

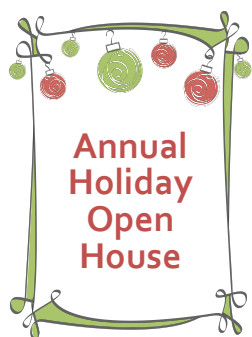
The Beacon

Fall/Winter 2013



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for details!


Caregivers
Nova Scotia
for friends and family giving care

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Greetings from Angus Campbell, Executive Director

Welcome to Caregivers Nova Scotia's newsletter. It has been awhile since we last published and we have lots of news to share. We renamed the newsletter *The Beacon* as we felt it better represents what we do and it has a Nova Scotian theme. We hope you agree.

With additional funding from the Department of Health and Wellness – Continuing Care Branch, we have been able to expand our programs and extend our services right across the province. Since April 1st we have been able to offer assistance in Cape Breton, the Capital District, the Western Region, and the Northern and Eastern Mainland Region. In this issue you will hear from each staff member.

With ongoing support from our Board of Directors and volunteers, we continue to support numerous caregivers by providing them with information, directing them to appropriate resources, clarifying available programs and benefits, facilitating peer support groups, and networking with our community partners and allies.

On May 1st we launched Caregiver Awareness Month with a Caregiver Appreciation Tea at Government House in Halifax hosted by His Honour Brigadier-General The Honourable J.J. Grant, CMM, ONS, CD (Ret'd), Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia and Her Honour Mrs. Joan Grant. Almost 60 caregivers, volunteers, and staff were in attendance to hear His Honour speak about the great contributions that caregivers are making to our province.

Also on that day, we introduced our new website www.CaregiversNS.org and to date we have received over 6,700 visits. We also held nine more Caregiver Appreciation Teas throughout the province during the month ...

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NOVA SCOTIA CANADA

Thank you to the NS Department of
Health & Wellness – Continuing Care Branch
for their ongoing generous support

Tips for Caregivers During The Holidays

By Brenda Sangster, Capital District Caregiver Support Coordinator

For those who are caregivers to a family member or friend, the holiday season can be a very stressful time of year. Stress occurs when we do too much, sleep too little, and neglect to take care of ourselves.

The holiday season can also be a time to enjoy festive gatherings with family and friends.

Consider the following tips to help you and your care recipient to reduce stress at this time of year.

- Set goals and realize your limitations. Be realistic of what you can and cannot do.
- Ask for and accept help from family members and friends. Even though they might have the best intentions, they may not know what you really need. For example, ask them in advance to help with food, shopping, gift-wrapping, or other caregiving needs.
- If you are planning on having a large group over, consider a potluck meal. Ask family or friends to bring a favourite dish. This can lessen your stress levels because you won't be doing everything yourself.
- Talk to your loved one about holiday plans. If a large family gathering is likely to create too much work and stress for you both, suggest that family and friends spend some individual quality time with you.
- Educate family and friends about your care recipient's health condition. Give them tools for how to communicate effectively with him or her.



- Don't abandon your own health during this time. It is okay to treat yourself, but try to avoid giving into stress-driven urges.
- Exercise regularly. Regular exercise can be helpful to your own physical and emotional well being.
- Take time out for yourself. Schedule some "me time", do some journaling, sit and relax, put your feet up, listen to music, read a book, go for a walk, or visit friends.
- Make sure you get plenty of rest. Remember to laugh and have fun.

Throughout the holiday season remember to be good to yourself. As a caregiver, you deserve support and quality time for **you** to keep your batteries charged. It is important to recognize that being able to have your family and friends around you during the holidays is a gift and can create memories to treasure.

CNS and New Dawn Partner for Caregiver Education Series

By Lynn Butler, Capital District Caregiver Support Coordinator

Caregivers Nova Scotia in collaboration with New Dawn Enterprises of Sydney recently developed a free eight week Caregiver Education Series for caregivers in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

As a caregiver, your physical and mental health is important. When you are in good health, you are able to provide better care to your loved one. The sessions provided practical information and support to caregivers on a variety of topics such as healthy eating, caregiver stress management, providing personal care, and on other themes relevant for people who are providing care.

Staff from the Halifax and the Northern and Eastern Mainland regions of Caregivers Nova Scotia travelled to Sydney to facilitate three separate sessions as part of this Caregiver Education Series: Caregiver Stress Management; the Safe Use of Medicines for Seniors; and, a session on Programs, Services, and Benefits available to caregivers in Nova Scotia. Staff from New Dawn Homecare facilitated sessions on Positioning and Helping Your Loved One Move, Healthy Eating and Nutrition, as well as the session on Communication. Other professionals were brought in to discuss Legal and Financial Issues relevant to care giving. As well, a Palliative Care professional discussed issues around end of life care.

The sessions were well attended and caregivers seem to have thoroughly enjoyed the sessions and the information provided in them. Among the comments about the sessions from caregivers are the following.

- “I am so grateful for this. Instructors are so knowledgeable and I enjoy talking to other caregivers.”
- “Very informative.”
- “This information changed my life.”
- “Love it.”

For us at Caregivers Nova Scotia, it was rewarding to be part of this project with New Dawn and to know that the information being presented would be making an impact on the lives of caregivers who are called on to provide various levels of care to their loved ones.

Our trips to Sydney were enjoyable, and it was good to have the opportunity to work with the New Dawn staff. We were not only able to present relevant and important information, but we also got to know the caregivers who attended. It was thrilling to be involved in the development of this new education series. We look forward to being able to provide continuing support for caregivers in Cape Breton.



Tea Cups Needed

During the month of May Caregivers Nova Scotia hosts Caregiver Appreciation teas across the province. If you have spare tea cups and saucers and would consider donating them for our Caregiver Teas please call our local number 421-7390 or our toll free number 1-877-488-7390.

The Rural & Remote Caregiver

By Jennifer Briand, Caregiver Support Coordinator Western Region

Rural and Remote: depending on your perspective these two words can evoke images of beautiful land and seascapes. These two words can also be used to describe many smaller communities across the province. The coastal communities, small towns, and country sides of western Nova Scotia portray a rugged beauty that is simply inspiring to all who encounter them. My travels across this area over the last year have reminded me why I continue to live here and call it home. Our communities are steeped in traditions and caregiving is one of those time honoured traditions. Providing support for family and friends is far from a new concept in rural areas, and it has a longer tradition than other structured forms of care.

Today the definition of caregiving is evolving, and the importance of unpaid caregivers is becoming more evident in our rural communities. However, the demographics of our communities are changing; many young people have migrated to larger urban centres or have moved out of the province to find educational and employment opportunities. This is a problem, particularly with the elderly as they often rely on family members, neighbours, and friends to fill any gaps in services. Living in areas of geographic isolation which are often underserved in terms of access to paid care providers can further increase the stresses for both those requiring help and support, and for those providing them.

Trends reflect the fact that the Canadian population is aging, and in 2010 Nova Scotia had, at 16%, the highest percentage of citizens over 65 in Canada. Similarly the average age of Canadians living in rural areas is increasingly higher than those in urban areas. The need to support caregivers has become an important rural healthcare issue.

As part of that long tradition of giving care, many people often see themselves as just someone providing support to those that need it. However, seeing yourself as a caregiver acknowledges the important work you do. It also recognizes that you need to look after your own health. To help rural caregivers, Caregivers NS has recently expanded throughout the province. As the Caregiver Support Coordinator for the Western Region, my role is both to increase the knowledge of our programs and services and to provide support services for caregivers in my region. I have met many caregivers across the western region and am always humbled by their efforts and their caregiving journeys. Support for these caregivers is imperative to keeping them healthy and thriving in a rural community.

While spending time on the shore at my parent's home, I noticed that the wharf has been damaged from recent storms. I realized that this would be a project for my family next summer. It's an ongoing project that is part of 'weathering the storms' in rural Nova Scotia. Similarly, by putting much needed supports in place, Caregivers Nova Scotia is helping those living in rural and remote areas to continue to thrive. We can all be prepared to weather the impending 'grey storm' that will be crashing towards our communities over the next 10 to 20 years.



Research and Resources

By Carlye Stein, Research Coordinator

I joined Caregivers Nova Scotia in June on a contractual basis. In my role as Research Coordinator, I have worked on a variety of projects including the *Where to Begin* guide and *The Caregiver's Handbook*. I have spoken with several caregivers and these conversations, together with all that I have researched, have deepened my appreciation for what unpaid caregivers do for their loved ones. My mom has been the primary caregiver to my dad for many years; my work here has reaffirmed how important it is that caregivers are recognized and supported.

Where to Begin was created as an introductory planning guide for people who may be new to caregiving; its purpose is to help them get organized and find support. Building on an earlier version, we have created a "Partners in Care" checklist, and have added a "Caregiver Check-In" to encourage people to think about their own physical and mental wellbeing. *Where to Begin* is available in print from our office or may be downloaded from our website.

We've included even more resources, tools, and tips in the updated version of *The Caregiver Handbook*. There is information on new government programs and services, as well as details about health and community organizations that support unpaid caregivers. We have also captured the latest provincial and national statistics about caregiving.

The Caregiver Handbook is a popular and much-loved resource. It is currently in the final revision stage, and we anticipate having it printed early in 2014.

Greetings (continued from page 1)

... of May where we reached out to let people know about our services and programs.

Did you know ...

- 1 in 3 Nova Scotians is a caregiver
- 1 in 10 caregivers give 30+ hours of care a week
- In Canada, 60% of caregivers also juggle the demands of paid work
- 28% of caregivers are "sandwiched" between caregiving and raising children
- 92% feel that the experience is rewarding ☺

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2013001-eng.htm>

Our number one workshop continues to be *Caregiver Stress Management* – which speaks to the reality of caregiving. It is important that as more and more people wish to remain in their homes, we must give their unpaid caregivers the tools to do the best job they can, and this includes learning how to develop strategies to cope with stressful situations.

As part of our program expansion, we have revived the *Safe Medicines for Seniors* workshop that we assisted Health Canada, the VON, and others develop in 2007. It is still a relevant workshop today and is applicable to all age groups. We are also pleased to announce that we have started delivering the *Brushing Up on Mouth Care* workshop developed by the Faculty of Dentistry at Dalhousie University.

I am sure you will agree that 2013 has been a very exciting year for us. May I take this opportunity to wish you a safe and happy holiday season, and all the very best for the new year.

Angus

The Benefits of a Caregiver Support Group

By Cindie Smith, Caregiver Support Coordinator Northern and Eastern Region

Attending the first Caregiver Support Group can be a stressful experience. How much will I be expected to share? Will I become emotional? Will other caregivers understand my situation? We would like to tell you a bit about our Support Groups in hopes that the information will address some of your fears.

Caregivers attend support groups for different reasons. Maybe you are feeling some intense emotions and have a need to express them. Or perhaps you would like to help others by sharing your own experience. Yet again, if you are uncomfortable speaking in a group of people or are feeling emotionally overwhelmed, you may simply want to listen. In our Caregiver Support Groups each person is encouraged to participate to her or his level of comfort. If that means just stating your name but pass on other opportunities to share, that is quite ok. Everyone joins in when they are ready.

Among the greatest advantages of joining a Support Group is coming to understand that you are not alone and that peer learning has been proven as a very effective means of problem solving. Caregivers Nova Scotia Support Groups may also offer educational opportunities in the form of guest speakers, focused discussions, and sharing articles or other resources. Our groups are not health condition, age, or gender specific.

We appreciate how difficult it is for many caregivers to get away for a couple of hours and how precious your respite time can be. Caregivers Nova Scotia wants you to receive benefit from the group, so please feel welcome to provide the facilitator with feedback on how useful the time was for you or how it could be of more assistance. It is

also very important that you are able to share your feelings with the group, even the negative ones, so a safe, confidential and non-judgmental environment is essential. We all need to vent sometimes but we can also help each other move forward in overcoming challenges.



In the Northern and Eastern Mainland Region of Nova Scotia we have facilitated Support Groups in Amherst, Stewiacke, and Antigonish for a few months now and the feedback has been positive. One caregiver said she was unsure of the benefit of coming to a meeting but after the first session, was quite surprised - other caregivers dealing with different health conditions have very similar issues! Other caregivers have said that it is comforting to know that they are not isolated in their worries and that other caregivers struggle every day too.

On the next page you will find a complete listing of Caregiver Nova Scotia Support Groups. This list is also posted at <http://www.caregiversns.org/how-we-help/peer-groups/>. If you have questions about Caregivers Nova Scotia Support Groups please contact our office at 1-877-488-7390. We look forward to seeing you!

Caregiver Support Groups

A confidential, friendly atmosphere to talk with other caregivers about your experiences

Capital District

Please call 421-7390 for more information or to register.

Dartmouth:

1st Wednesday of each month
1:00 – 3:00pm
East Dartmouth Centre, 50 Caledonia Road

Hummingbird House, Halifax:

2nd Tuesday of each month
11:00am – 12:30pm
3433 Dutch Village Road, Suite 2
and
Last Wednesday of each month
1:30 – 3:00pm
3433 Dutch Village Road, Suite 2

Bayers Road, Halifax:

2nd Wednesday of each month
1:00 – 2:30pm
St. Andrews Community Centre,
3380 Barnstead Lane

Spryfield:

3rd Wednesday of each month
10:00am – 12:00 noon
Spryfield Wellness Centre,
Room 169, 16 Dentith Road

Bedford:

Last Wednesday of each month
6:30 – 8:00pm
Ivany Place, 123 Gary Martin Drive, Bedford

Cape Breton

Coming soon!



Northern and Eastern Mainland

Facilitated by Cindie Smith, please call
(902) 324-2273 for more information.

Amherst:

1st Wednesday of each month
1:30 – 3:30pm
Seminar Room, Four Fathers Memorial
Library, 21 Acadia Street

Antigonish:

2nd Tuesday of each month
1:30 – 3:30pm
Health Connections Room, The People
Place Library, 283 Main Street

Stewiacke:

1st Thursday of each month
2:30 – 4:30pm
Winding River Consolidated School,
272 Kitchener Street

Western Region

Facilitated by Jennifer Briand, please call
(902) 521-5592 for more information.

Bridgewater:

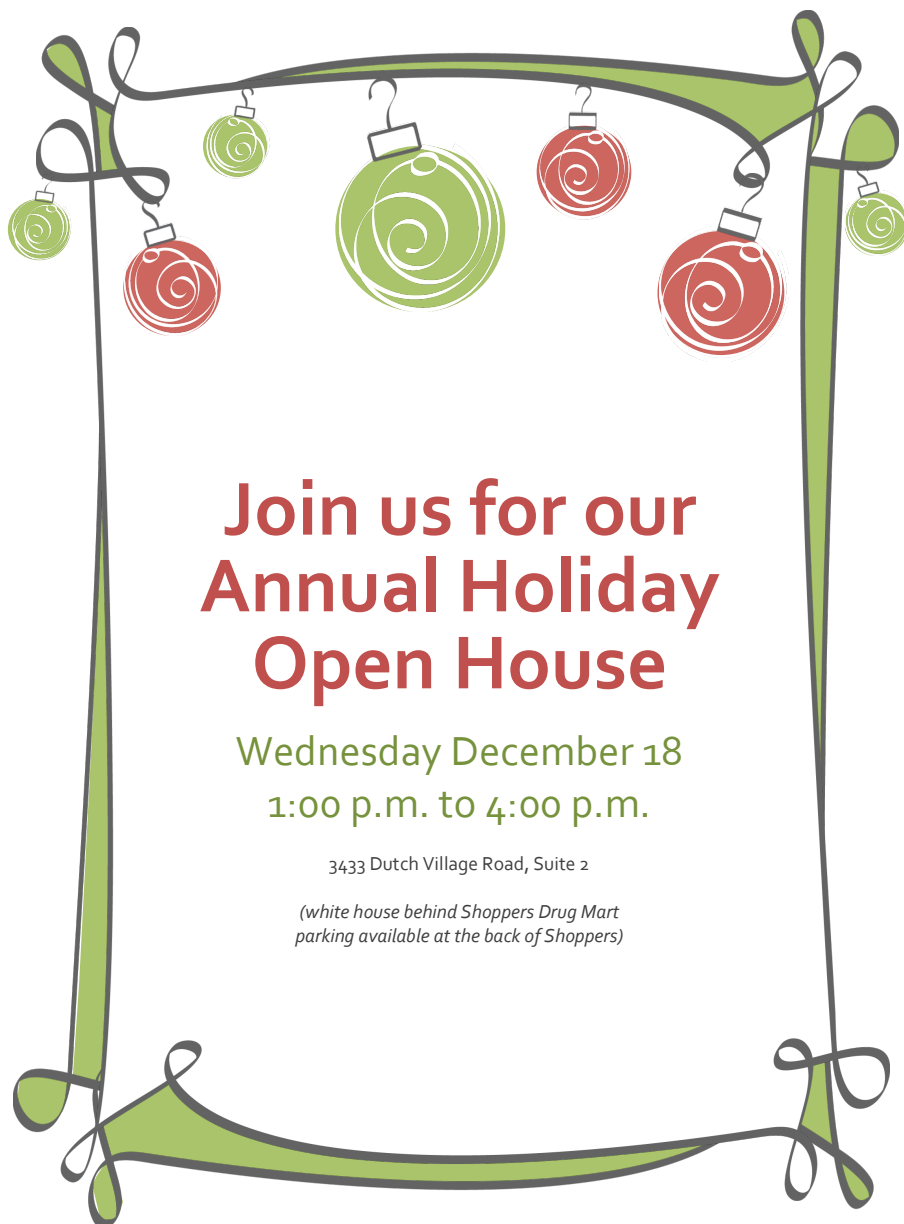
2nd Thursday of each month
1:30 – 3:30pm
Drumlin Hills, 558 Glen Allan

Kingston:

1st Thursday of each month
1:00 – 3:00pm
Superstore Community Room,
470 Main Street

Shelburne:

4th Thursday of each month
1:00 – 3:00pm
Sobeys Community Room Kingfisher Place,
Shelburne Mall



Join us for our Annual Holiday Open House

Wednesday December 18
1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

3433 Dutch Village Road, Suite 2

*(white house behind Shoppers Drug Mart
parking available at the back of Shoppers)*


Caregivers
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www.CaregiversNS.org

1.877.488.7390



The hummingbird symbolizes
performing the impossible,
working at lightning speed,
surviving extremes,
and often flying solo
– just like a caregiver.

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