

REPORT TO COMMUNITY 2019/20





Nova Scotia Association for Community Living

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WHO WE ARE



NSACL is a provincial not-for-profit organization committed to ensuring that individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families have the support they require to live full and inclusive lives in community.

VISION

All people, including persons with intellectual disabilities, belong and are fully included in community life.

MISSION

NSACL is a province-wide, not-for-profit association of people with intellectual disabilities, families and others leading the way to build a just and inclusive society. We do this by empowering and supporting individuals and families, promoting rights and values in keeping with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), and encouraging reform and collaborating with other organizations for social justice.

VALUES

Equality
Dignity
Respect



FROM THE PRESIDENT



My first year as President of NSACL has been a steep learning curve and provided me with continued inspiration, determination, and hope for our small but mighty organization.

Strategic Work Plan

This year the NSACL Board of Directors continued the work that started with the March 2018 report, *Welcoming 2018: Finding Our Voices*, and continued with the March 2019 report, *NSACL: Priorities and Planning*. The Steering Committee, made up of Lewis Crews, Carmel French, Patti Conrad, Ruth Strubank, and myself as Chair, welcomed Blaise Landry of Sport Nova Scotia who volunteered as a facilitator for the next steps of our strategic work planning. On September 14, the Steering Committee was joined by NSACL staff, the Executive Committee, and other interested Directors at Large, to engage in a priority-setting workshop during which participants brainstormed indicators of success for each of our three main goals: 1. Living a Good Life in Community with a Focus on Employment and Housing; 2. Organizational Viability, and 3. Governance. The working group then identified immediate priorities, to take us to the end of March 2021. These priorities have now been fleshed out into action steps which include timelines along with individuals/groups responsible for oversight of their progress. Throughout the upcoming year, staff and committee reports will include updates on the progress made toward each of our immediate goals. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank Blaise for volunteering his time and expertise to guide us toward clarifying and improving our work as an organization.



STEPHANIE CARVER

BOARD PRESIDENT

Board Development

In February, our Board of Directors and committee members came together with staff to participate in a one-day workshop on communications and fund development, led by our very own Fund Development & Communications Coordinator, Ashley Gallant. This session provided the opportunity for staff to share details about their work and for volunteers to understand their role in relation to communications and fund development. I would like to acknowledge the tireless work of the planning group that organized this valuable opportunity: Patti Conrad (chair), Anne Louise Desrosiers, Jaimie Fox, Meredith Bullock, Christopher Abbott, Ashley Gallant, and Ruth Strubank.

Committees

As President of NSACL, I have the honour of sitting on all committees ex officio, which means I have been witness to the countless hours of volunteer work on behalf of NSACL by board members, many of whom serve on more than one committee, as well as 12 non-board members. Not only do these volunteers attend many hours of meetings, which have taken place this year both in-person and virtually, but they have also been working on reviewing, revising, and re-writing policies and bylaws; developing plans for fund development and awareness; participating in the budgeting process; and providing guidance to the Executive Committee on a wide range of issues. Our volunteers bring a wealth of experience, backgrounds and perspectives, and the work and advancement of NSACL would not be possible without them. I am humbled by the work ethic and commitment of each of them and I extend my deepest gratitude.

CACL

Many thanks to Carmel French, our representative on the Canadian Association for Community Living Board (CACL), who has participated in monthly meetings both in person and via conference and video calls. Carmel also chairs the CACL Governance Committee and is an active participant on the Institutes for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society (IRIS) Board. This year, CACL has continued to focus on: advocating for and supporting people with disabilities and their families as they navigate costs and challenges due to COVID-19, medical assistance in dying (MAiD) in relation to people with intellectual disabilities, poverty reduction, employment, safe and inclusive communities through the My Home My Community initiative, legal capacity, family support, inclusive education, finalizing the name change, and CACL/federation Strategic Planning.

Acknowledgements

I would be remiss without acknowledging NSACL's amazing staff, who have shifted their work in so many ways during the unprecedented pandemic shutdown. Under the leadership of former Executive Director, Ruth Strubank and current Acting Executive Director, Patricia Neves, NSACL's team has continued to work in the best interest of our organization and to seek and pursue opportunities to support the community we serve. Many thanks to each of you. Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank outgoing board members Terry Wilson, Calvin Wood, Lewis Crews, Anita Naki Asiedu, and Archie Kaiser. You have each left an indelible mark on NSACL and have left us better than you found us. I hope you will stay in touch as life-long "friends of NSACL."

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Carver
President NSACL

FROM THE ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This past year, NSACL celebrated its 65th anniversary. For 65 years, NSACL has been supporting a sense of home and belonging for persons with intellectual disabilities within their communities. NSACL continues to fight for, and promote, full inclusion in the community through education, public awareness, and the delivery of supportive programming.

NSACL's work over the last year can be summarized in two words: transitions and opportunities. A strategic work plan was started, and we identified priorities to guide us for 2019-2021. The plan lays the groundwork on how we will successfully achieve our three focus areas. The first, Living a Good Life in Community, with a focus on supported housing and inclusive employment, the second, Organizational Viability, with a focus on NSACL being a trusted ally and recognized leader with self-advocates and families, and the third, Governance.

Living a Good Life in Community

As you'll see throughout this report, we've already started work on these focus areas. One of these initiatives is our Life Transitions to Work program, which we launched in 2019 thanks to a Department of Community Services, Disability Support Program grant. Nine participants attended the program in its first year. Although he prefers to remain nameless, one of these participants is a 16-year-old boy who arrived at Life Transitions to Work after bullying led him to change schools. When he came with a family member to register for the program, he would not make eye contact, smile, or give responses longer than one or two words. Despite that, I (working as the program's facilitator) told him he was welcome to attend a session that evening. To my surprise, he showed up, and though he was reluctant to participate, the other participants had him smiling by the time he went home. His shy smile has accompanied him to every session since.



PATRICIA NEVES

ACTING
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FROM THE ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In 2019, NSACL partnered with People First Nova Scotia, (PFNS), Community Living Ontario (CLO) and Inclusion Winnipeg (IW), on a two-year project called *The Truths of Institutionalization: Past and Present*. The goal of the project is to create learning materials and new opportunities for young people to learn about Canada's history of institutionalizing people with intellectual disabilities. As a partner, NSACL's role is to assist with community conversations, and connect the project leads to local people who have lived the experiences. NSACL participated in a number of collaborative meetings across the province in the fall of 2019, including at CACL Clare. NSACL will continue this partnership as there are plans to both test and distribute the materials throughout the province.

Organizational Viability

We understand that increasing our visibility in the community has a direct relation to the organization's viability, which is why we have engaged a part-time Fund Development and Communications Coordinator. The main goal of this position is to implement a Communications Plan to increase the awareness of NSACL. The plan has been created and elements of the plan have already started to be implemented. Our visibility will continue to evolve as we move throughout our strategic plan.

We are also putting plans in place to identify and prioritize existing and potential relationships in the areas of funding, employment, and housing. This information will lead to the development and implementation of a 24-month Fund Development Plan.

Over the last year we've worked hard to foster inclusion and a good life in community by supporting the basic human rights and choices of people with an intellectual disability. These accomplishments are only possible with the support and dedication of the Board, volunteers, and staff.

We would also like to recognize outgoing Executive Director, Ruth Strubank, for her work on behalf of NSACL. As the Board begins their search for a new Executive Director, I am confident the organization's future leader will continue to ensure NSACL is working toward fulfilling our vision - that all people, including persons with intellectual disabilities, belong and are fully included in community life.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Neves
Acting Executive Director

FROM THE TREASURER



This report encompasses the work of the Treasurer and an update on the activities of the finance committee. In the just ended fiscal year, our primary focus was to ensure the financial sustainability and growth of NSACL, through the compliance of the budget and financial policies. This, we were able to accomplish to an extent where our deficit came out lesser than expected. Our low deficit can also be attributed to income from two new projects, Truths of Institutionalization and Ready Willing and Able (RWA). Both of these projects were initially not included in our approved budget but proved to be greatly beneficial to us financially.

Together with the finance committee, we worked on reviewing the current financial policy of NSACL, as well as drafting the current year budget which took up a substantial part of our time at meetings. There continues to be challenging times for us financially as the Board had to approve another deficit budget for this coming year. We are however hopeful that future fund development programs will generate the resources needed to operate a balanced or surplus budget in the years to come. I am confident, we will predict the way forward for the benefit of NSACL and together we will accomplish what we have set out to achieve.

I am honored to be part of the work of NSACL at this exciting time, and I am thankful for the opportunity given to me to serve. I look forward to availing myself to assisting in other capacities of the organization soon and I am immensely proud to have been associated with NSACL.

Humbly submitted,

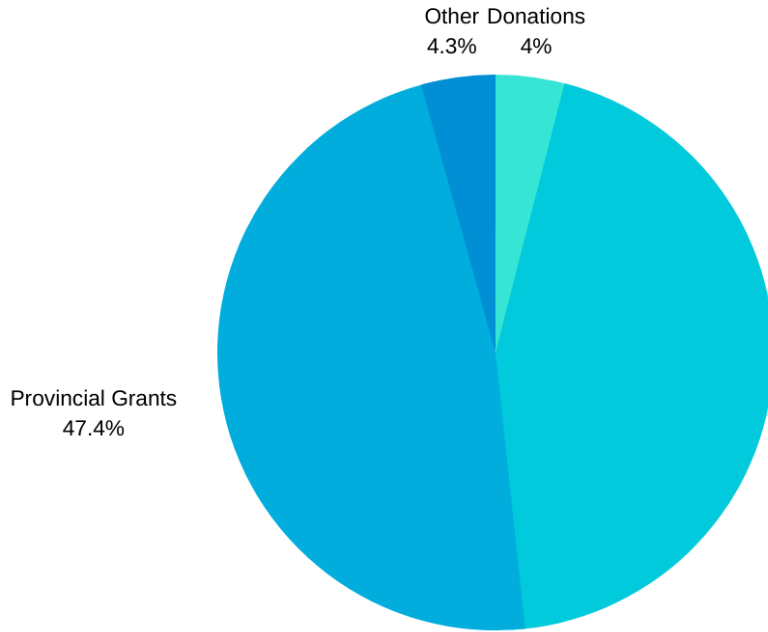
Anita Naki Asiedu



ANITA NAKI ASIEDU

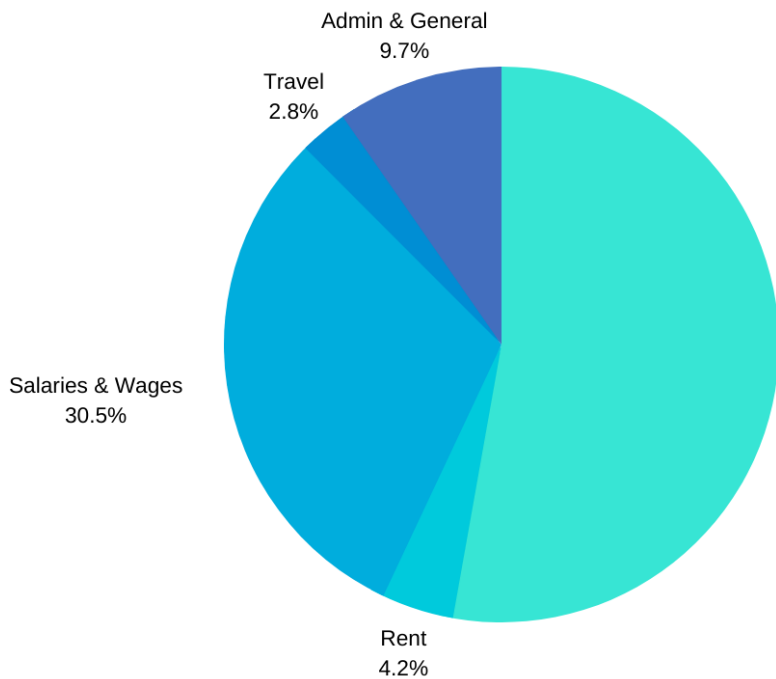
TREASURER

2019-2020 FINANCIALS



REVENUE

Federal Grants
44.3%



EXPENDITURES

Programs
52.8%



On March 12 and 13, NSACL had the pleasure of hosting a PATH workshop. During the training, our friends from NSCC had a chance to get in touch with their creative sides. Carolyn, Murray, and Mike are now certified PATH facilitators!

PATH - Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope

NSACL delivered a two-day session of PATH Facilitator Training to like minded organizations across Nova Scotia. This workshop was financed through participant ticket sales.

PATH is a person-centered planning tool that helps individuals plan their future. Used widely with persons who have a disability, though not limited to this use, the process involves a carefully ordered structure that uses graphics to focus energy and support memory. PATH also identifies supports and people that will help to accomplish the goals identified, guiding the individual toward the future they desire. PATH outcomes are achieved through a collaborative process by first planning backwards, from the vision of a desirable future to a detailed action plan.

This year, more than twenty people became trained PATH Facilitators and have been added to our growing database of PATH facilitators for Nova Scotia, connecting those seeking a PATH with those that are trained to facilitate.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



A Life Transitions to Work participant shares her love for the program.

Life Transitions to Work

This year NSACL received a grant to pilot a new program, Life Transitions.

This program supports high school students and recent graduates to develop the skills and confidence to successfully transition into employment after graduation. We developed a partnership with Chebucto Connections, who supported our recruitment of participants, and provided office and program space at their location on Herring Cove Road.

Although we had a slow start, and some bumps along the way, we created resources and recruited participants through the fall, and began program sessions in January. Seven high school students met with our facilitator one evening a week, and two recent graduates met two mornings a week.

Participants in both groups explored their skills, preferences and challenges, and explored six topic areas that will help them gain the skills and confidence they need to be successful in employment.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought an abrupt end to in person programming, and the facilitator explored ways to stay connected with participants and continue to support their learning. The program continues virtually and participants now have tablets to use thanks to a grant from the United Way - Atlantic Compassion Fund.

Family Support

This year we continued to offer support to families across Nova Scotia. Families often reach out to us when they are in crisis, and don't know where to turn. When providing family support, it is important to use the family lens to "...enable families with family members who have an intellectual disability to maintain typical family caring relationships while advancing the full inclusion, self-determination and citizenship of persons with intellectual disabilities."

CACL: The Family Lens

This, along with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) informs all of our work with individuals and families.

Examples of the families we supported this year include:

- A man in his 30s who has always lived with his mother, and relied on her for all areas of support. His mother passed away, his brother took a leave from work to care for him, but they had no long-term plan, and his brother had to return to work.
- A couple in their mid-twenties had four children, all were taken into care at birth. They had a loving relationship, but wanted to stop having babies as they knew that they would not be allowed to raise their children. No one had ever provided information on birth control to them.
- A wheelchair user, in hospital was given a room without an accessible bathroom. Hospital staff offered adult diapers as a solution.

We also support people by facilitating PATH. The PATH process brings together a support team, to help the person to identify goals and strategies to reach those goals. Facilitating a PATH ensures that the goals and strategies are positive and possible, to increase the likelihood of successfully reaching the goals.

In addition to the direct support of individuals and families, NSACL is represented on a number of community groups that work to educate the government and the public on challenges faced by Nova Scotians with intellectual disabilities and their family members and collaborate to find solutions to these challenges. NSACL was represented this year on the Respite Partnership, The Community Homes Action Group (CHAG), the Disability Rights Coalition (DRC), the Special Education Program and Services Committee (SEPS), and has also worked with the Dalhousie Schulich School of Law, the Dalhousie Family Medicine Adult Disability Clinic and Families for Inclusive Education to advocate for people with intellectual disabilities.

READY WILLING & ABLE

Ready, Willing and Able

Ready, Willing and Able (RWA) is a national partnership of the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL), the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorders Alliance (CASDA) and their member organizations. It is funded by the Government of Canada and is active in 20 communities across the country, including Halifax.

During January and March 2020, NSACL's RWA Labour Market Facilitator, Andrew Smith, was very active. During this time, he created 26 job opportunities with 7 new employers across the province. A large part of Andrew's work is imparting practical advice to employers so that inclusive hiring can become a norm for these organizations moving forward.

Due to COVID-19, job figures have decreased. Many employers placed a freeze on hiring as they dealt with the reality of running their businesses. Andrew remained active during this time, educating the local market with his LinkedIn posts which continue to receive high views and engagements. He also attended several virtual networking meetings and this work resulted in 23 new positions being created with 4 new employers to RWA.



NSACL IN THE COMMUNITY



The Better Together team visits NSACL.



NSACL attended the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities visit to NS.



The Rotary Club of Halifax Harbourside presents NSACL with a donation.



NSACL visits Clare ACL and Fancy Nancy's Cleaning Service's team.

NSACL IN THE COMMUNITY



NSACL participated in the Families for Inclusive Education NS Forum.



Patti Conrad (Board member), and Murray Kirkpatrick (friend of NSACL), visit the Queens Association for Supported Living.



As part of the Truths of Institutionalization project, NSACL participated in five forums across NS.



NSACL participated in the Supported Housing Summit.

Governance Committee

The Governance Committee has met six times since the 2019 AGM, and has much to show for the diligent work of its members. In addition to reviewing and updating the Terms of Reference for both the Governance and Nominations Committee, here are a number of accomplishments achieved:

- Reviewed results of Board self-assessment 2019.
- Discussed requirements for Annual Review of Standing and Ad Hoc Committees.
- Introduced the role of the Governance Committee in the NSACL Work Plan.
- Annual Review of NSACL Policies and Procedures.
- The Bylaws Committee presented the updated 2015 NSACL Bylaws for review and the Governance Committee reviewed Articles 1 to 7.
- Completed the initial review of Articles 8 thru 19 of the NSACL Bylaws. The document was returned to the Bylaws Committee for revisions.
- Welcomed Christy Linders as a member of the NSACL Governance Committee.
- Reviewed NSACL Bylaws revisions and approved with minor corrections. The Committee gave final approval online in March 2020.
- Reviewed 2019 Nominations Committee report and Board of Directors list to determine personnel requirements for the 2020 AGM.
- Reviewed Committee Evaluation form prepared by Charlie MacDonald.
- Reviewed Board positions and Committee Chair positions in preparation for the 2020 NSACL AGM.
- Reviewed and approved the revised NSACL Board Evaluation form.
- Steering Committee Chair, Stephanie Carver, led the Governance team through the NSACL Work Plan.

I extend a sincere thank you to all committee members for sharing your time with us.

Respectfully submitted,

Lewis Crews
Chair, Governance Committee

Human Resources Committee

A new Human Resources (HR) Committee was formed in October 2019 and since then has met bi-monthly, in person and via Zoom. The committee began by reviewing its Terms of Reference and current Personnel Policies. At the request of NSACL staff and Executive, the HR committee began the process of re-writing the personnel policies using the policies of another provincial organization as a basis. This was a major undertaking. Policies were divided among committee members, reviewed and rewritten by the committee member responsible for that section, uploaded in Google documents, and then edited and approved by the HR Committee as a whole.

The HR Committee was also responsible for conducting the annual evaluation of Executive Director (ED) of the NSACL. The HR Committee developed an evaluation survey based on the ED's current job description and forwarded it to the NSACL Executive for approval prior to distributing it, via a secure on-line site, to NSACL Board members and staff. Results of the ED evaluation were summarized by three members of the HR Committee and shared with the NSACL Executive and Board.

Recently, the Committee met to discuss the process for hiring the next Executive Director of NSACL. Discussion focused on the characteristics of the Search Committee Chair, the make-up of the search committee, and the hiring process. As the process cannot begin without a clear job description, the Human Resources Committee also met and developed a succinct job description with measurable objectives that was taken to the NSACL Executive for approval.

Overall, it has been an extremely busy year for the HR Committee. Going forward, the committee will take a leadership role in hiring the new ED, finalizing the personnel policies, and reviewing and developing job descriptions and a performance process for all NSACL staff.

I would like to thank all the members of the HR Committee for their time and effort. Throughout the year, every committee member demonstrated a willingness to dialogue, complete the assigned work, and provide meaningful feedback. All of this was done in a collegial, respectful manner that resulted in an amazing, friendly group who took pleasure in doing a good job. Thank You.

Carmel French, Ph.D.
Chair, Human Resources Committee

Fund Development and Communications Committee

The Fund Development Committee expanded its mandate in 2019 to oversee communications as well. Committee members agreed to this expanded role because we recognized that raising funds from different sources and profiling the work of NSACL are inextricably linked. Fund development remains a critical aspect of the committee's work since NSACL relies on government grants to pay for our operations. Only a small proportion of revenue is raised through donations from individuals and corporations. The committee has recognized that before we implement an all-encompassing corporate plan, NSACL must continue to build its profile and visibility across Nova Scotia.

Throughout 2019, the committee's major focus was on submitting grant applications to numerous foundations and government funding opportunities. These submissions were the result of research conducted by our committee, students who have worked with us, and NSACL staff. We continue to build on this work and are putting in place a system to monitor our submissions.

Ashley Gallant joined NSACL in the role of Fund Development and Communications Coordinator in December 2019 and has supported our committee work in various areas. A communications plan was developed in late spring while work is currently underway on producing a Fund Development plan. Ashley led our committee in organizing a skills development workshop for board members with a goal of gaining knowledge about the value of communications and its connection to fund development.

Under the current conditions of a world-wide pandemic, the committee continues to face challenges imposed by the shifting landscape of fund development. NSACL's future plans must fit within these changing dynamics.

I want to take the opportunity to thank Lisa Scott for her work in fund development for NSACL during 2019. My sincere appreciation goes out the committee members for their unwavering commitment and perseverance as we pursue options that will diversify the future revenue sources of NSACL.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Conrad
Chair, Fund Development & Communications Committee

CACL-Clare Branch

CACL has had a number of successes over the last year and would like to highlight the following:

- Establishment of clientele for Home Services Nova Scotia – a joint enterprise through Directions Council of NS.
- Construction has begun on our small options home in Meteghan, NS.
- Our staff has been continuing our day program online during the pandemic with daily calls/video chats with our workers, regular Zoom meetings, online training and delivery of their stipends. Our staff has also been doing a lot of training online with Open Future Learning and having regular staff meetings. They have also been coming in to help paint and renovate the day program centre.
- Our project to expand our kindling operation and improve our infrastructure within our day centre was green-lit by ACOA. We have already begun installing a new efficient heating system and are preparing our basement for the expanded operation.
- We finished our feasibility study to look at establishing a community-based residence. The recommendation was to work with Compass Nova Scotia to develop a cooperative, mixed income residence in Clare. Our board has approved of the recommendation and created a small working group to pursue this.
- We have begun a process of restructuring our HR to take full advantage of our staff's strengths and passions, and to bridge the residential and day programs under the same management and support structure. We will now have one general manager overseeing both programs and managing the staff on both sides. We will also have a facility/office manager supporting both programs. Our job coach has been made the day program coordinator and community facilitator. Our assistant residential supervisor will now become a residential program coordinator.
- Our organization is making progress with our merger with CORD (Clare Organization Representing Persons with Disabilities). We are also in the process of taking over their café operation as one of our social enterprises.
- Our board recently completed a new strategic plan. They also did several board training sessions which explored their roles and responsibilities.
- We have partnered with Autism Nova Scotia on the Person-Directed Planning Pilot and will soon be hiring a part-time Community Facilitator.

Halifax Association for Community Living

The Transition Support Program has continued to be an important service for those living with a disability and their families in the Halifax Regional Municipality. Our Program Director has been working closely with individuals and their families to plan for the future, access appropriate support through community partners and to advocate for themselves, in order to live the life they want and deserve. The transition support program works with people of all ages in various levels of support, including service navigation calls, short and long term support, as well as resource referrals. HAACL continues to develop this program to fit the dynamic challenges those with a disability face on a daily basis.

The Peer Support Program continues to be person-centered and participant driven. Our staff ensure the meetings are geared towards information and activities that are desired by the individuals who attend. We've had many guests come to our meetings including employees of NSACL, Autism Nova Scotia, Service Canada and more. Our Peer Support Program consists of 4 monthly meetings - two parent support meetings, a self advocate group (we call ourselves the Community Living Crew) and a sibling support group. The Peer Support Program has been growing and the community response has been overwhelming.

HAACL continues to partner with Best Buddies Canada and our program director acts as a "site administrator" for our association. Our host school is King's College and the program runs during the school year. The Best Buddies program provides the opportunity for true friendship, acceptance and inclusion for those with a disability.

We have been working on various projects and partnerships over the last year as well as a number of pre-existing collaborations. An example is an art project with a Halifax based artist. This includes a drawing of the Halifax peninsula in the artist's unique style along with drawings of all of the locations in that area that provide support for people with disabilities. This will create a disability resource guide for those who are seeking support. The individual/family member can easily find all of the relevant information for each organization involved, including location, a visual of what the building looks like, contact info and a mission statement of the agency all in one place. We are very excited to reveal the finished project this summer!

St Margaret's Bay and Area Association for Community Living

We have had another productive year at St Margaret's Bay ACL. Our Life Skill classes continued on Tuesdays with members preparing lunch, doing crafts and going out in the community for a meal and a movie.

We welcomed students from Sir John A MacDonald High School to the Superstore Community room each Thursday for exercise, games, shopping and lunch. This is part of their transition program, learning new skills, before they graduate.

Our major fundraiser, Fun Daze, was a great success. Everyone enjoyed the games, music and especially the food. Prizes were awarded to all who collected pledges. Our annual Christmas party was well attended, a time for family, friends and supporters to socialize. We enjoyed a visit from Santa who came bearing gifts for all the members.

We participated with the Bay Treasure Chest as toonie counters. As a small non-profit, we get the opportunity to send four volunteers four times a year to help with this community endeavour. We collected \$2,000 for our participation and the opportunity to tell others of the work we do.

A local law firm, Kennedy Schofield, took us on as their charity for the year and raised funds at many events in the community. Cavicchi's, a popular meat shop and restaurant, save their recyclables for us and our members do the pickup and drop off at the depot. It is amazing how much extra cash is generated for our programs. We continue to partner with the St Margaret's Bay Housing Coalition as they work on affordable housing for seniors, families and persons with intellectual disabilities.

We are keeping in touch with our members with calls and cards during the COVID-19 shutdown as all meetings, programs and fund raising has been cancelled.

We are hoping to gather in the not too distant future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Volunteers, Staff & Students

Abbott, Christopher
Asiedu, Anita Naki
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Chipman, Tim
Conrad, Patti
Cox, John
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Fewer, Julia
Flynn, Kemble
Fox, Jaimie
French, Carmel
Gallant, Ashley
Gillis, Jane
Isnor, Roger
Kaiser, Archie
Landry, Blaise
Linders, Christy
MacDonald, Charlie
McGarva, Rhea
McKay, Lynn
McNamara, Jo-Ann
McNeil, Kathryn
Mercier, Tammy
Montes, Jorge
Murphy-Cox, Donna
Murray, Calla
Neves, Patricia
Scott, Lisa
Smith, Andrew
St. George Gillis, Yvette
Strubank, Ruth
Whidden, Jeanne
Whiteway, Sharon
Wilson, Terry
Wood, Calvin

Funders

Government of Canada
Ready, Willing & Able
Community Living Ontario
Rotary Club of Halifax Harbourside
NS Department of Labour and Advanced Education
NS Department of Community Services
Sisters of Charity Halifax
United Way - Atlantic Compassion Fund

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