

A newsletter for and about  
Community Services staff

Winter 2008



Building strong, healthy  
communities together

# the Outlook

*It's 2008! International  
Year of the Potato (as well  
as the International Year  
of Sanitation... so, ummm...  
keep your taters clean.)*

*2007 was full of new faces and new projects,  
and we can't wait for the same in the  
following months.*

*So, as we settle in nicely to a new calendar,  
this issue of Outlook will serve as a glance  
back and a look ahead.*

*Would you like fries with that?*

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## Western Roundup

The Yarmouth District office was very proud to have won the Walk for Wellness Challenge which was held this past summer.

The offices were challenged to walk the distance equal to the amount of kms around the Province.

It was a great way to promote Healthy Workplace initiatives and promote healthy living. Congratulations to everyone who participated!

Most of the staff were involved in this, and below is a photo of some who were there for the last kms.



*Janine Doucette, Jean Brown, Shelley Comeau, Rachel Healy, Elaine Jackman, Danielle Boudreau, Kim Rhodenizer, Jo-Anne d'Entremont & Tanya Surette-Wallace after walking the province!*

## Northern Roundup

2007 was a year of Pink. From the no-holds barred singer, to the t-shirts on high school boys, it was a colour with pizzazz.

The New Glasgow District Office was made in that shade as well with their 2nd annual "Get in the Pink" fund raiser in support of the Canadian Breast Cancer Society.

The days' events were organized by the Staff for Staffers Committee and included staff participating in a pink and jeans casual day, a pot-luck and a services auction. Services that were auctioned off included a complete interior/exterior car wash and detail, cubicle cleaning once a month for 6 months, chili dinner for 6, homemade yummy goodies and much, much more. The auction was hosted by office funny guy extraordinaire Melvin Frosst. A grand total of \$548.50 was raised (beating last year's total of \$500) and was sent to the Atlantic Chapter of the Canadian Breast Cancer Society. (from the files of Erika Robinson ;)

Staff Appreciation Week at the New Glasgow District Office was filled with activity and food! Regional Staff got in on the fun with our annual Supervisors' Breakfast. Nothing says yummy like free pancakes and bacon - especially when it's cooked up by your Supervisor. Other activities during the week included: a healthy workplace crossword puzzle, "Name That DCS Acronym", "Name That Tune", brain teasers, and more! Brave and self-assured staffers brought in pictures of themselves when they were kids for "Name That DCS Staffer". And yes, we really like to play "Name That..." games! Then it was co-worker versus co-worker in the most heated game of charades this side of Montreal - staffers had so much fun they've opted to have this team building activity every month. (from the files of Erika Robinson ;)

Speaking of Montreal, Willow McLean made her way back home to Antigonish after receiving her Degree in Social Work from McGill University. She came on board at the Guysborough District Office in August as a casual Social Worker before moving to Halifax and a new position as Child Protection Caseworker with Children's Aid Society in Windsor, NS. She will do an excellent job, be a great team player and be an asset to her employer.

Willow was presented with a rose bouquet and gift on her last day. Congratulations Willow!

Other moves in the second half of 2007 saw District Manager Geri MacDonald heading for a temporary term in the Eastern Region. She is greatly missed in both the Antigonish & Guysborough Offices. In her stead, we welcomed Donna Deveaux-MacLeod as our new Acting District Manager for both these offices. Donna left her position as Regional ESIA Specialist for the Northern Region. Continued good luck to you both!

We had a busy Staff Appreciation Week in Guysborough District Office with good participation from co-workers. Highly coveted 'Treat bags' (pens, post-its and candy) were presented to all staff, supervisors and managers with the words "Thanks for a job well done - you are appreciated & valued by management". Other weekly activities included card games, brain teasers, crossword challenge, jelly bean jar count and posters with photos of past to present Staff Appreciation events with lots of prizes. Keeping with our theme "It's All About Balance", we enjoyed fruit & veggies with dips, a healthy breakfast, meats/cheeses/crackers/mini pitas, baked salsa dip & Tostitos, pita & dip, chocolate zucchini cake, and strawberry cheesecake.

Our Northern Regional Administrator, Catherine Berliner, visited the Guysborough District Office to present the Cup of Excellence Award to Garth Wilson. Both she and Donna Deveaux-MacLeod, Acting District Manager, also recognized the 30 years of dedicated service by Blair Pellerin and Harold Roberts.

Garth received his 10th year Milestone with the Department in 2006. Prior to his present position of IA Caseworker in the Guysborough Office, he was an ESS Caseworker. He was part of the Community Services ICM Project Team to receive the Minister's Cup of Excellence Award. Congratulations for a job well-done!

Blair started his career in February 1977 in Guysborough as a Social Assistance worker administering Income Assistance, Family Services and other programs. During that time he worked closely with the Municipality of Guysborough and the Towns of Canso & Mulgrave. He is currently an Income Assistance Caseworker.

Harold started his career in December 1977 in Cape Breton working with the Town of Port Hawkesbury as a Social Assistance Worker. He spent two years in the Family Court system before accepting a job closer to home in Guysborough as District Supervisor. When terms of reference changed, his title changed to District Manager. In 2005, he accepted a new & challenging role as Regional Child Welfare Specialist for the Northern Region.

*A special thank-you to the Employee Recognition Steering Committee, Regional Action Team Committee members for all their dedicated and hard work to make this week a success province-wide.*



## Eastern Roundup

On September 28th we wished a Happy Retirement to Don MacKenzie, Casework Supervisor of the Sydney District Office. "Big Don" has been an employee of the Department of Community Services for the past 35 years. He started his career with the Department as a Director of Public Welfare in Victoria County, moving on to Municipal Social Services in Dominion, North Sydney and Sydney Mines. Donnie also worked as Vocational Rehab Counselor and Career Counselor before becoming Casework Supervisor for ESIA, a position he held until his retirement.

Donnie has been a wonderful co-worker & friend and it was with bittersweet sadness that we gathered together to bid him farewell. We will miss him greatly and we hope he continues to be a presence at our office parties and various functions. We would also like to say a special thank you to his wife Maureen for the many special, sweet treats she has sent in for us over the years. To the "Big Fella" himself, we all thank you for your years of service, your unwavering support of your staff and your warmth and sense of humour that helped us all to feel a part of this great team in the Sydney District Office.



*The Sydney District Office gets behind Donnie prior to his retirement.*



## One Journey, Countless Successes

Ken Poole was an unofficial ambassador for the One Journey Program ever since he completed a special pilot program for mature workers at Home Depot.

"I'm no longer dependent on social services – and that's a good feeling," said Ken.

Because of his determination throughout the program and his vocal and adamant support of it after he left, Ken was the recipient of the One Journey Ambassador award for 2007.

During the International Literacy Day (Sept 7th) a Workplace Education Ambassador Award for the One Journey Program will now be presented to a deserving candidate.

This person demonstrates enthusiasm about learning, overcomes difficulties to participate in training and realizes personal learning goals. This individual has demonstrated the ability to transfer newly acquired skills to the workplace and acts as a champion for the program at the work site by encouraging and supporting others.

This description fits Ken perfectly.

The One Journey Program is a labour attachment initiative sponsored by both the Departments of Education and Community Services.

One Journey's objective is to work with industries that have identified a skill shortage and on a partnership model design training. Starting with essential skills, they'll then train and hire unemployed or underemployed people, many of whom are in receipt of income support. This is a province wide program.



## Helping Communities Develop an Action Plan

UEY is working locally with our schools, health care professionals, community-based organizations, government departments and agencies and other strategic partners to assist in the development of local community action plans to give Nova Scotian children the best possible start in life. UEY Community Coordinators are available to meet with you to talk about early years research and activities in your region. To learn more about UEY in your region:

### UEY Cumberland

Joan Beswick, Ph.D.: 902-667-1129,  
joan.beswick@cha.nshealth.ca  
Carol Oram, M.Ed.: 902-667-1261,  
carol.oram@cha.nshealth.ca  
www.cumberlanduey.ca

### UEY Halifax

Rachel Boehm, Sackville Bedford Early  
Intervention Society  
902-864-8744, uey@ns.aliantzinc.ca  
www.ueyhalifax.com

### UEY Western Nova Scotia

Jeff Kelly, Nova Scotia Community College  
– Kingstec Campus  
jeff.kelly@nsc.ca, 902-679-7482  
The UEY initiative is funded by Human  
Resources and Social Development  
Canada.

For further information, visit  
www.hrsdc.gc.ca.

## Bonjour!

Client Services is pleased to welcome Brian Doucet as the Coordinator of French Language Services.

Brian comes to the position with more than 20 years of experience within the Department, having worked as a Counselor, Caseworker, and Casework Supervisor. For the past 2 years, he has worked in a dual role as acting District Manager and acting Coordinator of French Language Services at our Yarmouth office. Brian holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, a Diploma in Community Development and is a Registered Social Worker.

Brian says, "All governmental departments are working on improving and increasing the amount of French Services to meet community demands. DCS is already doing some great work on FLS."

Brian will be identifying some of this work as well as formalizing the process. The Department is also working closely with community groups in identifying priority areas and services.

There has been tremendous support towards this initiative from all levels in the Department since its inception.

"It's important we all feel we can participate and contribute to the process as we strive for client service excellence," said Brian.

Look for immediate changes in some of the information we make available, be it our Inter/Intranet sites, bilingual Mission Statements as well as some reception areas. Other changes will be more systematic and sustainable as we work on policy and protocol.

Our Department's FLS Plan comes out in March. Merci!



*Congratulations to George Savoury, Executive Director, Family and Child Services for his recent honour from the Nova Scotia Council for the Family. George was the 2007 recipient of the Achievement of Excellence Award. George is seen here receiving his award from David Muise, Past President, Nova Scotia Council for the Family.*

## Clowning Around: National Child Day in Western Region

Perhaps the world's most famous clown is more pusher of "extra sizing" than exercising, but Ronald had nothing on two Annapolis Valley clowns who brought a message of activity and children's rights as part of National Child Day in November.

National Child Day is a day when we celebrate all children of the world and the joy they bring to our lives. Each year, National Child Day has a theme. The 2007 National Child Day theme was "I Have a Right to Be Active". This theme emphasized how important it is for children to participate in physical activity. We know physical activity is key to leading a healthy and productive lifestyle.

To celebrate National Child Day this year, all staff were encouraged to participate in activities to raise awareness for this special day. Where possible, staff was asked to help deliver a folder of useful tools and information to promote the Day. These folders were delivered to Child Care Centres, Family Resource Centres and Early Intervention Programs throughout the province.

In Western Region, to further entice staff to participate in celebrations, a friendly office competition ensued. District Offices throughout the Region were challenged to come up with the most creative ways to celebrate National Child Day, with the promise of a reward.

### *Well, what more creative than clowns?*

Granville Office had a fabulous day. Students from grades Primary to Three from Champlain School visited the office where they were greeted and entertained by Gurgles and Mona the Clowns. They were read a story, toured the office and given stickers celebrating National Child Day. Gurgles and Mona then gave out certificates and an apple to all the children, amidst shouts of "HAPPY NATIONAL CHILD DAY!"

It was a community effort with art work from Clark Rutherford, Lawrencetown Consolidated, Bear River Preschoolers & Champlain schools. The apples were donated by a local farm and the local drug store allowed the office to photocopy 100 Certificates of Participation.

For their efforts, Granville office won a mounted poster from UNICEF on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. But, this is an award best shared. Raelene Robinson and Jennifer Chisholm, who took the lead on the office's activities, took the award around to the schools that participated to show the children.



*Gurgles and Mona the Clowns help celebrate National Child Day.*

## Congratulations to the Integrated Case Management Team...

this year's recipient of the Minister's Award of Excellence.

Following on the heels of the Minister's Award, the ICM team was awarded a GOLD medal at a national IT/IM awards banquet in Ottawa. Kevin Hall from IT Services was there to accept the award on behalf of the whole ICM team.

The national distinction awards program is part of GTEC Week (Government Technology Exhibition and Conference), which is a leading international public sector learning event. It is the annual meeting place for IT/IM decision-makers from the federal, provincial, municipal, and regional levels of government to share knowledge and experiences in improving service delivery through the management of information and technology. For more information on the GTEC awards finalists, go to:

<http://www.gtec.ca/distinctionawards/finalists.html>

Congratulations are in order for all those involved with ICM.



## Kudos from SPD

Mildred Colbourne, Director of Services for Persons with Disabilities would like to commend her staff on the successful implementation of new programs & legislation that will provide more choices & safeguards for seniors, individuals with disabilities and their families;

### Support for Seniors Program - Judy LaPierre

Judy has been the lead in implementing a pilot program to serve the needs of seniors who require support in their own home or in the homes of family members or friends. The purpose of this program is to provide assistance with the purchase of at home support as a supplement to existing programs and assist care givers who look after seniors within their own homes. The program recognizes the extra expenses associated with the provision of care and may prevent or delay the need for out of home placement.

### In Home Support Program/Direct Family Support - Lorna MacPherson

The Services for Persons with Disabilities Renewal Project has resulted in the development of a new program, Direct Family Support and the re-design and enhancements of two other programs, Alternative Family Support and Independent Living Support. Subsequently, it was identified that the majority of the In Home Support clients, who were transferred to the Department of Health in April 2000, may be more appropriately served in one of these new programs. A process to transfer those clients to the Department of Community Services was developed and transfer of these clients was completed by July 1.

### Independent Living Support (Northern Region) - Anne Black

The Independent Living Support Program has been expanded to the Northern Region (Cumberland, Antigonish, Colchester & Guysborough counties) of Nova Scotia. Specifically this program provides support for those adults who are semi-independent and are able to live in their own homes or apartments. These individuals require a reduced level of support to achieve successful independent/semi-independent living.

### Protection for Persons in Care - Jackie Purcell

The Protection for Persons in Care Act was proclaimed on October 1, 2007. The Act is designed to protect individuals (patients or residents) in health care facilities from abuse. The Departments of Community Services and Health have worked collaboratively to ensure consistent interpretation and application of this Act and regulations. Jackie has been the DCS lead on this committee to implement this legislation, develop policy, and provide training sessions for DCS staff and service providers.

*Deputy Minister Judith Ferguson, Wayne Girvin, Bev Corbin and Derek Jessome celebrate the Minister's Award of Excellence for the ICM Team.*



## Understanding the Early Years: Helping Children Have the Best Possible Start in Life

*"Understanding human needs is half the job of meeting them."  
- ADLAI STEVENSON*

It is often said that knowledge comes before action. Understanding the Early Years (UEY) is a project that puts knowledge first. UEY is a national initiative to enable communities to better understand the needs of young children and families so that they can determine the best programs and services to meet those needs. UEY dates back to 1999, when it began as a pilot project in five communities. It became a national initiative in 2004 and today has been implemented in 36 sites across Canada.

Currently, UEY is active in three sites in Nova Scotia, including Halifax, Western Nova Scotia and Cumberland County. Two new sites will soon be active. Research carried out through the UEY sites in Nova Scotia will provide a snapshot of how ready primary children are when they enter school, how community and family factors help shape their school readiness, and what resources exist in communities to support young children and their families.

Information gathered through UEY will support government departments and agencies, including the Department of Community Services, local organizations, families, schools and other partners in working together to strengthen our approach to early child development, contributing to healthy families and healthy communities.

## New Digs for the DPC

On February 7, 2008, the Disabled Persons Commission held its Open House to celebrate a move to 277 Pleasant St. in Dartmouth. The Commission had previously been located in Nelson Place on Spring Garden Rd. The move to Dartmouth has meant that the Commission has more accessible office space.

Anne MacRae, Executive Director of the Commission said, "While we miss being so close to Minister Streach and her staff on the 8th Floor of Nelson Place, we are very excited to be in a venue that is fully accessible to persons with disabilities."

Some of the new features of the office are a fully accessible unisex washroom, video phone for the deaf, a library with accessible shelving and visual alarm system.

Commission Chairperson Brian Tapper said, "The Commission is fully committed to being a showcase for barrier free design in order to educate the public about how to create workplaces that are fully accessible to persons with disabilities."

This new space is certainly testament to that!

*Frank O'Sullivan, Executive Director of the Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians demonstrates the new video phone.*



## Early Years Research in Nova Scotia

All children are born ready to learn, but not all children arrive at school ready to learn. Children who start school not ready to learn are at a disadvantage, and many often never catch up. "It's as if they are behind before they even begin," says Michelle Snider, a primary teacher at Rockingstone Heights Elementary School.

Research initiatives like UEY are important, says Principal Susan Latham, whose school William King Elementary in Herring Cove, participated in the study. "Primary is such a vital year," says Latham. "Not every student comes with the same level of readiness."

Evaluating the school readiness of primary children is central to UEY research. Information about school readiness is gathered using the Early Development Instrument (EDI) and Parent Interviews and Direct Assessments of Children Survey (PIDACS), with the support of school boards and local schools, principals, primary teachers and families throughout the province. Results of these two studies are then analyzed and interpreted with the goal of transferring the knowledge gained through UEY research initiatives to partners, schools and families so that it can be transformed into community action.

## 8th Annual Youth Achievement Awards

The 8th Annual Youth Achievement Awards were held on November 23, 2007 at the Westin Hotel in Halifax. 270 people came together to celebrate the achievements of 41 youth in care from across the province. These amazing youth were described as having clear visions for their future and possessing strong leadership qualities. The 2007 YAA recipients were celebrated for a wide range of accomplishments including community volunteerism, having a positive attitude, demonstrating a willingness to accept help from others, showing loyalty to friends, as well as achieving academic and athletic success.

Gary Landry, President of Nova Scotia Council for the Family hosted the event, while the Honourable Judy Streach, Minister of Community Services, handed out the awards to each youth and congratulated them for all of their hard work. She announced that more than 350 young people have received an award over the past 8 years and that she had made a resolution in the Legislature on this day recognizing the event. Minister Streach told the recipients, "As we honour your success, we honour who you are... and may this be just one of many such acknowledgments.... You are all wonderful inspirations." Judith Ferguson, Deputy Minister of Community Services, said, "A lot of the recipients have had significant challenges in their lives that they have obviously faced with tremendous amounts of courage and certainly all of us sitting here have nothing but respect and admiration for them."

The event is a success in part due to volunteers and donors who come together to create a positive experience for everyone. These include: The Gordon Foundation, which contribution allows for the purchase of the awards; The Youth Secretariat's office, which purchased luncheon tickets for participants who would otherwise not be able to attend; and Dawn Hall, HomeBridge Youth Society, who volunteers her artistic talents and time to create mementos for the event.

Courage was the theme for the event because all of these youth have taken risks, faced challenges and persevered. Ben Gilby, MC and previous YAA recipient said, "It takes a lot of courage to go from one family to another." Colleen, 2007 YAA recipient, encouraged youth "not to stop trying, never to give up," and Amanda Murley, previous MC and YAA recipient, described a component of courage as youth "challenging themselves and taking healthy risks and being open to change."

Congratulations to all of the 2007 Youth Achievement Award recipients - you are an inspiration!



Participants and recipients of the 8th Annual Youth Achievement Awards.

We welcome your comments, input and story ideas!  
Please contact your Advisory Committee representative  
or the editor and help keep us all better informed!

### THE OUTLOOK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wendy Keen  
District Manager  
Hants District Office  
Phone: 798-6877  
Keenwe@gov.ns.ca

Gail Simpson  
Guysborough District Office  
Phone: 533-4007  
SimpsoGl@gov.ns.ca

Anna George  
Truro District Office  
Phone: 893-5950  
Georgeam@gov.ns.ca

Sean Cameron  
Antigonish District Office  
Phone: 863-7551  
CamerSr@gov.ns.ca

Sheryl Kingston  
Housing & Central Region  
Phone: 424-5134  
Kingstsl@gov.ns.ca

Lynn Parker  
Services for Persons with  
Disabilities  
Phone: 424-8268  
Parkerml@gov.ns.ca

Bea Buckland  
ECD/CD Specialist  
Eastern Region  
Phone: 563-3781  
Bucklabp@gov.ns.ca

