



New Dawn **Impact Report 2025**



John Whalley (1962–2025)
Portrait by Eltuek studio artist, Caitrian MacNeil.
In loving memory.



Photo: Clothesline Media

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

A Year of Weight & Wonder



2025 gave us its worst, and it gave us its best.

2025 will stand as the year in which the organization lost one of its great visionaries, John Whalley. A man who, even in life, was already part myth.

In his ten years with New Dawn, John focused our attention on the importance of population stabilization, and regional engines of economic growth, like the port of Sydney. He filled our minds with big ideas that have forever changed the organization, while everyday extending small kindnesses in all directions: thousands of meals delivered to seniors and perpetual concern for our wellbeing: were we getting enough rest, were we eating well, what we were doing about stress, were we saving for retirement, were we taking vacation time, were we reading good books.

John Whalley. Visionary. Anomaly. Gift.

Unexpected and unimaginable loss, followed by wave on wave of new beginnings.

In 2025, Eleanor's Court opened following two years of careful and thoughtful design, providing safe homes for twenty-five community members experiencing homelessness. Anchor Youth Space Sydney opened its doors, in partnership with the IWK, providing much-needed mental health counselling services and programming for youth.

New Dawn After School Care began and provided safe, engaging, and educational spaces for more than 100 children in eastern CBRM.

New Dawn Meals on Wheels doubled the number of hot, healthy meals it served in the community, from 20,000 to more than 40,000, to ensure our neighbours in the Village at Pine Tree had access to good food.

Eltuek Arts Centre turned five, and marked the occasion, in part, with two exhibitions of international significance: Joan Jonas, *We come from the sea* and Lawren Harris, *Miners' Houses, Glace Bay*, both pointing to different moments in our origins, the latter creating a space where memory, suffering, strength, beauty, service, death, exploitation, family, and survival could co-exist, as they always have, despite our human tendencies to set aside the incongruities, and our longing for healing and justice.

In 2025, we built housing. We welcomed newcomers. We cared for seniors. We delivered food. We hosted artists and made opportunities for art to be made. We created places for young people. We responded to changing community needs.

We continue to discover people whose hearts were as big as the ocean, and they stepped forward to guide the work, deliver the meals, resource the new projects, and hold us up.

And together, we continued the joyful, radical, and necessary work of making love and compassion material.

Erika Shea
President & CEO



Chris Kaiser & Robbie Metcalfe at the New Dawn Youth & Family Centre construction site in Glace Bay in November, as the Centre's poured concrete wall panels were lifted into place. The moment marked a visible turning point in a project years in the making, as plans, drawings, fundraising, partnerships, and community hopes began to take physical form on the site.

By late fall, the scale and shape of the future Centre were emerging clearly. The New Dawn Youth & Family Centre is scheduled to open in 2027, creating a permanent home for childcare, youth and seniors programs, recreation, family supports, and community gathering in Glace Bay.



Photo: Clothesline Media

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Stewardship, Trust & the Work Ahead

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to begin by expressing our gratitude to the people who make New Dawn what it is: our staff, volunteers, partners, community members, and my fellow Board members.

2025 was a year of significant growth for New Dawn, but growth here is never simply about becoming larger. It is about responding when the community tells us that something is missing.

This year, New Dawn opened Eleanor's Court, creating 25 homes for people experiencing homelessness; launched Anchor Youth Space Sydney in partnership with the IWK; began providing after-school care to more than 100 children in Glace Bay; and doubled the number of meals delivered through Meals on Wheels.

These are very different initiatives, but they share the same starting point: a need identified in the community and a willingness to act.

That responsiveness has shaped New Dawn for nearly fifty years. The organization continues to evolve because Cape Breton continues to evolve. Housing, youth mental health, food security, immigration, aging, arts and culture, and community infrastructure may seem like separate areas of work, but together they reflect a larger commitment to building a community in which people can belong, participate, and thrive.

The Board is deeply grateful to New Dawn's staff, whose care, creativity, and perseverance turn ideas into real places and services. We are equally grateful to the volunteers and community partners who give their time, knowledge, and trust to this work. And I want to thank my fellow Board members for the seriousness, generosity, and thoughtful stewardship they bring to the organization.

As New Dawn continues to grow, our responsibility is to ensure that growth remains grounded in purpose: listening closely, responding thoughtfully, and building the things our community needs most.

That is both the opportunity and the obligation of this work.

Kalie Wang
Chair of the Board

2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kalie Wang—Chair
Percy Patterson—Vice-Chair
Maureen Baldwin, CND, in loving memory
Erika Shea
Stan Johnson
Brady Doucette
Rejoice Shumba
Ankit Wadhwa
Alison Aho
Carolina Bergonzoni
Jill McPherson
Terry Gibbs
Liam O'Rourke





In 2025, Eltuek Arts Centre celebrated five years since opening.

Pictured here at Eltuek's 2021 Naming Ceremony is Elder Dolena Poulette of We'koqma'q, one of the Mi'kmaw Elders who guided a year of critical and challenging conversations that gave rise to the name Eltuek—"(we) are making (it) together."

The "we" decides what the "it" might be, but what emerges is shaped by the relationships, ideas and possibilities that unfold through making together. Five years on, Eltuek continues to be shaped by the people who bring it to life.



ENERGY & CLIMATE

Energy Belongs Here

“This project transformed more than just homes— it transformed us. Every decision we make now is guided by a sense of climate responsibility and a commitment to eliminating energy poverty.”

Erika Shea, President & CEO

Canada's First

subscription-based community solar garden

555 kW

renewable energy capacity

1,800

solar panels installed at Pine Tree Park

At Pine Tree Park, a field of 1,800 solar panels is changing how New Dawn thinks about energy, affordability, and community ownership.

The solar garden was built alongside deep energy retrofits across the property, with the goal of meeting Pine Tree Park's annual energy needs through renewable power. Together, the projects are helping move the 80-acre community toward net-zero energy while reducing dependence on fossil fuels and making energy costs more predictable for the people and organizations who call Pine Tree Park home.

For New Dawn President & CEO Erika Shea, the project has also changed what feels possible. When the work began, New Dawn had little in-house experience with renewable energy. By the time the solar garden was operating, that experience had become part of how the organization thinks about every building it owns and every new project it undertakes.

Energy poverty remains a serious issue in Cape Breton. Lower-income households are often asked to carry the greatest burden of rising energy costs while having the least ability to invest in efficiency or renewable energy themselves. New Dawn's work at Pine Tree Park is one response: improving buildings, producing clean energy locally, and finding ways for the benefits of that transition to reach people regardless of income.

The ambition now extends beyond Pine Tree. New Dawn's long-term goal is to move its properties toward net-zero energy and to continue exploring models in which renewable energy is produced, owned, and shared in ways that strengthen communities rather than leaving people behind. That work, and what we are learning from it, continues in New Dawn's Energy & Climate newsroom, where visitors can also follow the solar garden's energy production through its live monitoring dashboard.

FOLLOW THE SOLAR GARDEN

Stories, project updates + live energy production
newdawn.ca/energy-climate/solar-garden





In 1925, Lawren Harris visited Cape Breton during the bitter coal miners' strike and began *Miners' Houses*, Glace Bay. A century later, New Dawn and Eltuek Arts Centre brought the painting back to the Island on loan from the Art Gallery of Ontario, marking 100 years since the death of coal miner William Davis, killed by company police during the strike.

Its return made the front page of *The Globe and Mail*, but the story was much larger than the painting itself. Over the course of the exhibition, Eltuek brought together miners and their families, artists, labour historians, academics, students and community members. The *Men of the Deeps* sang at the opening, and CBC Radio's Wendy Bergfeldt hosted an award-winning live broadcast from the second floor galleries. There were student workshops, writing and conversations, and on Davis Day, an evening of poetry and music honouring William Davis, the miners and the families who lived through the struggles of labour's war, and its echoes through their descendants to today.

The exhibition also took place as New Dawn was preparing to build its Youth & Family Centre in Glace Bay, another undertaking with a hundred-year horizon. There was something important in bringing this history home while preparing to make such a lasting investment in the same community. One century of labour, struggle and change behind us, and another century of possibility ahead. Bringing the painting back, on its own ground, was an invitation to consider what has endured, what has changed, and what this history still asks of us today.

A man with a beard and long hair, wearing a tan jacket, is shown in profile, looking out a window. The background is a plain wall with some shadows.

“An unusual Canadian painting has made a sentimental journey to Cape Breton, 100 years after the dramatic events that inspired it.”

— Kate Taylor, Visual Arts Critic,
The Globe and Mail

The Village

This project of love
is dedicated to the
Memory of our
friend Mark Munroe.

May all who seek
shelter here find
Peace and comfort.





HOUSING & BELONGING

You Can Go Home Again



Eleanor's Court welcomed its first tenants in 2025. New Dawn's first purpose-built supportive housing development for people leaving homelessness—and the largest of its kind in the region—provides 25 deeply affordable homes, with wrap-around support delivered in partnership with the Ally Centre of Cape Breton.

The Village at Pine Tree Park, which provides temporary emergency shelter for people experiencing homelessness, completed its first nine months in partnership with the Ally Centre and the Province of Nova Scotia. During that time, 39 people moved from the Village into permanent housing at Eleanor's Court, in Nova Scotia public housing, and in private rentals. Many also took steps toward full- or part-time employment.

These outcomes exceeded our early hopes, particularly in the midst of a national housing crisis. Each number represents someone moving from the uncertainty of homelessness toward a home they can afford and a life with greater stability, privacy, and possibility.

In June, New Dawn replaced contracted security at the Village with an in-house, six-person team providing 24/7 site monitoring. The change allowed New Dawn to offer better wages and benefits and to train and support the team in a responsive, relationship-building approach to residents and neighbours. How the work is done matters.

New Dawn also helped establish CBRM's first Coordinated Access system in 2025. Often described as “no door is the wrong door,” Coordinated Access brings local service providers into one shared process so that people experiencing homelessness do not have to navigate a disconnected system alone.

At Abbey Ridge, New Dawn's supportive housing program for youth, one resident graduated from high school and prepared to begin university at Cape Breton University. The program also grew, with New Dawn acquiring a second home to create space for seven more young people. Both are investments in the stability and support young people need to build their futures.

A safe home. People who stay alongside you. The opportunity to learn, grow, and imagine a future. This is the dream made real.

Home is more than a building. It is safety, dignity, privacy, care, and the knowledge that there is a place where you belong.

25 deeply affordable homes at Eleanor's Court

39 people moved into permanent housing

additional Abbey Ridge youth placements in development

250+ people housed across New Dawn's apartment portfolio

7





CARE & FOOD SECURITY

Living Well, Close to Home



Much of care is ordinary. Help with a meal. Support getting ready for the day. A familiar person at the door. Someone checking in.

New Dawn Homecare has been helping people live well at home across CBRM for more than three decades. Through personal care, household support, respite, companionship, nursing, footcare and other practical assistance, the work is shaped around people's day-to-day lives and the things that help them remain comfortable, connected and independent at home.

New Dawn Meals on Wheels carries that same commitment into the kitchen. In 2025, more than 40,000 meals were prepared at Eltuek Arts Centre and delivered across CBRM by staff and volunteers.

The program also became part of the support surrounding the Pallet village emergency housing community at Pine Tree Park, providing two meals each day to all 35 residents. Reliable access to food became part of the wider work of creating safety, stability and a path toward permanent housing.

Homecare and Meals on Wheels meet different needs, but both begin from the same place: practical care, delivered consistently and with respect, can help people remain well and connected to their communities.

Behind that work are continuing care assistants, nurses, home support workers, cooks, drivers, volunteers, coordinators, families and neighbours—people whose care is made visible through the ordinary things they do every day.

42,000

meals prepared and delivered in 2025

30+

years of helping people live well at home

35 x 2

number of meals delivered daily to Pallet village residents

24/7

in-home care available when people need around-the-clock support



Yi Wang came to Cape Breton Island from China with her daughter, Vivian, pictured here with her at the kitchen in Eltuek Arts Centre.

After studying ESL through programs offered at the New Dawn Newcomer Centre, Yi enrolled in the culinary trades program at Sydney Mines Memorial High School and came to Cafe Marie through a school internship. She stayed.

Today, Yi is the social enterprise cafe's Head Baker, while Vivian remains an enthusiastic taste-tester and possible future star baker.



YOUTH & FAMILY CARE

Care Beyond the School Day



22M

Invested in the
New Dawn Youth &
Family Centre project

4

Eastern CBRM schools
offering New Dawn
After School Care

12-25

Age range
welcomed
at Anchor
Youth Space

Work continued on the \$22-million New Dawn Youth & Family Centre in Glace Bay. Developed in partnership with the Undercurrent Youth Society, the Centre will include licensed childcare, youth programming, recreation, family supports, and places for people to gather.

New Dawn launched After School Care at Donkin, Tompkins Memorial, John Bernard Croak, and St. Anne's schools. The program gives children a welcoming place to spend the hours after school and gives families affordable access to dependable care in their own communities.

Anchor Youth Space Sydney opened at New Dawn Centre as part of Nova Scotia's Integrated Youth Services network. With funding support from IWK Health, Anchor offers walk-in counselling, peer and family support, mental-health and wellness services, life-skills programs, and help with employment, education, and training.

Children and young people do not experience their lives in program categories. A family may need dependable care at the end of the school day. A young person may need somewhere they can walk in, without an appointment or referral, and talk to someone. The same family may need different kinds of help over the course of a year, or even within the same week. Care is easier to reach when it is part of familiar places and ordinary routines, rather than something reserved for the point of crisis. That understanding shaped New Dawn's work in 2025.

After School Care gave children and families more support in their own school communities. Anchor gave young people and caregivers a direct route to counselling, peer and family support, mental-health and wellness services, and help with education, employment, and training. The Youth & Family Centre project takes the longer view, creating a permanent home for hope, care, recreation, and gathering in Glace Bay. None of this work was undertaken by New Dawn alone. It grew through schools, community organizations, IWK Health, the federal and provincial governments, youth and caregiver advisors, staff, donors, and families who shared what was needed and helped shape the response. Together, these projects make more help available earlier, closer to home, and within communities where they are already known.





Sarah Prosper and Joan Jonas at Eltuek Arts Centre, 8 August 2025.

Sarah Prosper, a dancer, choreographer, Mi'kmaw artist and Eltuek studio artist, presented two performances at the August 2025 opening of Joan Jonas's *We come from the sea*. Presented in partnership with the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia and the National Gallery of Canada, the exhibition brought the work of one of the world's most influential contemporary artists to Eltuek, drawing more than 6,000 visitors over nine weeks.



COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

People Keep Showing Up



New Dawn is a non-profit social enterprise governed by a volunteer community board. It is not organized to accumulate profit, but to make work possible: housing, care, food, employment, art and culture, newcomer settlement, and places where people can gather.

Across New Dawn, staff, knowledge, buildings, systems, and relationships are shared so that the organization can respond as the needs of the community change.

None of it is sustained by structure alone. Staff, volunteers, tenants, residents, artists, donors, neighbours, and partners bring the work to life every day.

They deliver meals, prepare food, offer their time and knowledge, make introductions, solve problems, and stay with an idea long enough for it to become real.

New Dawn's greatest resource has always been people willing to invest in one another and in the future of Unama'ki, Cape Breton Island.

NEW PARTNERS IN 2025

Giving Ring of Women The Medavie Foundation J&W Murphy Foundation

Community ownership is not only about who holds an asset. It is about what that ownership makes possible over time.

When resources stay rooted here, they can be reinvested in housing, care, culture, food security, art and artists, employment, and the next idea the community asks us to take seriously. New partners bring more people, resources and possibility into that work, and help us do more of it here, in Unama'ki, Cape Breton.

LEARN MORE. JOIN THE WORK.

Give, volunteer, partner, work with us, attend, or stay connected. Scan to learn more.





“You’re doing great things here. I love that you’re investing in people. For the next 50 years, my wish is that you continue on that road, making this a place where people want to come.”

— Annette Verschuren, pictured with Stan Shibinsky at Eltuek Arts Centre



New Dawn Today

A SNAPSHOT

3,000+

people served by New Dawn every day



22M

Youth & Family Centre capital construction project under development in Glace Bay

6,000+

visits to Joan Jonas's *We come from the sea* exhibition at Eltuek Arts Centre over nine weeks



42,000

Meals on Wheels meals prepared and delivered in 2025

39

individuals moved into permanent housing in 2025



785

newcomers and international students supported each year through programming

55

naloxone kits distributed through community safety programming



200+

Cape Bretoners employed across New Dawn businesses and companies



Eymu'ti'k Unama'ki, newte'jk l'uiknek te'sikl Mi'kmawe'l maqamikall mna'q iknmuettumittl. Ula maqamikew wiaqi-wikasik Wantaqo'tie'l aqq l'amatultimkewe'l Ankukamkewe'l Mi'kmaq aqq Eleke'wuti kisa'matultisnik 1726ek. We are in Unama'ki, one of the seven traditional and unceded ancestral territories of the people of Mi'kma'ki. This territory is covered by the Treaties of Peace and Friendship which the Mi'kmaq first signed with the British Crown in 1726.

Ketu'-keknuite'tmek aqq kepmite'tmek ula tela'matultimkip wjit maqamikew ta'n etekl mtmo'taqne'l. Ula tett, ula maqamikek, etl-lukutiek l'tunen aqq apoqntmnen apoqnmasimk aqq weliknamk Unama'ki. We wish to recognize and honour this understanding of the lands on which we reside. It is from here, on these lands, that we work to create and support a culture of self-reliance and vibrancy.

**Murray Gallant
(1938-2024)**

Artwork from a man lies here
Eltuek Arts Centre, Winter 2025
In loving memory.

New Dawn Enterprises

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