

The logo for Shelter Nova Scotia features the word "shelter" in a lowercase, white, serif font. Above the letter 'e' is a stylized white icon of a plant with three leaves. Below "shelter" is the text "NOVA SCOTIA" in a smaller, white, uppercase, sans-serif font. The background of the entire page is a black and white photograph of a person's hands holding a small green plant with soil. The person's face is partially visible in the background, looking towards the camera.

shelter
NOVA SCOTIA

Annual Report
2014-2015

Message From The President

OUR VISION

A community without judgement where everyone has a safe, affordable home.

OUR MISSION

While providing a safe place to stay for those in need, Shelter Nova Scotia seeks to grow an effective continuum of services to help people transition from crisis back to community.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive

Laurie Edwards, President
Director of Career Development,
Nova Scotia Community College

Scott MacDonald, Secretary
HRM Public Safety Officer

Ken MacLean, Past President
Lawyer & General Counsel at
The Municipal Group of Companies

Doreen Malone, Treasurer,
Sr. Private Banker, BMO Harris
Private Banking

Members at Large

Jeremy Jackson,
Vice President – Marketing,
Killam Properties Ltd.

Meghan Laing,
Co-Founder Halifax Connects
Realtor, Domus Realty

Sean Lewis,
Director of Public Affairs,
Corporate Research Associates

Mike Myette,
Executive Director - Nova Scotia 211

Bernard Smith
Community Development

It is a privilege to provide the President's Report on behalf of the Board for Shelter Nova Scotia. The year has been full of change; fast-paced, inspiring and rewarding.

The Board continues its practice of monthly meetings and this year scheduled additional meetings for the Executive Director Search and our newest initiative in housing.

Don Spicer's resignation was a surprise and a challenge but the Board immediately endorsed, with full confidence, Melissa Phillips as acting Executive Director. The Board wishes to thank Melissa for her work in continuing to build Shelter Nova Scotia's excellent relationships with our funders, stakeholders, and partners in the community.

I want to acknowledge Mike Myette and Ken MacLean who joined me in the Executive Director Search Committee, we were very fortunate to hire Linda Wilson, MSW, RSW formerly of HomeBridge Youth Society as the new Executive Director.

The Board's Governance Committee, with the assistance of a legal intern, has prepared a report and in the coming months by-laws of the Society will be reviewed and updated.

The Board wishes to acknowledge the endorsement of the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia with the funding for our newest housing whereby our clients who have long term needs and issues will be housed with respect and dignity. Melissa Phillips stewarded this on our behalf. Under very tight timelines and the directive to be fiscally responsive she managed to secure the support of a cautious Board. Melissa successfully managed all expectations and completed the purchase of the building on time and within budget.

This year the Board again participated in Sleep-Out for Change and Halifax Connects and has committed to a fund-raising plan that is robust and exciting.

On behalf of the Board I would like to thank the Management Team for their warm welcome to our new Executive Director, as well as their support of Melissa in managing the transition, and acknowledge the tremendous work this team does to support front-line staff.

Shelter Nova Scotia has truly amazing employees. In our work as a Board we hear about the remarkable work they do at Metro Turning Point, Rebuilding, Barry House, Nehiley House, and Sir Sanford Fleming House. The Management Team shares their stories of human compassion, acts of selflessness, and the commitment they have to clients. The Board greatly appreciates the employees "heart-work".

The year ahead holds new challenges for us. The Board is committed to a strategic fund-raising plan, strong financial oversight, and a highly functioning organization supported by renewed emphasis on governance.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laurie JA Edwards".

Respectfully submitted,
Laurie JA Edwards

Message From The Executive Director

Our Executive Director's message this year reflects the thoughts of two dedicated leaders, Melissa Phillips, Acting Executive Director and Linda Wilson our new Executive Director. In tandem their message outlines our accomplishments and our hopes for the coming year. In the pages of this report you will discover the ways we nurture those that stay with us, our colleagues, our community and ourselves. It is not easy but we work to find solutions rooted in partnerships.

Melissa's message

This past year had many highlights that we are pleased to share with you. Perhaps most importantly, through our housing programs, 144 men and women and another 8 children transitioned to housing during the past year. This is incredible! Shelter Nova Scotia housed 23 men at The Rebuilding, our supportive apartment program aptly named by one of our tenants. Through our Trusteeship program, which offers financial management and eviction prevention, another 178 men, women and children in the community were supported.

Through our residential programs, Barry House, Metro Turning Point, Nehiley House and Sir Sanford Fleming House, we provided 43,154 nights of rest for those in need of our services.

At Shelter Nova Scotia, we support individuals who are often the most vulnerable and marginalized in our community. Our staff and volunteers work tirelessly under demanding circumstances, using extremely limited resources, yet still find a warm smile for someone coming in out of the cold.

During the past year, with thanks to the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, Shelter Nova Scotia was fortunate to receive funding for the purchase of a property to provide affordable, supportive housing. Set to open in 2015, this newest property will support individuals who face chronic and persistent barriers to accessing housing. To promote housing stability and eviction prevention, staff will be onsite to provide support and services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Homelessness Partnering Strategy also allowed us to operate a supportive housing program for the fifth and final year, targeted at helping men secure and sustain housing in private rental apartments.

At Shelter Nova Scotia, we believe in reaching higher. We also know that social change cannot happen in isolation. Shelter Nova Scotia's second annual Sleep-Out for Change fundraiser raised almost \$30,000 to support our programs, and created opportunities to dialogue about the challenges faced by people living in poverty. Throughout the year, we have seized opportunities to provide education and awareness to groups who were interested in learning more about homelessness and community corrections. Employees spoke to schools, community groups, employment groups and volunteers about our services and different ways that people can help.

With thanks to our core funders, Correctional Services Canada, Department of Community Services and Housing Nova Scotia, as well as our generous community members Shelter Nova Scotia would like to extend our appreciation for your continued support.

To our volunteer Board of Directors, thank you for your guidance, leadership, time and commitment to helping those in our community who are in need of our services.

To our volunteers, thank you for your eagerness to get involved. You make a difference.

To the employees of Shelter Nova Scotia, thank you for another year of being here during holidays, weekends, and snowstorms to ensure that the men, women, transgender person and children we serve have a place to come to for a night's rest.

To our donors, thank you for your support. Without you, we would not be able to reach higher.



191 Herring Cove Road

Melissa Phillips
Director of Housing and Homelessness

Linda's message

I am pleased and honored to have started work with Shelter Nova Scotia over the past number of weeks. In that time, I am continually impressed with the commitment and skill of board members and employees alike.

Shelter Nova Scotia with its broad reaching services is involved in life changing and lifesaving work. Everyone involved is so invested, I am left to believe that they no longer realize the profound significance of their work. It's just what they do.

Being so very new, my observation skills are probably at their finest now. The language used to discuss the work is very deliberate, it is respectful, inclusive and accurate. The actions and interventions with clients and residents are carefully considered and differential. Managers value employees and understand the challenges of front line work circumstance. Everyone appreciates the importance of partnerships to further the stability and positive experiences of service users.

My 29 year career to date has been with people experiencing homeless and youth at risk of homelessness. Much has changed over those years. There have been great increases in the numbers of people in need, but also progressive new programs and supports. Working with Shelter Nova Scotia at this time in my life is destiny. I am so happy to be here.

I have been completing "shadow shifts" with employees at all facilities and spending time with supervisors, program workers, board members and stake holders. Last week I met a man at Metro Turning Point, our men's shelter. He told me he and his wife had moved here from Ontario. She had accepted a position, as a university professor. He also had a professional designation but had been unable to find employment in his field. This man and his wife separated, he had nowhere to go and had run out of money. He told me he would never have believed his life would take this turn. This morning I arrived at work earlier than my colleagues. The doorbell rang and it was him. He made a financial donation. He remembered me and said he had found a place to sublet for three months. His next goal was to find a job...."any job".

Breaking the stereotype about who is "homeless" in 2015, is never ending. More people are temporarily homeless, than chronically without a place to call home. We need every sector of the community to be involved to end this tragedy. I am looking forward to being part of the solution.



Linda Wilson MSW RSW
Executive Director



Homelessness and Housing

Barry House Metro Turning Point The Rebuilding Supportive Housing Program Housing Support Trusteeship

For the last four plus years, shelter usage has been declining at Shelter Nova Scotia. We believe that this is due in part to at least two factors. Firstly, with thanks to funding from Housing Nova Scotia, Shelter Nova Scotia has one full time Housing Support Worker at each shelter to help people find and sustain housing. Secondly, Shelter Nova Scotia has shifted direction in terms of how we operate.

We do not believe that emergency shelter constitutes housing, and our procedures are aimed at reinforcing that our shelter is transitional and temporary. Within the first ten days of welcoming an individual in our shelter, our staff will meet with people and collaboratively produce an action plan that we call a Housing Plan. The goal of this plan is to help define individual goals and barriers to housing. Our staff work diligently 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to help navigate programs and services that assist individuals with the transition to appropriate and affordable housing.

Many of the individuals and families served by Shelter Nova Scotia will only access our services once, and for a short time. There are stories of people who are fleeing domestic partner violence, family breakdown, loss of job, or even loss of home due to fire. Then there are others who will rely on the shelter system as a means of survival. These are people who face incredible barriers to accessing housing, most notably poverty, victimization, discrimination, illness and/or (dis)ability, and often without support from family or friends. In some cases, generations of family may all find themselves in need of our services. For various reasons, people are not privileged or born into equal opportunity.

Due to the incredible work of our staff, we end homelessness, one person at a time. However, we know that the needs of individuals that we are unable to successfully transition from shelter are growing in complexity. It is clear that more targeted assistance is needed to support individuals who are most vulnerable and most chronically without stable housing.

Housing is only part of the solution to homelessness. Affordability among people who are under or unemployed is an ongoing issue. Food insecurity, rising housing costs, stigma and discrimination are just some of the daily challenges for many of the people who come to us for help. More help is needed.

Trustee Program

Our Trusteeship program is an eviction prevention program. We work with individuals and families to budget household income, and directly pay bills on behalf of clients to assist with manageability of finances. Individuals budget or save remaining money for personal use, such as food or clothing. Our Trusteeship program often assists with bill repayment plans, using clients own income, to make debt repayment more manageable. Fixed incomes often result in struggles for individuals and families to address all their household needs, including food and power costs. This program promotes housing stability by ensuring rent is paid on behalf of individuals who rely on this critical service.

Housing Support

With support from Housing Nova Scotia, Barry House and Metro Turning Point both offer a Housing Support Worker to provide assistance in obtaining housing. The ability to provide assistance beyond the shelter to the men, women, transgendered persons, seniors, youth and children we serve has made an incredible impact on the quality of supports we can provide. Our employees travel with shelter clients to view potential apartments, and develop relationships with landlords. They also provide follow up support once the individual or family has transitioned from shelter to housing. This ongoing connection plays a critical role in eviction prevention. Social exclusion and isolation can be detrimental to housing stability. Our employee work with people to support ongoing needs, whether it's navigating resources, providing referrals, or assisting with goal planning.



Community Corrections

AMANDA'S STORY

Amanda* came to Nehiley House this past spring with the plan to return to public high school in the fall. Initially she was not happy about living in a halfway house, and her strongest desire was to make sure she was released by the time school started. Unfortunately it was not possible for Amanda to move out by the time school started, but despite great disappointment she was determined to make it work. She attended school all day Monday to Friday and enjoyed her classes immensely. She worked a part-time job most evenings and weekends while still staying on top of her schoolwork.

JASON'S STORY

Jason* was housed in a minimum-security unit with about eight other men including Peter*. On Peter's birthday, Jason noticed and Peter was isolating himself in his room. Jason decided to take the initiative to do something nice for Peter to brighten his day and made him a birthday cake. When the cake was finished, Jason recruited his other housemates, one of whom had a guitar, to sing Peter Happy Birthday while presenting him with the cake. Peter was profoundly thankful to his housemates and told them that no one had ever baked him a cake before. Even when recounting this story, Jason became somewhat emotional and said that this event had a profound impact on him and his way of thinking about men in prison. It is important to remember that individuals and their past mistakes do not define their future.

*Names have been changed for privacy reasons.

Shelter Nova Scotia has two Halfway houses. Halfway houses provide a highly structured and supervised setting in which people can serve out a part of their sentence in the community where they are held accountable for their actions and decisions. The goal of community corrections is to support people in the community for as long as they remain safe to be there, keeping public safety in mind. People in jail are automatically released after serving two thirds of their time. Affording the opportunity to have support and supervision in a halfway house prior to this allows them to find a job, work on recovery, and find a place to live providing them an increased likelihood of success and decrease the chance for returning to incarceration.

We had 22 different women stay with us at Nehiley House this year.

Both the number of women who stayed at the facility and the number of bed days increased this year compared to last, with a total of 1,919 resident bed days. Nehiley House reviewed 33 cases for residency and accepted 65% of the cases. The average age of residents staying at the facility was 34. Monthly in-reach activities continued throughout the year to meet with women at both the federal and provincial institutions.

This was the first year that Nehiley House received interest in our Mother Child Program. Two women applied for consideration to have their children live with them at Nehiley House, and both were approved. For the first time since opening in 2005 the facility had a wait list from Nov 2014 and continued to the end of the fiscal year.

As of the end of the fiscal there were 8 women residing at Nehiley House. We are pleased to report that of the residents who were no longer at the facility, 86% successfully completed the mandated period of residency portion of their parole while staying with us.



Some of our Nehiley House employees

We had 69 different men stay with us as Sir Sanford Fleming House this year.

There was a slight decrease in number of men staying at the facility this year, but the resident bed days were up compared to last fiscal year, reaching 6,523. Sir Sanford Fleming House reviewed 260 cases, of which 68% were accepted. In reach activities to meet with men at the Federal Institutions continued throughout the year.

A grant partnership with Dalhousie University's Occupational Therapy Program provided Sir Sanford Fleming House with the opportunity to have a second year student from the program at the facility. The student engaged with residents who volunteered to meet with him. They participated in an OT assessment to determine the areas of support they would need prior to moving out into the community. The parameters of the grant enabled the student to take residents out into the community — a gap we had hoped to address through the grant.

As of the end of the fiscal year, there were 18 men residing at Sir Sanford Fleming House. Of the residents who were no longer at the facility, 73% successfully completed the mandated period of residency portion of their parole while staying with us.

Fund Development

We believe in a community where everyone has a safe and affordable home. In partnership with our cornerstone funders and project grant funding we work to find solutions to homelessness.

Our Cornerstone Funders

Nova Scotia Department of Community Service
Correctional Service Canada
Homelessness Partnering Strategy
Housing Nova Scotia
Generous Community Members

Our 2014 Community Grants

We regularly apply for grants. This year we were awarded funding for our projects and facilities from the following foundations and organizations. Thank you to...

Domus – A Home for Everyone
Halifax Assistance Fund
Home Depot
Halifax Community Grant
Flemming Foundation
Councillor Wayne Mason's Participatory Budgeting

Our facilities and core programs:

- Two emergency shelters (100 beds)
- Two community residential facilities – Halfway houses (29 beds)
- A supportive housing apartment building (19 units)
- A facility for those in the late stages of alcoholism
- Housing Support Program for 80 people living independently in the community
- Trustee Program for 178 people seeking assistance with stabilizing their housing

MYTH:

Parole and Probation are the same thing.

FACT:

Probation is given by a judge to a person who has committed a crime and they serve probation in the community without going to jail but have conditions to follow. Parole is when a person who has committed a crime is given a jail sentence. They can apply to be considered for a release into the community (parole) and this may or may not be supported by the Parole Board of Canada who makes all decisions about parole releases.

MYTH:

People go back to jail because they commit new crimes.

FACT:

If people are sent back to jail, the majority of the time it's due to technical violations of their conditions such as hanging out with someone they are not supposed to and not because they have committed new crime.

Our Challenge:

The cost of running a household in Nova Scotia has increased. Our funding has not. To offer the same service to the more than 1100 people who will utilize our services again this year we need \$185,000 from the community. This community support ensures that our doors stay open.

How you and your friends can help:

- Provide a night's rest:
A minimum donation of \$35.50 a year for 2 years
- Join our \$100 Club:
A minimum donation of \$100 a year for 2 years

Donations of household and personal care items are always appreciated. Items we have the greatest need for include:

Personal care items:

toothbrushes, deodorant, feminine hygiene products, shampoo, towels & washcloths

Linens & supplies:

bedding for single beds, laundry detergent

Food:

casseroles, canned food, fresh produce, coffee, tea, sugar

Luxuries:

bus tickets, pizzas, gift cards, duffel bags



Monetary donations can be made online by visiting www.shelternovascotia.com and clicking on "Act Now" or can be mailed to us at Shelter Nova Scotia, 101-5506 Cunard St., Halifax, NS, B3K 1C2

DID YOU KNOW?

We are active on social media. We have 787 likes on facebook and 1503 followers on twitter. Follow and like us to stay up to date on our story.



Sleep Out for Change 2014

This grass-roots event connects us to those we serve. Putting yourself in someone else's position changes your perception of a situation. It helps educate you. Our 2nd annual fundraiser saw more than 40 people sleep out raising just under \$30,000!

Sleeping-out for one night is not meant to replicate the challenges of experiencing homelessness. That would be impossible. This event is founded on empathy and is about creating awareness and much needed funds for the more than 1100 people that Shelter Nova Scotia works with each year.

New in 2014 we built in activities to accompany the round table discussions. We made bagged breakfasts for clients at all of our facilities – more than 150 people were fed. A big thank you to Pete's Frootique and Chater's Meats for the items they donated.

Standing in the Gap, who each weekend visit those living on the streets, allowed our sleepers to go out with them to deliver snacks and personal care items. They provide caring conversation to those who are often ignored and we are thankful that they took us along.

We launched a corporate sponsorship program and are thrilled that Killam Properties and Dexter came on board to support the event.

SHARON'S STORY

Sharon came to Barry House in December relocating from New Brunswick. She was new to Halifax and was here in search of a better life. Her hope was to come to Halifax and find work. She was adamant that she did not wish to receive any income assistance, she wanted to find a job and earn her own money to get an apartment.

After tireless job searches and countless applications being dropped off she became frustrated and lost hope that she would be able to find a job. Then she did an interview with the a local newspaper Metro Halifax and suddenly received numerous job offers for her high standards in the janitorial field.

After months of hard work, dedication and commitment she has been housed in her own apartment.



Thank You
to our corporate supporters



We would like to thank the Grant Thornton team for challenging themselves at Mud Hero and raising money for our clients.

If you are interested in receiving our audited financial statements please contact us and we will be happy to send you a copy. Charitable Organization Registration: 108027590RR0001

Community Building

Soleful Caring

In just two short months, Shelter Nova Scotia helped a Canadian rock star's vision of providing footwear to those in need come to fruition. By mobilizing community partners and local media, our Communications and Fund Development department was able to collect hundreds of pairs of footwear for Myles Goodwyn's Soleful Caring...Shoes for the Homeless foundation.

When approached by Goodwyn about collaborating on the idea, we knew it would be a great fit for Shelter Nova Scotia. For many of our clients, being on their feet for long periods is a reality of daily life. Having good quality footwear helps prevent serious medical issues that are the result of poor foot care. Good shoes are a basic need, Soleful Caring helped us meet it.

This campaign was a partnership with Value Village, who accepted donations of gently used or new boots and sneakers at their Bayer's Lake location. In the three-week life of the campaign, we surpassed our goal of collecting 1,500 pairs of shoes. The support for this campaign was overwhelming. Once distributed to all five Shelter Nova Scotia facilities, extra donations were shared with shelter providers in Halifax, Truro, Cape Breton and Kentville.

Crucial to the success of this campaign was the media coverage received. Featured by CBC News, Global News, The Chronicle Herald, The Cape Breton Post and several local radio stations, Soleful Caring received media attention across the region.

We would like to extend a huge thank you to Myles Goodwyn and Dr. Stan Kutcher, Value Village, Alscott Air Systems and all those who donated and supported this important campaign.

Holiday Giving

We are fortunate to have long standing donors who give each year at this time. The funds and donations we receive carry us long past the holidays. The O'Regan's Kia Jammie Drive is a fun, new initiative asking the community to give new warm pj's for those experiencing homelessness. People dropped off a new pair of Jammies, any size, to O'Regan's Kia Dartmouth and received a ballot to enter their 12 days of Christmas Giveaways. We collected enough pajamas for all of the people staying with us over the holiday season. Can't wait to do it again next year.

Thank You to 2014 Media Supporters

Thank you to the local media who have helped us create awareness and break down the myths about people experiencing homelessness and people transitioning from prison life to community life.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| CBC | C100 |
| CTV | Q104 |
| Global | The Chronicle Herald |
| Snap'd | Halifax magazine |
| Metro Halifax | Local Connections Halifax |
| News 95.7 – Sheldon MacLeod | |



DID YOU KNOW?
 41 people and organizations conducted personal care campaigns for us. We have 322 in kind donors, of these 20 are faith based organizations

Halifax Connects

Bringing people together.



A day of caring for those
EXPERIENCING
or at risk of
HOMELESSNESS

4,000
attendees since 2010

750
attendees in 2014

\$60,000
of in-kind goods & services

200 volunteers

Attendees have free access to:



Haircuts



Optometry



Footcare



Clothing



A hot lunch



Social services

40
service
providers

99% of those surveyed
said they felt
RESPECTED

Our People

Our employees keep our facilities open 24 hours, 365 days a year - caring for our clients. Their flexibility and commitment to the clients is recognized by a years of service program that begins at 3 years. Below is a list of the people who make up the Shelter Nova Scotia team with special notation for those receiving years of service recognition this year.

Ashley Avery		Stephanie Eisnor		Sabrina Maxfield		Kelsea Schofield	
Shane Ballard		Erin Elliot-Doucet		Carly McConnell		Dhillon Sehmbey	
Kathryn Bell		Stacey Farmer		Bobby Mckay		Daniel Simms	10 yrs
Jenna Benoit		Samantha Fleckney		Mitzi Mitchell		Julie Slen	
Katelyn Billo	3 yrs	Savanna Gallant	5 yrs	Elizabeth Mooney	3 yrs	Tammy Smith	5 yrs
Lynne Bryant		Darcy Gillis	3 yrs	Samantha Morris		Matthew Snyder	
Dawn Burgess		Nicole Goldsworthy		Clinton Myra		Melanie Spates	
Caitlyn Clements		Joshua Goodwin		Stephanie Neiman		Tyler Spencer	
Sarah Collins		Anthony Gough		Samantha Nestor		Bruce Spicer	
John Connor	15 yrs	Darlene Grady-Lunn	5 yrs	Aron Nyman	3 yrs	Karen Spurr	5 yrs
Stephanie Cook		Darren Greer		Amanda O'Brien		Melissa Thompson	
Jill Cooke		Katherine Harris		Oluwayomi Odediran		Sandi Thomson	3 yrs
Erin Cotie		Elissa Hughes	5 yrs	Bola Omolaja		Kendra Turvey	
Courtney Crewe		Marisa Janes		Jennifer O'Reilly	5 yrs	Emma Walker	
Terra Crowe	10 yrs	Kinnon Job		Patrick Peori	3 yrs	Kelly Walsh	
Kevin Delahunty		Nicole Johnston		Melissa Phillips	10 yrs	Catherine Ward	
Marisa DiCosta		Justin Jordan		Donna Poirier	30 yrs	Leslie Weber	5 yrs
Lamont Dobbin		Mariah King		Wayne Poisson		Michelle Wheeler	10 yrs
Mary-Anne Dober	3 yrs	Lisa Kloucek		Jeremy Pongoski	5 yrs	Linda Wilson	
Stacey Dort	15 yrs	Amie Leslie		Anthony Regimbal		Regina Wilson	10 yrs
Mike Dove		Erin Levy	5 yrs	Colleen Ritchie		Dawn Wright	
April Drake	5 yrs	Stephen MacAskill		Christina Rodrigue	3 yrs	Dwayne Wright	3 yrs
Heather Dunfield		Leigh MacLean		Mickyla Rogers		Tyler Wright	
Amelia Edwards		Erin Manning		Rachel Salter	3 yrs		

Our team includes approximately 36 full time employees, 20 part time employees and 30 casual employees. With an average length of service of 3.5 years and a combined 280 years of experience, we are able to provide well trained, qualified employees who make a difference in the lives of those who come to us.

This diverse staffing base shares a few dynamics. We see an almost even split between University degrees in the Social Sciences and College Diplomas in Human Services. In fact, several of our employees have both! From an educational standpoint our employees are lifelong learners. We have employees working on a second degrees or a Master's degree while they are employed with us.

We provide ongoing training for our employees, keeping them current with the tools they need. We offer ASIST (applied suicide intervention skills training) and NVCI (non-violent crisis intervention) with in-house trainers. First Aid training is provided in partnership with the Community Partnership Training Alliance and the Compass Group of pharmacies. We are very fortunate to have friends in the community who recognize and support the work we do.

It is important to us to remain active in the employment community. We participate in job fairs at Saint Mary's University and Dalhousie University as well as Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) and Success College. We sit on the Program Advisory Committee for NSCC and provide valuable placements for their students. These placements provide students with practical experiences to complement their text books and lectures. A few of these students remain with us as casual employees at the end of their placements and post-graduation some have applied for employment and become part of our team.

We offer a comprehensive Health and Dental plan as well as an Employee Assistance Program which is available twenty four hours a day. This program provides support for a variety of employment and life issues. These include but are not limited to managing stress, financial & retirement guidance as well as help with parenting, caring for aging parents & relationships. We believe in supporting our employees in their daily lives and also help our employees move forward and plan for the future. A matching RSP program has been in effect for several years. Employees also have the option to participate in the Canada Savings Bond Payroll deduction plan. Approximately 20 employees are saving with this plan.

Volunteer Awards

Statistics show that volunteers contribute \$1.8 billion worth of services to the Nova Scotia economy. Shelter Nova Scotia is lucky to have many of these dedicated people giving their time and talents to help us serve our clients. Volunteers are unsung heroes who continually go beyond to help keep our work going. With 1,100 clients and five facilities in the Halifax region, the help and support of our community members is not only appreciated, but crucial to our success.

Employees nominated volunteers who made a difference to them in their daily work. From these nominations we selected the 5 volunteer finalists listed here.

We are truly thankful for their compassion and dedication and are pleased to present them with Shelter Nova Scotia Volunteer Recognition Awards.

Recipients

Church of the Latter Day Saint's members
Maura Gair and Sacred Heart of Halifax students
James Ingram and Success College students
Murray Lunn
Mary Ritchie

Save the Dates 2015



Halifax Connects

November 8, 2015
Citadel High



Sleep-Out for Shelter Nova Scotia

Saturday, October 3, 2015
Victoria Park (Spring Garden Road)
7 p.m. to 7 a.m.

DID YOU KNOW?

Two women who participated in our trusteeship program took training and obtained full time jobs allowing them to become independent and move on from the trusteeship program.

Look What Else We Did

- Presentation to Success Counseling Class of 25 students
- Presentation to Eastern College Addictions Class of 15 students
- Mentor students from NSCC Ad. Diploma Public Relations program
- NSCC Program Advisory Committee participant for developing the first Criminal Justice Program at NSCC
- Organized Correctional Service Canada Housing Forum
- Volunteered with the Inmate Library Program
- Work with John Howard Society to complete reports on incarcerated male offenders
- Volunteer with Search and Rescue
- Committee participant for The Canadian Counseling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA)
- Presented to Georges P. Vanier Junior High Grades 7 & 8
- Participated in the Social Justice Symposium at North Colchester Junior High
- Presented to Halifax Police leadership team
- Exhibited at Gottingen 250 celebration
- The Director of Sir Sanford Fleming House and clients present to the Auburn High Law class
- Participated as volunteers in the United Way – Living on the Edge simulation
- Participated in the United Way Gift of Giving Day receiving free advice from communications professionals
- Exhibited at the 2014 Dalhousie Volunteer Fair for students
- Sobey's MBA Society students gave us 75 hours of volunteer service
- Served as a board member of Bryony House
- Volunteered at Victim Services
- Participated on EMO committee for emergency response
- We are a member of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce

We are focused on mentoring students. We take student placements from

- OT students from Dalhousie
- Students from a variety of Nova Scotia Community College programs
- Students from Business programs
- Students from Eastern College

DID YOUKNOW?

- Approximately 84 % of shelter users in Canada had only one stay during the year.
- Chronic homelessness means someone who has needed a shelter for 180 nights or more in the past year.
- Episodic homelessness means someone who has experienced three or more episodes of homelessness in the past year. These would be stays separated by 30 day periods.*

*From the 2014 Homelessness Partnering Strategy for Canada – Employment and Social Development Canada

Planting Seeds of Positive Change

In the spring of 2014 we pitched our garden idea at the Halifax District 7 participatory budgeting event. This amazing evening, full of energy, was fruitful for us. Voters decided and we were awarded \$20,000 to pilot a community garden at Barrington and Cornwallis St. beside Metro Turning Point.

Why a garden? We are challenged by tight budgets. Metro Turning Point relies on food donations to feed the men who stay with us. As such we provide a snack not meals. As a solution to this problem and as way to build community we planted a garden.

Gardens provide people with exercise, camaraderie, a sense of purpose, hope, transferrable skills and finally food! Gardening is intergenerational and has roots in all cultures. As people learn to provide for themselves they build confidence that can lead to positive changes in their lives.

Evidence shows that when working together in a safe and supportive environment, as well as being active outdoors, an individual who suffers from mental health problems can experience significant benefits when engaging in community garden projects. That is one of the many reasons we have created 1000 square feet of garden beds open to clients, employees or community volunteers, to come in and express themselves through horticulture.

Sometimes when nurturing yourself is difficult nurturing something else, like a plant, seeing it grow, allows you to learn new things about yourself.

So, just before the holidays our garden was built and it is ready to plant in the spring. We held a community information session and talked with the clients to find out what they wanted to grow. Beans, tomatoes, peppers, squash, peas, lettuce, herbs, cucumbers and spinach will kick things off. With support from Common Roots, Edmonds Landscape, Blomidon Nurseries and more we were ready to plant as soon as the frost left the ground.

If you are interested in the project and want to donate or volunteer contact colleenritchie@shelternovascotia.com.



www.shelternovascotia.com

