



The John Howard Society of Nova Scotia

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Effective, just and humane

RESPONSES

to the causes and consequences of crime.

THIS ISSUE IS ABOUT GIVING BACK TO OUR COMMUNITIES and the meaning it can have for all involved. As such, it is dedicated to the efforts of our Society’s members, staff and volunteers/students who give back to their communities by lending so much of themselves to supporting those in need. This issue also acknowledges and commemorates the desire of our clients to give back to their communities, while shedding light on how these activities affect our clients’ self-concept and their ability to reintegrate into society.

Giving back is about more than making amends for wrongdoing; it serves to remind us of our shared responsibilities as a community—to help each other.

A letter from Nova Institution on Restorative Justice

The John Howard Society [Central Regional Office] has been facilitating an onsite Restorative Justice program at Nova Institution for Women for over ten years. We are a Federal Institution for women that is multi level and houses incarcerated women serving at least a two year sentence, located in Truro NS. The staff from JH [...] have been pleasant, professional, knowledgeable and a pleasure to work with.

[W]e have been able to have many things accomplished. We have regular group meetings that our offender population attend and [...] focus of various topics and tasks such as victim empathy, the apology letter writing, the RJ process, restorative opportunities and actual facilitation of these tasks. The RJ group has hosted events open to all of our population, staff and other community partners during a community building day, shared what RJ is and what occurs on our site at staff briefing, assisted with hosting an RJ play, created an annual ‘giving back project’ for the women to participate in, assisted with preparation of the RJ process for some of our women and support them as they prepared to share their story in the community.

The following is a brief example of the Giving Back event and the impact it has on the staff, community and participants. This event was very successful. [...]uring the weeks leading up to the holidays and at the end of the project, we had over fourteen women participate. They painted hugs for the hospice society. Made paper angels for the food bank. Made cards and candy cane angels for meals on wheels. A few participants were also able to knit hats/scarves & mittens and slippers for the women’s shelter. All of the materials were donated, some by staff and/or our community partners, and all grateful for a way to assist and contribute to a worthy cause. The facilitators and participants were appreciative of the work done and of the opportunity to give back to the community. They ended the project with a holiday movie [...] and enjoying some treats (provided by the kindness of the RJ facilitators).

Tammy MacEachern

Social Program Officer & Volunteer Coordinator /Officier de programmes social

JHSNS Provincial Newsletter

Responses

Volume 3, Issue 2

Fall 2016



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Special thanks to student placements Barb Minard and Sarah Rogers for their work on this issue of the newsletter.

Other Activities

Through the fall JHSNS attended some provincial events, including:

- ◆ Crime Prevention through Social Development and your Municipality, *hosted by the Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention.*
- ◆ National Restorative Justice Symposium, *hosted in Halifax by Schulich School of Law, NS Restorative Justice Program and Dept. of Justice.*
- ◆ Flying Under the Radar: Forced Marriage, FGM and Human Trafficking Conference, *hosted by Silent Witness NS.*

Personnel also benefitted from free training opportunities through the fall:

- ◆ *Mental Health First Aid, thanks to a grant from St. John Ambulance and the Mental Health Foundation of NS;*
- ◆ *WHMIS & Safety Orientation Training;*
- ◆ *Emergency First Aid/CPR Training;*
- ◆ *Applied Suicide Intervention Training and MANERS Psychological First Aid, offered through the Province during a conference on Workplace Mental Health and PTSD.*

A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

It is hard to believe that another year is about to come to a close. What a busy 2016 it has been! I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the full Board to acknowledge and thank the staff, volunteers and partners for their commitment and successes over the year. JHSNS is an important organization to many Nova Scotians and their families and friends. You take on challenges daily that are difficult and rewarding at the same time. You should be very proud of what you do.

I would like to thank John Peach for his leadership throughout the year, and his never ending goal of ensuring the effective management of the association. I would like to acknowledge as well Janis Aitken for her appointment to the role of President of the John Howard Society of Canada. I also would like to congratulate Bob MacDonald on receiving the national Humanitarian Service Award.

The holiday season, while exciting for many, is also difficult for some. It is also a time for you to reflect, spend time with those you love and care for, and to take time for personal wellness. I wish everyone the best wishes of the season and a great 2017!

— Cheryl Fraser, President

OFFICE UPDATE: HALIFAX REGION (LOWER SACKVILLE, NS)

The fall has been full of great opportunities for HRO. To start September off, we accepted three student placements and it's been wonderful having the extra hands on deck. Barb and Sarah came to us from the Human Services and Counseling Skills Diploma Program at Success College. Sarah completed her placement hours early and we were fortunate that she remained on to help with some projects. Barb has just finished her hours and has obtained new employment but wishes to remain on as a volunteer (thank you!). Daniela is doing a Bachelor of Social Work degree at Dalhousie University and will be with us for another semester before her hours are complete. A huge thank you to all three for their hard work and help!

Through the fall we've made some adjustments to the Anger Management & Emotional Intelligence Program. A fifth session was developed and added to provide participants more one-on-one time with the facilitator and the opportunity to develop a personal CASE plan for implementing the skills learned during their program cycle. This change was made based on feedback collected from clients and it's been well received so far.

HRO was invited to speak at criminology class at both Saint Mary's University and Eastern College. We also attended SMU's volunteer fair, with a lot of interest from the students in attendance. These are all great opportunities to educate community members about what JHSNS does, and recruit new volunteers.

We have continued to deliver the Community Maintenance Program and Community Assessments contracts for Correctional Services Canada. In November we also began operation under an expansion to the Community Assessment contract to include Parole Supervision. JHSNS hadn't engaged in this sort of work for almost 20 years, and so it's been a unique opportunity and learning experience. At the same time, it's meant that staff responsibilities at HRO have been rearranged; I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all staff for being so willing and flexible!

— Adrienne MacDonald, Director

OFFICE UPDATE: CENTRAL REGION (TRURO, NS)

There has been a lot of exciting things happening within our province. The Justice Minister, Diana Whalen, recently announced the expansion of the Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Program to include adults province wide. We have been waiting for this development for almost 20 years, the amount of time the RJ program has been available for youth.

Staff have learned a lot in the past four years working collaboratively through a shared skills model with Community Corrections. We continue to engage key stakeholders such as police, crown, legal aid, and probation and build strong relationships (and partnerships) with other community agencies. And, with the NSRJP expansion we will build new relationships with community groups as we move forward.

Our office would like to welcome two students, Shandi Cameron and Mirinda Bray from the Criminal Justice class at NSCC Truro; they will be doing a six

week work term with us.

We are happy to report that we received a Community Impact Grant from the Colchester United Way to purchase 2 laptop computers for our office. We are extremely grateful for their generosity and support of our ongoing programs. The laptops will be available for clients working on writing apology letters, essays and employment search.

— **Christina King, Director**



OFFICE UPDATE: NORTH EASTERN REGION (WESTVILLE, NS)

We are extremely pleased to announce that as of November 30, 2016, Nova Scotia has a Restorative Justice Program available to both youth *and adults*. Over the last few months our office has been busy preparing for this expansion of the NS Restorative Justice Program. Our province has the most comprehensive restorative justice program in Canada, and offenders can be referred at all stages of the criminal justice process. RJ sees crime as a harm done to people and relationships. Through a restorative process the people who have been affected by the offence have an opportunity to come together to talk about what happened and work on a plan that meets the needs of those affected.

A recent event hosted by NS Restorative Justice Program highlighted the meet-

ing of a victimized café owner and perpetrator. “After our café was broken into, we were devastated,” said Meghan Peters, co-owner of the Tall and Small Café. “Through restorative justice we met the person who broke into the café, we saw their remorse and how much they wanted to make things right.

“I want people to know that something positive can come from negative actions thanks to the restorative justice program. It is such a humane, respectful, and positive part of our justice system and with the right people and situations, it can heal and provide closure. I can’t imagine any other outcomes having had the same positive impact for both of us and we still stay in touch to this day.”

— **Susan Hughes, Director**

CRO has been operating the Giving Back initiative for a few years. For the upcoming cold months, we have worked with community partners to prepare wellness packages for those in need in our community.

This fall 62 back packs were donated to the community, containing personal hygiene products, personalized notes, hot drink products, and other treats. Women at Nova Institution for Women contributed handmade Christmas cards and knitted hats, mittens and scarves. Donations came from Shelter Nova Scotia, Walmart’s Truro location, Food Bank, Salvation Army, and staff members who have contributed time and effort to the project. They were assembled by the women at Nova Institution and CRO staff.

Thank you to Mike Dove & Wanda Dickie for taking the lead.

The packages are in high demand, and many have already been allocated: twelve to East Hants Victim Services, five to Laver’s House in Truro, five to the Colchester Community Food Bank, and the remainder were distributed to the RCMP and Truro Polices Services, Truro Homeless Outreach Society and community members in need.



Pictured (right to left) Diana Whalen, Minister of Justice; Susan Hughes, Director JHS NERO; Meghan Peters, Café owner; and offender.

“Café owner meets the person who broke into her store and through the restorative process the victim, offender and community find healing.”

SPECIAL STORY: THE NEED TO READ

This fall while visiting Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility, program officers shared that there was a great need for books for male inmates. Reading materials available to the men were quite limited, and of the “old and stuffy” sort. Without hesitation, the Halifax Office got to work organizing a book drive.

A criteria was provided by CNSCF staff, outlining the types of books inmates are most interested in. These included educational books, books with cultural themes, particular authors, and so on. The HRO students in particular got busy making calls, placing an ad on Kijiji, reaching out to their own networks (including their schools), all looking for book donations. To date, hundreds of books have been donated to CNSCF and any that didn't meet the facility's criteria have been redirected to community housing agencies.

While this book drive has been deemed a success, HRO and CNSCF have decided that it will be an ongoing initiative. HRO is still actively collecting

book donations for the inmates.

This initiative promotes literacy as well as continued education. It also gives the inmates a source of entertainment, which can provide some sort of escape from their current situation. We have helped to create a library for leisure reading, fostering constructive pastimes for a range of reading levels and interests.



These are just some of the books collected by the Halifax Regional Office for the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility. Fall 2016.

FROM OUR CLIENTS: WORKING IN THE GARDEN – JULY 1ST, 2016

A letter from a Garden Project Participant at Northeast Nova Scotia Correctional Facility

Working in the garden has allowed me to get some much needed mental relaxation and therapy. This project is the first of its kind in Provincial corrections and I am proud to have the opportunity to be one of the founding members.

Allowing me to go outside the walls of the facility and into the fenced in yard has helped my stress level considerably. Breathing in the fresh air, seeing all the trees around me, and all of the other sights Mother Nature has given our Earth has opened my eyes to what I will be looking forward to seeing upon release. I am anticipating seeing almost anything other than the bricks that are around me now.

The things that I am doing, learning, and accomplishing during my days of gardening allows me to forget any negativity that has or may occur during a run of a day on the inside. Whether I am planting new seeds, watering, or weeding, my mind is able to stay focused, clear, and opened to my teachings. That makes me feel awesome – like a person and not like an inmate.

Being part of something new like this and knowing that I am one of the first inmate participants to have gotten the NNSCF garden off the ground makes me feel important and keeps me thinking positively throughout the day. Growing up I never really felt part of something. For the first time, I feel like I really belong to this garden project and I am proud of the seat and hard work that I've put into it.

This gardening project has also made me aware of how life begins from a seed. I am being taught something new every day: how far apart seeds should be sown, how far down in the soil certain seeds should be planted, and which plants are compatible with each other and which plants are not.

On top of all this, I've also learned about the importance of bees. They are one of the most important insects in the entire world. They are one of the best pollinators on the planet, and without them most of the

flowers, plants, etc. would not produce making life for us humans quite difficult. So as an incentive to the garden we added different types of flowers with bright colors and nice aromas that attract the bees.

I feel that this project for inmates will continue to grow each year as long as no one gives up. Future inmates participating will want to behave well and want to learn about Horticultural activities such as I have.

The potential to grow fresh vegetables and beautiful flowers for the institution and other community services will hopefully flourish in the years to come. Furthermore, this program should give inmates new skills and ideas about jobs and hobbies upon their release; some may want to continue their education in the Horticultural field. I may entertain that thought myself.

Over the years I have worked on many farms such as vegetable farms, dairy farms, and Christmas tree farms. Although I learned a little bit about each, being part of this program helped me to learn how a garden can be set up from start to finish, and just how awesome it is.

I wish to give thanks and express that I have fully enjoyed my days attending the garden and not to forget the support from The John Howard Society and all the classes we have had with them. It's been an amazing experience for me, and hope that this program, with the support of the volunteers from John Howard, continues to benefit future inmates, staff and the community for years to come.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

“As a volunteer with The John Howard Society, it has been my privilege to work with a small group of men at the Northeast Nova Scotia Correctional Facility in “[From the Ground Up](#),” the brand new garden program there. Every second week, I would share a little information about a given topic and gain a whole lot more from the men as they would share their own ideas and information; I was so impressed with the friendly and respectful manner that was the basis of the group. I shared in the pride of the gardeners there as we learned how much produce went out to various groups to help folks in the community. As an educator, I was also so proud to hear them using the information we learned, for example, when they were talking about what - and how - things should be planted next year based on compatibility of plants; in fact, the extension was even made to how people were like that, we should try to limit how much time we spend with people who do not seem compatible to us.”

Gwen MacLean Volunteer JHSNS, North Eastern Regional Office.

“Working with the men at NNSCF with the Garden Program was one of the highlights of my summer. Just being there with these men who were so enthusiastic about the garden, and being able to contribute was very rewarding. Seeing these men so excited about working in the garden and raising food for the community was an amazing experience. I must say, the way this garden flourished was due to the pride and dedication to the work these men put into it. The garden was incredibly productive and surpassed our projections with superior yields. Everyone benefitted from this program, the men who carried out the work, the community who received nutritious fresh food and myself through the experience.”

Berma Marshall, Volunteer JHSNS, North Eastern Regional Office.

The Northeast Nova Scotia Correctional Facility began a community gardening program in the Spring of 2016. The inmates at the facility are responsible for growing and maintaining the garden. Produce grown at the facility is given back to various non-profit community organizations to help those in need.

The inmates chose to name the garden program "From the Ground Up." One of the inmates wrote this letter (left) about what the garden program means to him.



NERO Volunteer, Gwen MacLean



NERO Volunteer, Berma Marshall

THE JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF
NOVA SCOTIA

SINCE 1950

The John Howard Society of Nova Scotia (JHSNS) is a provincial organization comprised of and governed by people whose goal is to understand and respond to problems of crime and the criminal justice system. JHSNS is a member of the John Howard Society of Canada.

JHSNS has three offices, each serving a different catchment area: **North Eastern Regional Office** serves Pictou, Antigonish and Guysborough Counties; **Central Regional Office** serves Colchester and East Hants Counties; and **Halifax Regional Office** primarily serves the urban area of Halifax Regional Municipality.

Learn more on our website:
<http://www.ns.johnhoward.ca>

Become a Member!

As a member, you are one of the owners of JHSNS. Membership includes:

- The opportunity to represent your community within the Society and/or as a Board member;
- The opportunity to elect individuals to the Society's Board of Directors;
- An invitation to the Annual General Meeting, a copy of the Annual General Report, and a copy of the Audited Financial Statement; and
- Invitations to learning events held throughout the year

For more information, or to apply, go to:
<http://ns.johnhoward.ca/about>

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COMMUNITY WORK TEAMS & OUR COMMUNITIES

In the spirit of giving back, we'd like to take this opportunity to discuss our Community Workplace Program (CWP). Since the early 1990s, JHSNS has been supervising community service hours for adults on behalf of the Dept. of Justice.

As part of the CWP our Halifax Regional Office offers Community Work Teams (CWT), a perfect pairing for our clients and our community partners. Not-for-profit organizations contact us throughout the year with project ideas they need help with; we organize a team of clients and JHS volunteer supervisors to get the job done. This helps our partners get essential projects completed and our clients benefit from additional opportunities to do their community service hours, while seeing exactly how they are giving back to their community.

We organized a number of projects this past season, from our bi-annual Adopt-a-Highway clean-ups, to helping paint New Hope Baptist Church. One of our main projects this fall was with Rope Works Community Garden, where JHS helped



with the last of the garden expansion. The four year old garden has fifteen regular beds and membership currently comes from folks living around the park or nearby area, however, Rope Works plans to do some outreach to expand their community. For more information: <https://ropeworkscommunitygarden.wordpress.com> or find

them on Facebook.

Rope Works had asked for our help with levelling an area of the garden and installing patio stones so that it was wheelchair accessible, developing special raised beds, and adding four fruit trees. It needed to be done by Nov. 30th due to funding deadlines, but also before the freeze. To ensure the project got done we organized a few work days and leaned on extra volunteers from Success College (thank you!).

— **Sarah Rogers, Student Placement**

Pictured: a client hard at work levelling off the area. Sept. 2016, credit to Shelley Wilcox of Rope Works Community Garden.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

JHSNS's Employment Readiness Program— Halifax Regional Office is now accepting referrals for men (19+) with a criminal record, which they identify as a barrier to obtaining employment. This 6 week program funded by Employment Nova Scotia includes employability skills workshops, job search support, and workplace certifications to help participants obtain and maintain employment. February 2017.

ATTIRE TO ASPIRE!

(For men actively seeking employment.)

Tuesday, Jan. 24th 9:00am – 3:30pm & Wednesday, Jan. 25th 9:30am – 2:30pm. By appointment, men can receive donated clothing suitable for interviews, networking, and employment. This initiative also includes a FREE men's haircut provided by Sailor Bup's Barbershop! There will be time for up to 60 men to be supported.

Happy Holidays

from The John Howard Society of Nova Scotia.

If you would like to be added to or removed from the newsletter's emailing list, please contact jhsns@ns.johnhoward.ca.