



2020

ANNUAL REPORT



**NEW DAWN
ENTERPRISES**

New Dawn Board of Directors 2020

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Louisbourg

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Dorothy Payne
Chair
New Dawn Enterprises

It is with much gratitude and considerable pride that I share with you the 2020 New Dawn Annual Report and invite you to reflect with us on the last year and what it has meant.

Never before have we been so thankful for our stability and capacity as an organization, and for the solid, diversified foundation that has been so thoughtfully shaped. Often hard-fought-for over the last four decades, these strengths have ensured that we have weathered this strange and difficult year well. We are most thankful that, in the midst of it, we have found ways and places in which to extend ourselves in service to others.

I thank my fellow Board Directors for their thoughtful, steady leadership over the last year. In addition to COVID-19, this has been a year of substantial transition for New Dawn, and it is at these times that the collective knowledge and experience of New Dawn’s Directors, and their commitment to its vision, are most apparent and most important.

I want to thank two of our retiring Directors, Myrtle Campbell and Alicia Lake, for their many years of service to the organization, and for bringing their insights, compassion, and perspectives to the ongoing shaping of New Dawn.

I thank the staff and volunteers of New Dawn – many of whom have spent this last year on the frontlines of COVID-19, tending to and ensuring the health and well-being of some of our community’s most vulnerable.

Rankin MacSween: A Legacy of Leadership and Love



For New Dawn, 2020 marks the end of the tenure of Rankin MacSween as our longtime CEO and President. It is impossible to overstate Rankin's influence on this forty-five year old community development organization. He was with New Dawn in some of its earliest, leanest, and most tentative years — when it was more idea than tangible organization. He was with New Dawn through its most intense years — when it wasn't clear whether the organization would survive at all. Perhaps most notably, Rankin was not only with — but at the helm — of New Dawn in those years in which it thrived: when new people were welcomed in and new projects were born and when both found their footing and their vigour, going on to create the community as we now know it.

As Rankin steps away, 2020 also marks the beginning of a new tenure — that of Erika Shea as our new CEO and President. Erika started with New Dawn in 2012, first as Manager of Marketing and Communication and then as Vice President of Development. Guided by Rankin's mentorship, her dedication and considerable abilities have helped shape New Dawn's identity as we know it today and its place in the larger community. Already a positive force in the organization, Erika was the clear choice in New Dawn's search for new leadership.

As we look ahead, we step with curiosity and optimism into a changed world, a world that, as the result of COVID-19, appears to be turning toward more human-centred, compassionate, and sustainable models for building communities and economies. And thanks in no small part to increased immigration to Cape Breton Island and new municipal leadership across much of the Island, we are stepping into a world characterized by a great sense of possibility for this Island and its people.

When we step into this new world, we do so both with the gifts and perspectives of our new leadership and from the strong foundation built by Rankin and by those — New Dawn's first generation of leaders — who accompanied him on a remarkable journey to build an organization that is capable of meeting immediate needs in the community while drawing on the strength and resilience of its people to shape a different kind of community, a community built on personal and collective vibrancy and self-reliance.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



“New Dawn’s experience of COVID-19 can be characterized as one of gratitude and fortitude.”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erika Shea". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E".

Erika Shea
CEO/President
New Dawn Enterprises

As we look back on 2020, we do so not yet knowing its full impact. Like only a handful of years in modern history, the social and economic changes that will result from these unforgettable 365 days will take years, decades perhaps, to fully unfold. This year has pulled back the curtain on so much: our healthcare system; our leadership; the deeply engrained and racism in our systems and institutions; and the way in which we care for – or don’t – our most vulnerable. It has been a year full of lessons, asking to be learned.

New Dawn’s experience of COVID-19 can be characterized as one of gratitude and fortitude. Cape Breton’s COVID-19 cases remained low; our staff and their loved ones remained healthy; our Occupational Health and Safety Committee helped our large organization to adapt our policies and practices to ensure the safety of staff, clients, and visitors; and our diversified business model mediated the pandemic’s financial impact on the organization as a whole.

This year has also served as a spotlight, illuminating the values and character of the staff, managers, and volunteers who make up the organization. In the spring, as we began to understand the magnitude of COVID-19 and its impacts in the community, our staff and managers stepped decisively into the fire, asking what more they could do.

A Better Bite Community Kitchen, with the support of various levels of government and in conjunction with community partners, sent out 6,082 free, healthy Good Food Grocery Packs to families and seniors in need. Simultaneously, New Dawn Meals on Wheels doubled the number of meals it delivered in an effort to keep more seniors healthy in their homes given their vulnerability to COVID. And as the first wave receded, The Good Food Bus hit the road with stacks of vouchers to make fresh fruits and vegetables as affordable as possible for those who needed them most.

Of all the things we imagined for the long awaited opening of The Convent | Ta’n etl-mawita’mk, a global pandemic did not make the list. And yet, here we are, looking back on 2020: the first year in which the former Holy Angels convent reopened to the community as an arts centre. A year that, while difficult, was still filled with art, ideas, and – yes – chaos (albeit chaos that was, itself, at times beautiful and pregnant with hope). In these ways, our first year was just as we’d dreamt all along. And it was a year that, despite everything, still saw all of the building’s spaces occupied by artists and organizations.

When we first walked through the Convent building in 2012, in addition to its beauty, we were struck by its size: would it even be possible to repurpose this much space? Today we are left wondering if it might be a bit too small. An outcome that speaks to the spirit being nurtured in this new space: one of compassion, curiosity, creativity, possibility, and hope for a radical new future.

For four of New Dawn's divisions, New Dawn Properties, New Dawn Homecare, the New Dawn Guest Home, and New Dawn Home Living, COVID-19 did not lessen the need for staff to spend time in the lives and homes of tenants and clients. As many of us were retreating to kitchen-table offices, our properties team, frontline homecare staff, and Guest Home and Home Living caregivers were suiting up and taking extra care as they showed up to look after the most immediate needs of hundreds.

Finally, the Cape Breton Island Centre for Immigration – who for the first few months of the pandemic mourned the loss of the steady stream of newcomers and international students who had brightened their door and days for the last two years – has been busier in the latter part of 2020 than at any time since the Centre's opening in 2016. They have had a front row seat for the emergence of a new national and global interest in the safety, affordability, and serenity of life in Cape Breton.

To say that we are proud of our response to COVID-19 would be an understatement. In a year defined by change, uncertainty, and worry, New Dawn's staff and managers showed up with courage, readiness, openness, an impulse to act, and an unwavering focus on those they serve.

These values, that we know will likewise carry us through greater challenges in the future, are in many ways a testament to the culture of New Dawn – a culture imagined, and then carefully, lovingly, nurtured by Rankin MacSween.

Rankin was first introduced to New Dawn in 1979, through Father Greg MacLeod, while working and studying at St Francis Xavier Junior College. In 1983 he became the non-paid part-time Executive Director of the still fledgling organization, continuing to work at the university until 1990 when he finally assumed a full-time position as President/CEO of New Dawn.

Over the next thirty years, he would grow the organization from a handful of staff to more than 100 full and part-time employees and weather some of its greatest challenges including a years-long battle with the Department of National Defense over the contamination of the former radar base, and an intense community debate over the ownership of Sydney harbour. He would also oversee the launch and growth of a \$13 million CEDIF program and the acquisition and redevelopment of the former Holy Angels property.

To have experienced the leadership and vision of Rankin MacSween is to have been changed. It is to become more hopeful, and it is to want to stay in the conversation about what might be possible. It is to believe in a more vibrant and self-reliant future, and it is to feel called to be part of bringing that about. It is to have been listened to, to have been seen, to have been guided gently by what feels like a universe of wisdom to have been invigorated, and to have been set free.

For all these gifts, for all of this love, for all of this beauty, amidst a year that will forever be characterized as one of struggle and difficult awakenings, we are so lucky.



Caitrian MacNeil painting in her studio.

THE CONVENT/TA'N ETL-MAWITA'MK CENTRE OF THE ARTS

As we look back on this first year, when many of us were more restricted in our movements for part or most of it, these are but a few of the people and moments shaping what is both a community building and building community.

The Convent | Ta'n etl-mawita'mk welcomed its first cohort of artists and creative organizations in February 2020, including Phee's Original Goods, Alana Wilson (Builderburner Ceramics), Merrideth MacDonald (Hunky Dunky Dory Paper Art), Isaac Jeddore Gould, Caitrian MacNeil, Devon Morrison (Youth Haunts), Alison Uhma, Donald Calabrese, Raylene's School of Music, Nova Stream, Nelson MacDonald and Grassfire Films, Adrienne Chapman, Celtic Colours International Festival, Cape Breton Music Industry Cooperative, Nikki Boisvert and Surly Mermaid Tattoos, Lumière Arts Festival Association, Greg Davies, Saba Mohsin, Bruce Bearnes, Asta Antoff, John Gainer, Barb Glassey, Anne Latour, Michelle Gardiner, and Melissa Kearney.

Throughout 2020, The Convent | Ta'n etl-mawita'mk has been working closely with an Elders Advisory Committee to ensure that Mi'kmaw artists and community members feel seen, valued, supported, and welcomed in the building and through its programming.

The Committee's members include Anita Basque (Potlotek), Pauline Isadore (Wagmatcook), Ernest Johnson (Eskasoni), Dolena Mary Poulette (We'koqma'q), and Lawrence Wells (Membertou). The work of the committee has been supported by the guidance and leadership of Robert Bernard.

In 2020, the Elders designed and executed a call for nominations for the Kisituek (We've made it) Gallery. From among the nominations, the Elders selected seven artists for the Gallery's first installation. The Gallery, which will be unveiled in 2021, will offer visitors to the Centre the opportunity to learn more about some of the many Mi'kmaw artists who have contributed to various artistic disciplines and to the life of their communities. The seven unique didactic panel installations are currently being researched and designed by Patuo'kn, an illustration and design firm run by Cassidy and Kaylyn Bernard.

The Elders also lead us through the raising of the Mi'kmaq flag on the unceded traditional lands of The Convent | Ta'n etl-mawita'mk, as well as the Black Lives Matter and Inclusive Pride flags, in a historic and moving ceremony on a sunny October day. For the Convent | Ta'n etl-mawita'mk, the raising of these flags reflects ongoing work to welcome and create safe spaces for people and communities who have often been excluded, and made to feel unsafe, unwelcome, or unseen.



[Robin Young of Phee's Original Goods in Phee's studio.](#)

Robyn Young of Phee's Original Goods was the mastermind behind Plaza Party, the very first public event at The Convent | Ta'n etl-mawita'mk. Responding to the local skateboarding community's affinity for The Convent | Ta'n etl-mawita'mk as a place to gather and skate, Robyn gathered Undercurrent Youth Centre, the Shred Sirens, The Convent | Ta'n etl-mawita'mk, and our neighbours at Island Folk Cidery, to create an evening of skateboarding and skate films for skaters and their families, from young to old. Held in July, it was alive, organic, peaceful, but bustling, with a collective sense of awe at this new gathering place in the historic north end of Sydney.

North End Noël was held over two evenings in December to support local artists and small businesses through an outdoor holiday market, featuring local food & drink, art works, gifts, and a program of festive short films from the National Film Board. The Convent | Ta'n etl-mawita'mk was all dressed up for the holidays, and several hundred people safely visited the grounds to take in the market for local gifts, films, food, and good cheer.

Looking to the new year, and exciting moments of creativity to come, we are preparing for the Convent | Ta'n etl-mawita'mk to become a part of the national conversation on art, community, and social change. Early 2021 will bring, among the many surprises we now trust it has in store for us, the installation of public art pieces by Cape Breton artists Nelson MacDonald and Scott Moore, visual artist Malcolm Pate, and Ursula Johnson, winner of the 2017 Sobey Art Award.

We are welcoming anchor tenant The Coast radio station to the building, who will begin broadcasting to the Island from their new home. We are also excited to unveil a series of paintings commissioned from artist Loretta Gould from We'koqma'q and permanently installed in The Convent | Ta'n etl-mawita'mk.



(Top to Bottom) The Convent | Ta'n etl-mawita'mk Redevelopment Team, North End Noel, The Convent | Ta'n etl-mawita'mk.

The Convent/Ta'n etl-mawita'mk Centre of the Arts

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The Centre of the Arts 2020 Snapshot:

- Opened in February 2020 in the former Holy Angels Convent, ca. 1895, a 130-year-old heritage building. The Centre is, to date, the largest adaptive reuse of built heritage in Unama'ki.
- Serves as a creative hub and stands as a symbol of hope and renewal for a community that has struggled for more than 40 years to reinvent itself after the decline of coal and steel.
- Includes 21 private artist studios, a large Open Studio with 22 working spaces for artists, the Better Bite Café and Community Kitchen, Meals on Wheels, and four anchor tenants – Nova Scotia Community College's Creative Arts Music Program, Celtic Colours International Festival, The Coast, and Nova Stream.
- Despite the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 global pandemic, we hosted two large and safe community gatherings on the beautiful grounds during the summer and winter months.
- We are nearly full: at the close of 2020, the Centre's 21 private studio spaces are all rented, 4 anchor tenants are moved in, and only Open Studio desks available to new artists. With no advertising and a year spent navigating the global pandemic, this is testimony to the real need in the arts community for this space and the value of meaningful relationships.



Kyle O'Connell and Ganiyu Abbass, Personal Care Assistants with New Dawn Homecare

NEW DAWN HOMECARE

In early March we were delighted to welcome Amanda Thomson to New Dawn Homecare as our new Nurse Care Coordinator. A Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) with a vast amount of experience in acute care and community care, Amanda stepped into her new role with passion and enthusiasm. Not only has she brought nursing expertise to New Dawn Homecare providing oversight and case management for our clients who require nursing care, but she also brings a wealth of knowledge that has translated to in-depth clinical training for frontline staff, thus expanding the skill set of our employees.

Very soon after Amanda's arrival, we, along with the rest of the world, were thrust into our new reality – providing frontline healthcare, in homes, hospitals, and long-term care facilities, in a global pandemic. This meant having to very quickly design and implement new protocols to further ensure the health and safety of our clients, staff, and community – a value that is at the heart of everything we do. With PPE in short supply locally, we worked around the clock to ensure we secured, and then hand delivered, all of the required supplies to our staff.

Despite a radically new context of uncertainty and nervousness, as a collective our staff showed up for each other and for our clients every single day. Our service never stopped, we adjusted and adapted the way we provide care to ensure client health and safety, as well as emotional well-being. In some ways 2020 stretched us, in other ways it taught us, and in other ways still, it brought us closer.



“We have an incredibly dedicated staff who go above and beyond to put the health and safety of their clients at the forefront every day. I am so proud of the work they do and the ways in which they represent the values of New Dawn.”

Janine Hussey, Manager New Dawn Homecare



“I am most proud of our staff's resilience. Our frontline staff have shown up every day, despite lockdowns, home learning, and fears of the unknown; to provide the care that they know others need. They have put their fears aside and others needs ahead and powered through every single day like the superheroes they are. And I am infinitely proud of them; in 2020 and beyond.”

Beth Hubley, Scheduling Coordinator, New Dawn Homecare

In November, we celebrated the retirement of five long time staff members at a Retiree Tea at the New Dawn Center. We bid goodbye and good wishes to Betty Gillis after 8 years, Donna Vatcher after 9 years, Debbie Gillis after 11 years, Mary McLaughlin after 14 years, and Mary O’Neill after 19 years. In August we likewise bid a fond farewell, and congratulations on a long career of community service, to Sister Clarine O’Leary as she retired after 27 years as a Footcare Nurse with New Dawn Homecare. Along with Sister Clarine, we thanked and celebrated Anne MacKenzie, a longtime friend and assistant to Clarine who helped to manage our footcare work for many years. We wish each of our retirees many years of happiness, health, rest, and adventure in their retirement years.



(L-R) Sabrina Vatcher, Betty Gillis and Janine Hussey. (2): (Back) Janine Hussey and Rankin MacSween (Front) Sister Clarine O’Leary and Anne MacKenzie

Finally, as demands for care services shift and change, New Dawn Homecare continues to evolve to meet community care needs. In 2020, New Dawn Homecare launched it’s suite of Nursing Care services and has grown to offer everything from a one-time visit by a nurse at home to 24-7 nursing care 365 days a year. Whether at home or in hospital, for wound care, bowel care, palliative care, or medications, our compassionate and capable nursing staff are ready to serve. For our clients this has meant that they are able to return home sooner after a hospital stay or avoid the hospital altogether – critically important options in the time of a pandemic.

New Dawn Homecare
 170 George Street, Sydney
 homecare@newdawn.ca
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 @NewDawnHomecare



“I am proud of how resilient our clients were through this pandemic. They were so appreciative for every phone call we made to them, and knew we were there anytime they needed us. They knew we tried our best to provide them the care they required through this difficult time. In addition to regular care, we were able to provide them with all the latest updates and information on new protocols and provincial restrictions. They were comforted seeing all of the new PPE used by our staff when coming into their homes.”

**Amanda Thomson,
 Nurse Care Coordinator,
 New Dawn Homecare**



“The good will always prevail, and we are part of the good.”

**Eve Fudge, Accounting Assistant,
 New Dawn Homecare**



Personal Care Assistants, Natasha Lee Nash and Teniola Awosusi with New Dawn Homecare.

ONE
SOUP



Community Cares Youth Outreach
Breadmaking Workshop

NEW DAWN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community CARES Youth Outreach

This year the Community Engagement division supported the work of a number of ongoing initiatives including a Cape Breton Island data portal, the Island Food Network, and the New Dawn Social Justice Working Group. Two additional initiatives illustrate the nature of these long-term, multifaceted projects.

As a long-term partner of Community CARES, New Dawn has helped to revitalize this grassroots community organization serving vulnerable young people and young families on the Northside.

2020 has only reinforced the importance of this work. Community CARES is one of our community's crucial front-line organizations that has helped people meet their most basic needs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, the vulnerabilities and inequities made visible by COVID-19 have existed for many years and do require more than emergency responses.

As Executive Director, Dorothy Halliday, notes, “Many young people in our community face acute challenges meeting their basic needs for employment, shelter, nutrition and health, and often lack the skills or the opportunity to address these barriers. The result is youth leading lives that are determined more by their circumstances and their challenges than by their abilities and their ambitions.”

While responding to COVID-19, Community CARES has continued to build a community hub where residents and agencies can support each other to address needs and build long-term well-being. Relationships were built with people receiving emergency supports and long-term needs identified; Red Cross funding focused on creating more integrated supports among human service agencies; the Sustainable Livelihoods model was adopted as a way to help people build the assets they need for sustainable well-being; and two community navigators were hired to help create a hub of community support on the Northside.

**New Dawn
Community
Engagement**

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2020 By the Numbers For: Community CARES Youth Outreach

COVID Comfort Site:

New facility created for those in need of showers, washrooms, hot drinks and healthy food, hygiene products, phone, PPE, and information resources

Kindness Food Project:

Served 82 households including 95 children with 200 hampers including food, hygiene products, and activity kits

Red Cross Projects:

Served 799 individuals with 350 food bags and 105 participants in mental health workshops

Volunteer-led Hot Meal Program:

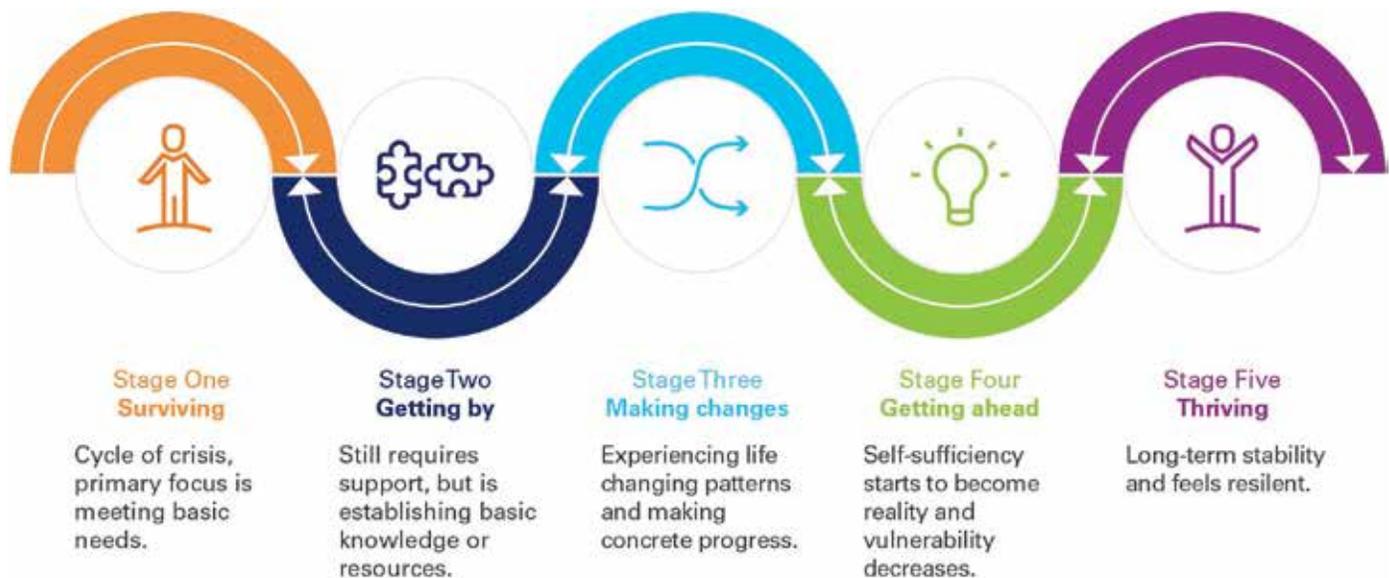
Served 300 hot meals over 5 months

Expanded Online Presence:

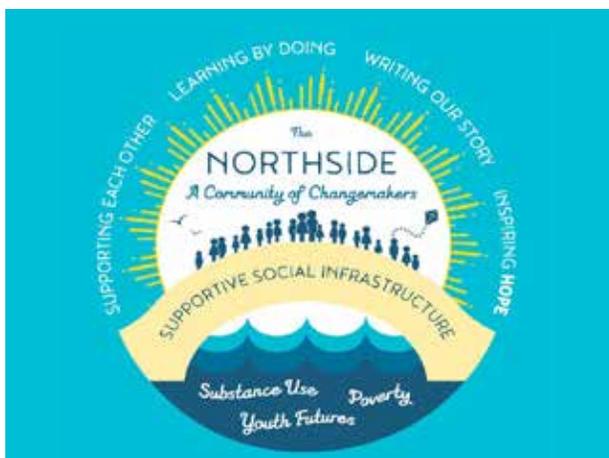
Communitycaresyouth.com links people to community resources; 1,585 Facebook followers

Community Navigators:

With funding from NS Labour and Advanced Education, two full-time, one-year positions established to develop community hub and build sustainable livelihoods



Momentum (momentum.org) adapted from Eko Nomos



Northside Rising – Building a Community of Changemakers

Since 2017, New Dawn has been helping build a movement for change on the Northside, first as one of the initial organizers, and more recently as a participant in the initiative’s staff team responsible for research and evaluation.

The past year has seen significant shifts in the Northside Rising initiative. From its initial focus on substance use, a broader Framework for Change has now been developed. While still a priority, substance use is now seen as part of a larger effort to strengthen hope and agency on the Northside.

“In order to bring about positive change,” says Project Lead Jody Nelson, “people need to believe that change is possible. Hope and agency go hand in hand; both are needed for people to create the future they want for themselves and their community.”

To support community change, Northside Rising plays three main roles: developing supportive social infrastructure (structures, relationships and programs that enable other things to happen); mobilizing community (ways of working that encourage participation, collaboration and creativity); and writing our story (empowering narratives about the Northside community).

Five areas of work have unfolded throughout the year:

- **Invictus:** A research project exploring the state of hope and agency on the Northside (502 community surveys and 42 in-depth interviews).
- **Northside Community Changemakers:** A 10-week pilot program developed to help build the capacity of local changemakers (10 participants; 9 community projects; a series of ‘changemaker stories’; round two of funding secured).
- **NSR Virtual Coffeehouse:** A live-streamed coffeehouse linking Northside residents to issues in their community (20 sessions with topics ranging from harm reduction to health care to the politics of hope).
- **Northside Community Coalition:** A space for diverse community changemakers to learn together, support each other in community action, and create positive narratives that strengthen the Northside (25 individuals participated in opening sessions to shape the coalition and get behind existing community initiatives).
- **Substance Use Roundtable:** A multifaceted initiative to address substance use on the Northside with emphasis on including people with lived and living experience in generating solutions (an independent user advocacy group has been created and community input influenced government support for Overdose Prevention Site serving CBRM).



Downhill Skiing at Ski Ben Eoin

CAPE BRETON ISLAND CENTRE FOR IMMIGRATION (CBICI)

As COVID-19 began to unfold in March of 2020, we couldn't help but wonder what this would mean for immigration to Cape Breton – which had been steadily gaining momentum over the last five years – and in turn, the Cape Breton Island Centre for Immigration. As the virus spread across the globe, international travel came to halt, international students stopped arriving for in-person study, hiring slowed down, and overseas visa offices began to close.

Somewhat to our surprise, and much to our delight, we have been busy, in some ways busier than ever. In the Spring of 2020, we made our transition to working from home and providing remote (e-mail, phone, and video) support to new and existing clients. Client outreach was an integral part of this transition – we wanted them to know that we were here for them, as always, as they too set about navigating this new unknown.

Many clients were, of course, concerned about how travel, document processing, and work or study interruptions might impact their immigration to Canada. Thankfully, the federal government was both responsive and reassuring and in time all of our clients were able to continue this important journey.

Throughout the year, despite the pandemic, and despite our several months of working from home, the Cape Breton Island Centre for Immigration served 688 clients in 2020. Of this, 133 were non-student newcomers seeking settlement services and 557 were international students and their spouses seeking settlement support and/or participation in tours and workshops.

Prior to the mandated restrictions introduced in March 2020, 198 international students had been able to attend various island tours, focusing on exposure to life outside of the CBRM, employment opportunities, and recreation. These ventures included visits to Membertou and Eskasoni, snowshoeing, ice fishing, and downhill skiing at Ski Ben Eoin – the first for many of the participating students.

We also travelled to Inverness County, where students visited Cabot Links and Route 19 Brewery. They met with the owners/operators of these establishments and were invited to apply for summer employment at both locations.



CBICI hosted multiple workshops in 2020, a mixture of in person sessions when permitted, and virtual. A total of 83 clients of CBICI attended these sessions which included:

- CPR/Emergency First Aid with St. John Ambulance;
- Pathways to Licensure in partnership with ISANS and Island Employment for newcomers looking for information on bridging programs and professional licensure. This is now a bimonthly webinar where participants are connected with a program coordinator in their employment area; and
- Cultural Sensitivity and Workplace Diversity workshops

Cape Breton Island Centre for Immigration

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@CapeBretonImmigration



CPR First Aid Certificate Training Class



Prince Duta and Ravinder Kaur. Prince received his Permanent Resident nomination from the Province of Nova Scotia in 2020.

The Atlantic Immigration Pilot program (AIP) which launched in 2017, continues to gain momentum as an immigration pathway to Nova Scotia. In 2020, CBICI worked with 77 clients participating in this program. The AIP helps employers fill labour gaps, while supporting foreign workers and international graduates in their goal of attaining permanent residency. Last year, CBICI was able to assist 21 clients in securing their permanent residence status, while also supporting 30 employers and business owners across the island through the AIP process.

Prince Duta, a client of CBICI and one of our most active volunteers, is among those recently nominated by the Province of Nova Scotia for Permanent Residency. Living in Canada as a Permanent Resident is a requirement for Canadian citizenship and opens up work opportunities not available on shorter term and more conditional visas. Prince made use of a number of CBICI services while studying at CBU and after his graduation. Ravinder Kaur, Prince's wife, has likewise participated in many Centre workshops, tours, and events, and along with her husband is excited about the possibility of staying and building a life in Cape Breton. In a recent interview, Prince shared that, "people here are friendly, and I want to stay."



Better Bite Cafe Barista making a coffee.

A BETTER BITE AND NEW DAWN MEALS ON WHEELS

For A Better Bite and New Dawn Meals on Wheels, 2020 started off with a bang – or rather, the christening of a brand new, much larger, commercial kitchen in the new Convent | Ta'n etl-mawita'mk Centre of the Arts. After launching (and quickly outgrowing) our smaller kitchen in the adjacent New Dawn Centre, our new kitchen enabled us to prepare more meals for seniors, host more community food programming, provide more catering inside and outside the Convent | Ta'n etl-mawita'mk, and serve visitors to the new Better Bite Café.

Not long after, in the spring of 2020 as many Nova Scotians were heading home for lockdown with the unfolding of the first wave of COVID-19, staff and management of New Dawn Meals on Wheels were gearing up for what would be our busiest year yet.

Across the country, COVID-19 has shown us who among us is most vulnerable to disease and economic disruptions. For New Dawn Meals on Wheels this meant that it was suddenly more important than ever to keep seniors and those with compromised immunity safe and well-nourished in their homes, and that more of our neighbours and community members were facing food insecurity for the first time.

In early April, as the reality of COVID began to set in, we began to wonder, in addition to maintaining and expanding our Meals on Wheels program, what else we could do to be of service to our community. As business closures and lay-offs were announced, we realized that access to healthy food would be more important, and more challenging, than ever for many.

With a \$5000 donation from a generous and long-time supporter of New Dawn Meals on Wheels, we launched the Good Food Pack Program and trusted that, in time, additional donations and funding would enable us to meet the growing need. This proved to be true as organizations like the United Way of Cape Breton stepped up to make sure we had the financial resources we needed to continue to get food to those in need.

“I found I didn't feel alone. I felt somebody had my back,”

GOOD FOOD
PACK RECIPIENT.

A Better Bite

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@goodfoodbuscb



Meals on Wheels dinners preparation for delivery.

Between April 17, 2020 and June 26, 2020, the Good Food Pack Program, provided 6,082 deliveries of groceries to seniors and families who could not otherwise afford them. These packs included oranges, apples, carrots, potatoes, onions, peanut butter, soup, bread, oatmeal, beans, canned meat, canned milk, pasta and pasta sauce, granola bars, fruit cups or apple sauce, pudding, apple juice, orange juice, tea, instant coffee, and cereal.

This would not have been possible without our community partners, who identified those in need among their clients or community and made sure the deliveries of the Packs were undertaken each week.

“One of the best parts of the program was the referral process. At this time, the no-questions-asked method was what was needed. It was free of stigma,”

~ GOOD FOOD PACK COMMUNITY PARTNER.

These partners included: Eskasoni First Nation, Community Cares Youth Outreach, Cape Breton Centre for Education, Glace Bay Seniors and Pensioners, New Waterford Rotary, Saint Michael’s Polish Benefit Society, Adult Learning Association of Cape Breton, Pathways to Employment, Reserve Mines Seniors & Pensioners Club, Cape Breton Community Housing Association, and the Ann Terry Society.

At the same time, demand for New Dawn Meals on Wheels services grew. With the COVID-19 virus being most dangerous for the health of the elderly, it was more important than ever to help our seniors stay safe and well-fed at home.

A number of other community organizations were also adapting operations and needed external help feeding their clientele and New Dawn Meals on Wheels was honoured to fill this gap for Glace Bay Meals on Wheels, the Cape Breton Cancer Centre, the Townsend Street Homeless Shelter, and via Nova Scotia Public Health, individuals requiring assistance as part of their self-isolation or quarantine.

Taken together, this increased demand meant that we grew from serving an average of 1,000 meals/month in 2019 to serving an average of 2,000 meals/month in 2020.

Lastly, knowing intimately the increased social isolation brought on by COVID-19, we created a volunteer telephone check in program to connect with our senior clients since our interactions with them during delivery were limited due to our new contact free delivery procedures.

As the first wave of COVID waned, we knew that food insecurity remained at an all time high in our communities. Enter the Good Food Bus. The Good Food Bus was piloted in 2019 to bring fresh and affordable fruits and veggies to communities all across the CBRM. And, as it turned out, when they showed up, a little party was not far behind.



Good Food Bus setup for their community market.

With the help of United Way Cape Breton, Community Food Centres Canada, and Debbie Madore, Dietician with the Cape Breton Victoria Regional Centre for Education, we were able to provide hundreds of vouchers for fruits and veggies to help increase access to healthy food throughout 2020.

In 2020, the Good Food Bus visited: New Waterford, Main-a-Dieu, Louisbourg, Whitney Pier, Glace Bay, Sydney, Sydney Mines, and Membertou. The Bus delivered 84 markets and five free markets where customers could choose what they needed at no cost.

A recently acquired new bus (a little newer, a little quicker, a little bigger) will let us expand this reach next year, reaching more communities outside the CBRM and allowing us to bring our volunteers along with us for these new markets all across Cape Breton Island.

2020 also saw the fruition of a long-time dream, the opening of our social enterprise café, located on the second floor of the Convent | Ta'n etl-mawita'mk Centre of the Arts. All of the proceeds from the café go directly to New Dawn Meals on Wheels, helping us to reach more seniors in need. In the midst of a year characterized by the importance of physical distancing, the café has offered us a safe reprieve with wonderful energy, and wonderful conversations and meals shared among friends.

We closed out this unforgettable year with a festive (and COVID-safe) Holiday Market in the Convent | Ta'n etl-mawita'mk. We knew that this Christmas would be harder than most for many families across the CBRM and we wanted to make the holiday season a little easier for them.

With funding from Community Food Centers Canada, United Way Cape Breton, New Horizons for Seniors, Rising-Youth Grants, and private donations, our Holiday Market was able to provide more than \$24,000 in groceries, personal care items, toys, and pet supplies for those in need. items for pets. The Market hosted more than 220 families in December.

2020 By The Numbers for A Better Bite and New Dawn Meals on Wheels

- 2019: New Dawn Meals on Wheels produced 12,569 meals
- 2020: New Dawn Meals on Wheels produced 21,112 meals
- 1,464 meals provided for free through Emergency Relief Funding
- 6,082 Good Food Packs delivered to seniors and families across the CBRM
- 135 volunteers packing, planning, and coordinating the Good Food Pack Program
- \$146,195.15 raised in private donations and funding from government and community agencies for GFPs
- Value of food distributed at free Good Food Bus markets: \$18,180.46
- Good Food Bus Market clients in 2020: 1,490 (excluding clients at free markets)
- Food vouchers distributed: \$3,200 worth
- Good Food Bus volunteers: 60
- Community group partners: 40
- Holiday Market attendees: 220
- 200 Personal Care Packs delivered to seniors throughout the CBRM.



Guest Home resident gardening project

NEW DAWN GUEST HOME AND NEW DAWN HOME LIVING

For the New Dawn Guest Home, on top of tackling the challenges presented by COVID-19, 2020 marked the departure of the Home's much-loved Administrator, Linda MacDougall. Trained as a Continuing Care Assistant, Linda co-founded and operated Breton Caregivers, a local, private homecare company for more than a decade. In 2011, when New Dawn Homecare acquired Breton Caregivers, we acquired Linda with it! Linda transitioned from managing Breton Caregivers to working as Client Care Coordinator for New Dawn Homecare for the next five years.



In 2016, Linda left New Dawn Homecare to take on the role of Administrator with the New Dawn Guest Home and New Dawn Home Living. She was instantly and much loved by residents, staff, and caregivers will be deeply missed. For the next five years, Linda was there when anyone, at any time, needed her direction, guidance, advice, or someone to laugh with, have tea with, or get a hug from. Linda led the Guest Home through its Qmentum Accreditation process and certification with Exemplary standing.

Linda, who is best described as caring, thoughtful, passionate, trustworthy, steady, and with one of the best smiles around, leaves the Guest Home and Home Living to spend more time with her husband, Gordie, and her three daughters and many grandchildren.



Celebrating Earl's Retirement are Linda MacDougall, Earl Murphy, Rankin McSween and Sabrina Vatcher.

In addition to Linda's retirement, 2020 also meant saying goodbye to longtime staff Earl Murphy, Cecil Hodder, and Darlene Hareguy and wishing them the very best in their retirements.

Linda's departure opened the door for the welcoming of a new Guest Home and Home Living Administrator, Michael Nearing. After 23 years as a New Dawn Home Living Caregiver, Michael steps into this new role with a strong understanding of both the Guest Home and Home Living, and long-time relationships with staff and residents.

For our residents at the Guest Home and Home Living, 2020 is sure to be a year they won't soon forget. The spring COVID-19 lockdown fundamentally changed the rhythm of their days, and of their lives.

They went from time spent at jobs, visiting with friends and family, and attending community programming and sports and recreation activities, to long months of being together with just staff and each other on the grounds of Pine Tree Park. For the health and safety of residents, visitors – who are often much anticipated – were no longer allowed.

Like the rest of us, they made the best of a difficult situation, and we remain forever grateful to the dedicated, careful, and caring Guest Home staff and Home Living caregivers who poured their hearts into their work, coming up with ever more creative ways to pass the time, elicit laughter, and keep everyone in this together. While 2020 was tough, it was also marked, thanks to Activity Director Gennie MacDonald, by more movie nights, arts and crafts, festive dinners, walks around the grounds, and epic bingo games than ever before.



Resident and staff Halloween party



Guest Home residents celebrating Canada Day



Guest Home residents and staff enjoying outdoor summer games



Community services chair Aurelle Landry presents a cheque to Gennie MacDonald, Activity Director, to help cover the costs of Christmas crafts for the residents of the New Dawn Guest Home.

Sydney-Sunrise Rotary and the New Dawn Guest Home

New Dawn Guest Home residents and staff and members of the Sydney-Sunrise Rotary Club have enjoyed a long, warm relationship dating back more than twenty years to 1996. Since that time, the local Club has contributed to numerous projects for the residents, including the creation of a garden (which they also helped to maintain over the years) and the construction of a gazebo. The Club has fundraised for the purchase of a storage shed, a new television, a barbecue, two treadmills and an exercise bike, and the resources required for residents to go camping in the summer and enjoy Ribfest in all its finger-licking glory. They have also marked every Christmas, Valentines, Easter and Halloween with a celebration for residents. That is, until COVID-19.

Not a group to be deterred by a global pandemic, Sydney-Sunrise Rotary reorganized to make sure that residents were still treated to some additional holiday cheer this December. Rotary Club members filled shoeboxes with gifts for residents based on ideas about each resident's greatest wish. From gift cards to jewelry to special personal care products and favourite treats, Christmas morning at the Guest Home was a joyful one. Although they couldn't join in this year, the Sydney Sunrise Rotary Club also sent along \$150 to purchase craft supplies for residents so that they could still enjoy a holiday craft party together.

**New Dawn Guest Home and
New Dawn Home Living**

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Soulvaria Virtual Reality

NEW DAWN PROPERTIES

Like many businesses and community facilities across Nova Scotia, COVID-19 saw the New Dawn Centre closed to visitors for a number of months in 2020. Despite this, the building welcomed a number of new tenants throughout the year including: 7 By 7 Restaurant (office space), Boombox Media, the Cape Breton Beard Company, Future Worx CCA classes, Coastal Golf, MacLeod Homes, Scotia Seafood, and Talem Health. These new tenants join others, some who have been part of the Centre now for many years, rendering it almost completely occupied.



(Left to right) The Clean Foundation, Tim and Brittany MacLeod of MacLeod Homes.

New Dawn Centre Tenants

- 7 By 7 Restaurant
- Ann Terry Society
- Boombox Media
- Cape Breton Beard Company
- Clean Foundation
- Coastal Golf
- Common Goods Solution
- CBU Cooperative Study Club
- East Golf Tour
- FUTUREWORX CCA Class, Lab and Office
- The Good Food Bus
- House of Ferments
- Innovacorp
- MacLeod Homes
- Navigate Event Space
- Navigate Startup House
- New Dawn Enterprises
- New Dawn Homecare
- Nova Scotia Business Inc
- Nova Scotia Power Maker's Space
- Scotia Seafoods
- Soulvaria Virtual Reality
- Talem Health



Tyler MacIntyre of Cape Breton Beard Company

This demand for New Dawn space carried over to New Dawn's residential properties which saw near 100% occupancy, again this year.

A special thank you to Wayne MacKinnon, Chris Fraser, Daniel MacIntyre, and Reg Peters, who adapted quickly and carefully to the new protocols and PPE required in their day-to-day and ensured that all of those who call a New Dawn building home were cared for and attended to, even at the height of our first COVID wave in early 2020.

Throughout the year, we were able to complete a number of renovations of some of New Dawn's SHIMI (Supported Housing for Individuals with Mental Illness) units, improving the building envelope and energy efficiency of these homes. Funding for this work was provided by Reaching Home, a stream of Employment and Social Development Canada.

We are honoured to have been asked to serve as a Community Partner in the SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council)-funded study *People, Places, Policies and Prospects: Affordable Rental Housing for Those in Greatest Need*, led by Dr. Catherine Leviten-Reid at Cape Breton University.

The goal of the research initiative is to understand the role and effects of different affordable rental housing models in the lives of marginalized individuals and families. Specifically, it seeks to understand:

- » The scale and scope of affordable rental housing provision across the country, including which kinds of approaches are used, where, and for whom.
- » The outcomes and experiences of tenants living in affordable rental housing as they relate to financial security, housing satisfaction, housing stability, health and well-being, and opportunities.
- » How outcomes and experiences differ based on the affordable rental housing approach provided.
- » The potential differential experiences and effects of rental housing on women and their families.
- » How neighbourhood conditions (such high levels of poverty, or lack of transit or nearby amenities) and policy environments (such as service and legal systems) affect tenants.

Finally, 2020 saw the modest beginnings of a very large New Dawn Properties undertaking. In partnership, New Dawn and the Verschuren Centre for Sustainability in Energy and the Environment, are in the process of designing, and then installing, a 700-kW solar garden for New Dawn's Pine Tree Park Estates residential community.

This project has two ambitious targets: (1) net-zero greenhouse gas emissions and (2) net-zero energy. Once complete, the property will no longer use any fossil fuels for heat or electricity and the solar garden will meet 100% of the properties annual electricity/thermal demand.



A solar field similar to the one currently being designed for Pine Tree Park

Pine Tree Park Estates (the former Lingan Road Radar Base) has long been an asset with great potential. The property – comprised of 80 acres with many unused but serviced lots – presently houses community non-profits (Elizabeth Fry, New Dawn Guest Home, New Dawn Home Living, Bridge Club, and Curling Club) and a mix of families and seniors. It is a property with a complicated history, having been contaminated by buried home heating oil tanks when it was under the ownership of the Department of National Defense. Its transition to renewable energy marks the final chapter in its reclamation and renewal.

In addition to eliminating gas emissions by all of the buildings on the property (28 residential units and 4 community buildings), the project creates energy cost savings, stability, and predictability for residents. We are excited to continue to steward its development and to be host to Nova Scotia's largest community solar garden.

New Dawn Properties

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 @NewDawnCentre

MISSION: To engage the community to create a culture of self-reliance.

VISION: A self-reliant people in a vibrant community.



NEW DAWN
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