responsibility and camaraderie that has made the camp such a success.

Collaboration is an important part of what makes this camp innovative and what keeps it up and running. In previous years Camp Eclipse has been supported by Eastern Health, Community Youth Network – St. John’s, United Way – Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Canadian Federation of Women.

“[The volunteers and participants] own the camp. Planned Parenthood supports their ideas and helps to implement their dreams.”

***Costa Kasimos,
Executive Director***



Camp Eclipse has met with some challenges along the way but they have only served to make the camp stronger. Concerned parents and close-minded schools have been won over by the perseverance of camp participants and Planned Parenthood.

As a direct result of Camp Eclipse 4 new gay/straight alliances have started in schools all over the province. The participants who started these alliances have been asked to return to the camp as presenters, to teach

other youth how to become advocates in their own schools. Camp Eclipse is providing linkages to the rest of the community through its youth ambassadors. The camp's mandate is to make queerness visible so that they might help to give a voice to LGBT issues and find solutions.

To learn more about Camp Eclipse: OUT in the Woods or Planned Parenthood's other programs and services please visit <http://www.nlsexualhealthcentre.org>

If you would like to speak with someone, call 599-1009 or their toll-free number, 1-877-NO-MYTHS (666-9847).

You can also like them on Facebook!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/72024779136/>



Mental Health in Rural Newfoundland

Two Community Advisory Committees on the Southern Avalon are working to enhance mental health in rural communities from Ship Harbour to Peter's River. In 2007, the Placentia Area Cape Shore Community Connections and the St. Mary's Bay Community Advisory Committee decided to shift their focus to improving the mental health of people in the region. In recent years, the committees have observed that mental health issues have come up time and time again and they decided it was time to look at what it means to be mentally healthy. It was the Southern Avalon Community Health Needs Assessment conducted by Eastern Health in 2007 that really put fuel on the fire, with a significant finding that 21% of Southern Avalon residents reported that loneliness was negatively affecting their health.

Maintaining Healthy Minds

Research by the members of the Community Advisory Committees revealed a program called the Healthy Minds Network in the rural Australian town of Swan Hill. This network promotes community relationships in order to enhance positive mental health. The Southern Avalon Healthy Minds Network is starting from a less will focus on cultivating and maintaining mental health.

The community advisory committee members completed a mental health needs assessment in an effort to gain a clear picture of mental health in the region. The assessment found two major themes, including grief and loss, and opportunities for socialization. Using this information, the committees are working to form a Healthy Minds Network that can sustain itself after the committees have shifted focus to other issues facing rural Newfoundland.

Building relationships and communication networks

The Southern Avalon Community Advisory Committees have already started a number of positive mental health initiatives, including mental health road shows and two forums in Freshwater and St. Mary's, in partnership with the Rural Secretariat, called "Communities for Healthy Minds" while promoting the importance of community relationships and open and honest communication regarding mental health issues. Through these activities the committees hope to build connections and maintain relationships between residents of the Southern Avalon and mental health professionals all over Newfoundland and Labrador.

Forming Families from Communities with Singing Kitchen

Since 2006 the Branch town council has been running the “Singing Kitchen” initiative out of the Branch Community Center. Singing Kitchen began as a way to bring the community together and build a lasting structure of communication and friendship for the people of Branch. Now people come from all over Cape Shore to participate in the biweekly meal, chat with old friends and make new ones.

The meals are prepared with fresh vegetables from the town’s own community garden, The Flats Edge Community Garden, by a dedicated group of 6 volunteers. All of the volunteers are women, though men are more than welcome to participate as well, and they are all active community participants. The meals are served by volunteers from the local high school. This gives the students the opportunity to build lasting community relationships as well as complete some of their mandatory volunteer hours

Poverty and exclusion were two of the major issues that the people of Branch wanted to address with the Singing Kitchens endeavor. Quite often poverty goes unrecognized and unaddressed because of shame and embarrassment. Similarly, isolation and loneliness can be difficult to talk about and even more difficult to remedy. Singing Kitchen serves between 100 and 160 people biweekly at 5 dollars a meal, addressing both financial issues and developing a strong community connection.

“You sit with new people all the time so you are always seeing someone you haven’t spoken to in a while.”

*- Priscilla Corcoran Mooney,
Branch Mayor*

The singing aspect of Singing Kitchen never really took off. Organizers noticed that just before 6:00 pm, people started heading home en masse to catch the news rather than listen to singers or watch performers. In order to extend the Singing Kitchen meal and extend the time people were developing connections, Singing Kitchen invested in a projector and cable in order to watch the news with the community. However, thanks to a technologically savvy volunteer, Singing Kitchen began presenting slideshows of pictures from community events, some from present-day and some from many years ago, instead of showing the news. The Singing Kitchen patrons have loved the slideshows and the happy memories they evoke, and so the slideshow continue to this day. When singing didn’t keep people in their seats, Singing Kitchen “innovented” a new solution, and when that solution evolved into something new, the Singing Kitchens organizers ran with it. Sometimes listening to what the people want is the best way to encourage dedicated patronage and solid connection-building.

Singing Kitchen has succeeded in turning a community into a family, it’s only appropriate that they should all sit down to supper together.

Health From the Ground Up: The Built Communities Movement

In November of 2011 the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council, in association with The Newfoundland and Labrador Public Health Association and the Newfoundland and Labrador Branch of the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors, held a successful conference revolving around the hot topic of built communities.

A built community - also known as a built environment or a purpose-built community - is the result of innovative thinking and action around the planning and functionality of our cities, towns and villages. This includes physical structures such as buildings and roads as well as the planning and policies that go into creating and growing our communities. The built community's movement focuses on the physical and mental health of residents and how changing the way we think about community living can have a dramatic impact on our overall wellness. Built communities emphasize a neighborhood structure, where stores, restaurants, schools and daycares are within walking or biking distance of residential areas. A focus is put on integrating neighborhoods so that people of various socioeconomic statuses live together in one area. In such a community, physical activity is built into individual lifestyles. The physical layout of the community also means that residents have contact with their neighbors, running into them at the local grocery store, the local clothing shop and the local school. By increasing neighborhood connections like this, the built communities movement aims to decrease the sense of isolation that has become an emblem of modern life.

"We want to create a community where the healthy choice is the easy choice."

- *Dr. Cathy Donovan*

The built communities' movement is also focused on the environmental sustainability of communities. Dr. Donovan, chair of the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council, recently attended a conference that featured Bjarke Ingels, Danish architect and innovator. His talk was entitled "Hedonistic Sustainability" and he was able to shed light on many of the challenges facing built communities.

Built communities face some common misconceptions about sustainability: that things that are sustainable do not contribute to economic development and that sustainability necessitates a lower quality of life. In Ingel's presentation, he argued that often the most sustainable way is often the least wasteful and most profitable way of building both structures and communities.

A city that spends less on health care has more to spend on projects that improve quality of life. Businesses that create less waste and thus spend less time and money dealing with it will have higher profit margins and happier shareholders.

The conference was well-attended, with over 175 participants representing all sectors that have an interest in the Built Community. The conference was very interactive, with the participants making a significant contribution to setting future direction and had a great deal of media coverage. The work continues through a group called the Building Healthy Communities Collaborative, and The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council affirmed its commitment to work on this issue, and with the support of the Minister of Health & Community Services is developing a “Wellness Paper” on Building Healthy Communities. These papers help to inform policy development within government and the Collaborative is acting as a working group for this paper. The Collaborative is also assisting a local Community Planner as she helps a rural community develop its Town Plan. One of the Regional Wellness Coalitions has also begun work to promote the use of the Neighbourhood Checklist which was introduced at the conference.



The website (www.buildinghealthycommunities.ca) has been retained as an ongoing vehicle of communication and contains all of the presentations from the conferences and additional resources are added on a regular basis.

For more information about the Canadian Public Health Association visit their website at <http://www.cpha.ca/en/about/provincial-associations/nl.aspx>