

# The Beacon

Spring 2022

Volume #16, Issue 1



## In This Issue

Caregiver Awareness Month.....	2
Working Caregivers.....	3
Interview With A Working Caregiver..	3
Le coin acadien.....	4
Reduce Social Isolation.....	6
What Is Grief?.....	6
Young Caregivers.....	7
Spring Home Maintenance.....	8

## Board of Directors

### Executive Officers

Patricia Murray  
- Chair

Mary Elizabeth MacLellan  
- Vice-Chair

Anne Corbin  
- Treasurer & Secretary

Crystal Taylor

### Members at Large

Donna Dill

Sherri Mitchell

Paula Blackmore

Kelli MacDonald

Catherine Morley

Ruvi Nora Mugara

  
**Caregivers**  
Nova Scotia  
for friends and family giving care

3433 Dutch Village Road  
Halifax, NS B3N 2S7

Tel. 902.421.7390

Toll-free 1.877.488.7390

Info@CaregiversNS.org

www.CaregiversNS.org

  
**NOVA SCOTIA**  
CANADA

Thank you to the  
Department of Seniors  
and Long-term Care  
for their support

**Hello Caregivers and Friends!** We are happy to be celebrating Caregiver Awareness Month this May with our friends across the country. Follow us on Facebook + Twitter (@caregiversns) to

see the many faces of caregiving all month long and follow #caregiveraware2022.

This year, for the first time, we invited members of our own community of caregivers to join a Caregiver Awareness Committee to share their expertise as we bring awareness to caregiving and recognize caregivers here in Nova Scotia. We thank Art, Juanita, and Steven for their invaluable contributions.

Look out for our Caregiver Awareness Month displays featured at libraries all over the province during the month. Many libraries will also offer a number of great reading recommendations for caregivers including fiction and non-fiction, we hope you'll visit a library near you and pick up some literature. Follow us on social media or visit our website for a list of all participating libraries.

Warm regards,

Jenny Theriault  
Executive Director




**May is Caregiver Awareness Month**

#CAREGIVERAWARE2022

Are you a family member, friend, or neighbour looking after a person who needs support? Caregivers NS understands that you are on a journey. Whether it be long or short, Caregivers NS will share your rewards and support you through the challenges.

Website: [www.caregiversns.org](http://www.caregiversns.org)  
Toll free: 1.877.488.7390



**Our Annual General Meeting**  
will be held Saturday,  
June 25 - 11am

Call for more  
information or  
to register.  
902.488.7390

## Together for Fun Program

Free six-week program begins May 6th

For caregivers and their loved one living with dementia

Contact [Taylor.McKay@dal.ca](mailto:Taylor.McKay@dal.ca) to register.

# May is Caregiver Awareness Month

By Nicole Byers, Caregiver Support Coordinator, South Shore Region

Did you know that one in three Nova Scotians is an unpaid caregiver? When it comes to being a caregiver, it can be thankless work. Many caregivers in Nova Scotia are heavily burdened by feeling alone in their caregiving journey, unsure of where to turn for help and assistance.

At Caregivers Nova Scotia, our mission is to support caregivers and in order to do that, we first need to understand the needs of those caregivers. In an effort to do this, we partnered with Leger, the largest Canadian-owned polling, market research, and analytics firm to survey 573 caregivers between April 29 and May 16, 2021. This survey yielded some fairly significant results about the caregivers in our province. Approximately 32% of caregivers surveyed are caring for a loved one



with dementia followed by 31% of caregivers caring for someone with a mobility issue. Half of the caregivers said that their care recipient lives in the same household as them. Not surprisingly, when a caregiver and care recipient live in the same home, those caregivers reported providing more support to their care recipient. Among those tasks that care recipients need the most help with were: emotional support, transportation, housework, home maintenance, outdoor work, managing and scheduling

appointments, and meal preparation.

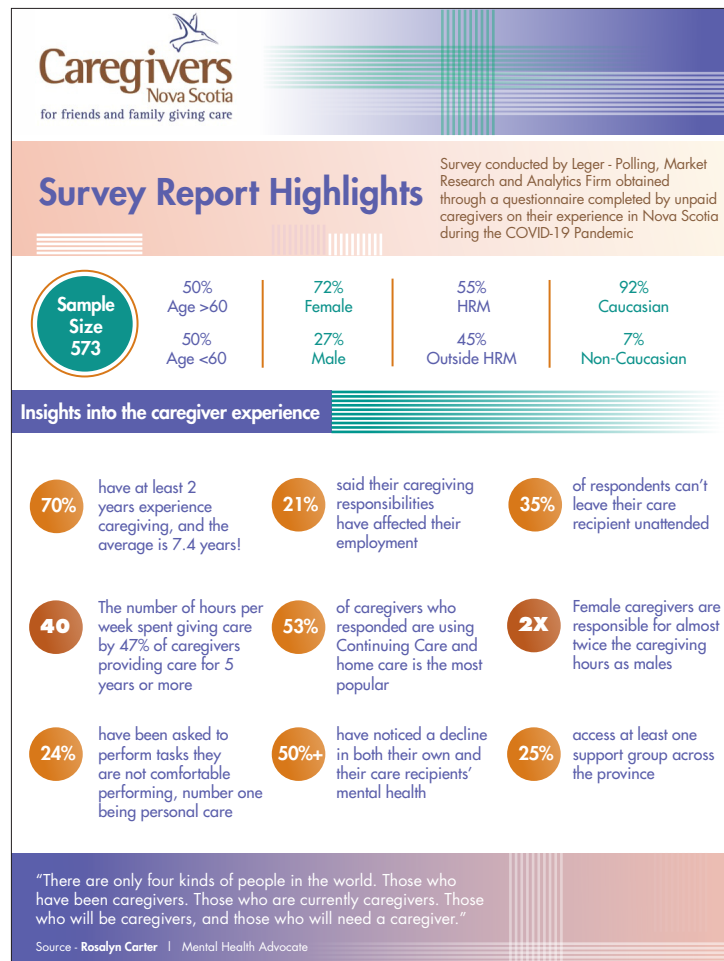
Thirty-five percent of the caregivers surveyed cannot leave their care recipient unattended, even for a few hours. Caregivers reported dedicating approximately 40 hours a week to providing care to their loved one. That is the equivalent of a full time job!

The global pandemic has certainly taken a toll on caregivers. Since the beginning of the pandemic, 80% of caregivers surveyed have noticed an increase in one or more household expenses, with food being the highest increase. Feelings of isolation, stress, exhaustion, and nervousness have increased drastically. About 55% of caregivers surveyed reported a decline in their mental health since the beginning of the pandemic. In addition, caregivers' feelings of confidence, support, and comfort have all decreased during the pandemic.

With all of those statistics in mind, it can be hard to believe that so many people take on the role of caregiver. But for those of us who have been a caregiver, we know that it is a journey that you take with a loved one; often the last journey that you will take together. There are highs and there are lows and everything in between. Each day is a new experience and as a caregiver; you never know what that day will hold.

Whatever the challenges of caregiving, Caregivers Nova Scotia has heard time and time again that caregivers feel it is their responsibility and honour to care for their loved one. At Caregivers Nova Scotia, we're focused on empowering caregivers, supporting their efforts, and recognizing the invaluable contribution unpaid caregivers make to both their care recipient and society in general.

So to all of you caregivers out there, thank you. We see you and we're here for you. Reach out to us for support at our toll free number 1.877.488.7390. Happy Caregiver Awareness Month!



# Working Caregivers

By Maggie Roach-Ganaway, Caregiver Support Coordinator, Cape Breton Region

If Covid-19 has shown us nothing else, I think it has put a spotlight on the importance of the unpaid caregiver and the challenges that they face on a daily basis. This has been even more evident for the working caregiver. When the whole world stopped, they still had to worry about not only trying to earn a living, but caring for a loved one that may need specialized care that couldn't just stop, so a lot of juggling had to take place very quickly.

More than half of all caregivers are also working either full-time or part-time so coordinating caregiving while trying to work can be very challenging. Although there is no one size fits all, there may be some things you can explore to help make it work for everyone.

Key things to remember: Organization, Communication, Prioritization, Connecting and Setting Boundaries

## Organization & Communication

First and foremost, organization and communication are key when it comes to the making the best choices for both you and your care recipient. Planning with other family members should be top of the list, but if that is not an option, communicating with your employer as to what options could be available to you if you have to take time away from work is very important as well. Things like flexible work hours, working remotely, reducing your hours or job sharing could work for some people. But, if that is not an option and you have to take time off you should check into your Employee Benefits program, like Short or Long term leave or go through Employment Insurance Benefits, (Medical or Compassionate Care Benefits). And as a last resort, your personal days or vacation time may be accessed. Most employers have an

EAP, (Employee Assistance Program) that you can access to get the emotional support you may need so don't forget to check that out.

## Prioritization

Prioritize what is important, then throw out half the list, as everything may seem like a priority at first, but when you really look at it you will see what is really important. Don't try to be perfect or set unrealistic expectations, but instead just try to keep everyone as safe and happy as possible.

## Connection

Connecting with other caregivers will give you a sense of how others are coping and what works for them. You may find it helpful to join a support group to share your experience and get other perspectives as to how others deal with things that come up. But, if a support group is not for you, you may want to join a club or exercise group that will give you a break from your everyday routine.

## Set Boundaries

Lastly, setting boundaries is very important so that it will not become all-consuming to your life. Give yourself permission to have your own life and take care of yourself too. Eating a healthy diet, exercising, having social time, getting enough sleep and regular check-ups are all things that you can do for yourself so that you can stay healthy and happy during your caregiving.

---

## Interview With A Working Caregiver

By Jennine Wilson, Caregiver Support Coordinator, Valley Region

Lesley McGill generously agreed to speak to me about her experience as a working caregiver. She said that other caregivers sharing their experiences benefitted her so much that she did not see a need to remain anonymous if it could help someone.

Lesley's journey started in 2012 when her son was diagnosed with Leukemia starting 3 1/2 years of treatment; her son celebrated his 4th birthday in the IWK a week later.

Her employer at this time was not supportive so she quit.

The IWK is a 2-hour drive from home, so Lesley and her son moved in with her parents, who lived in HRM. She began to notice significant changes in her mom. After a year of intensive treatment and her parents' divorce, she and her son moved home and made the 4 hours round trip to the IWK for the next two years, stopping to help her mom, who was living independently. Lesley was now juggling her son's treatments, her mom's increasing care needs, the family farm, part-time jobs and the knowledge that she had to go back to school to get a

better job for opportunities with supportive employers, benefits and flexibility. She finished a 2-year NSCC program, and her son's trips to the IWK gradually became less frequent, allowing for a full-time job. To balance work and caregiving, Lesley convinced her mom to move closer.

Lesley devoted all her time caring for her family until an emergency surgery forced her to step back. When she ran out of medical time, she discussed her needs with her employer, who knew her work ethic and gave her flexibility to meet her caregiving responsibilities.

Lesley's key elements for balance:

- Organization: a weekly calendar was essential for tracking appointments, medications, travel time, and scheduling downtime. Friday was always a pizza supper and a do-nothing evening.
- Network: finding a network for emotional support was crucial.

CONT'D ON PAGE 4



- Share the journey: ASNS, Caregivers NS, and IWK Moms support group; all helped her navigate services, learn what worked, and provided resources.
- Get help: Utilizing after-school and home care, assisted living, day programs, and now private long-term care for her mom.
- Access available programs: the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for emotional support, EI for Parents of Critically Ill Children, and the Disability Tax Credit for financial aid.
- Being honest with herself and others about her time commitments: gratitude for invitations offered, but saying no when needed and protecting family time.

Lesley shared that going to work was her solace, a place that brought normalcy, where she had control, and could manage her responsibilities. Co-workers cared about her, knew what was going on, and she felt supported. It prevented her from micromanaging her mother's needs and gave her a break from caregiving to focus on other things.

Lesley's advice for employers to know and remember:

- Offer flexibility, do not make things harder. You will lose dedicated, intelligent employees whose loyalty grows stronger with your support.
- Be approachable and open to meeting your employee's needs creatively.
- Check-in with your employees. Being compassionate helps them be compassionate toward themselves leading to increased productivity.
- Offer benefit programs. Medical costs are enormous, and good health plans retain employees.
- Provide education on federal employee benefits available.
- Children, parents, siblings, and friends need their caregivers to advocate for and comfort them. A fill-in person will not do. If you or your loved one needed care, you would surely want the same treatment.

I could go on with Lesley's story; how she helped other families get the Disability Tax Credit, her son's campaign of donating hats to oncology hospitals, his 5 year remission, advocacy to get the astronomical cost of in-home chemo treatment covered by MSI, and more. Thank you Lesley for sharing your story and words of wisdom.



## Le coin acadien

par JoAnne Connors - Coordinatrice de soutien aux aidantes

### Bonjour aux personnes aidantes!

Nous sommes ravis de pouvoir maintenant offrir des services en français pour notre communauté acadienne et francophone en Nouvelle-Écosse.

Saviez-vous que nous avons beaucoup d'informations sur notre site Web disponible en français <https://www.caregiversns.org/francais/>, et que nous avons un Manuel des personnes aidantes en français disponible digitalement sur notre site web? <https://www.caregiversns.org/francais/manuel-du-soignant/>

Il y a aussi des grands développements à annoncer qui sont le résultat d'un merveilleux partenariat avec la Fédération de Femmes Acadienne de la Nouvelle Écosse (FFANE). La FFANE s'est donné pour priorité de briser l'isolement des personnes aidantes acadiennes et francophones de la Nouvelle-Écosse (<https://www.ffane.ca/projets/personnes-aidantes/>) par l'intermédiaire l'initiative Ensemble pour le développement social des communautés francophones et acadiennes du Canada. Elle a développé de nombreuses ressources formidables, notamment ses capsules « As-tu Deux Minutes », où Mme Louise Gervais, naturopathe, nous présente plusieurs petites techniques pour aider à gérer les situations plus difficiles qui peuvent ressortir lorsqu'on est personne aidante. Ils organisent également une «

Pause-Mieux Être » mensuelle, en partenariat avec le Réseau Santé de la N-É. Ces pauses virtuelles d'une heure sont d'abord et avant tout destinées aux personnes aidantes francophones, acadiennes et d'expression française de la province pour les aider à briser leur isolement, les informer et leur offrir un espace de partage. Elles présentent aussi une belle occasion pour en apprendre plus sur certains sujets spécialisés, des soins palliatifs aux expériences de personnes aidantes de leur enfant à la conciliation travail/aidant et bien d'autres.

Des personnes aidantes de partout en Nouvelle-Écosse ont partagé leurs expériences et leurs vécus avec FFANE. À partir de leurs entrevues, la FFANE a créé des articles qui ont été publiés dans le Courrier de la Nouvelle-Écosse, ainsi que sur leurs réseaux sociaux. Si vous souhaitez écrire sur vos expériences en tant que personne aidante et les partager avec d'autres, vous pouvez contacter Élisabeth Vickers-Drennan à la FFANE. (902.433.2088 ou [elizabeth.vd@ffane.ca](mailto:elizabeth.vd@ffane.ca))

Nous sommes également très heureux d'annoncer la publication d'un nouveau Guide de la personne aidantes en français (2022), qui était un grand projet de collaboration avec FFANE, Réseau Santé et Caregivers NS. Il sera disponible sous forme numérique en mai 2022, le mois de la sensibilisation aux personnes aidantes en Nouvelle-Écosse et au Canada.

Enfin, Caregivers Nova Scotia lancera un “Groupe de soutien” virtuel en français pour les personnes aidantes qui se réunira le premier mercredi de chaque mois de 18h30 à 20h30. Dans nos groupes de soutien aux personnes aidantes, l’accent est mis sur vous, la personne aidante. Que vous ayez envie de parler ou que vous soyez plus à l’aise pour écouter, nous vous offrons une atmosphère confidentielle, sans jugement et amicale pour rencontrer d’autres personnes aidantes ayant des expériences similaires, quel que soit l’âge ou l’état de santé de votre bénéficiaire. Si vous souhaitez rejoindre notre groupe de soutien aux personnes aidantes francophones, veuillez contacter JoAnne Connors, notre coordinatrice francophone du soutien aux personnes aidantes, au 902.421.7390/1.877. 488.7390 ou [Halifax@CaregiversNS.org](mailto:Halifax@CaregiversNS.org). Ce groupe de soutien sera animé par ZOOM et est ouvert à toute la province.

Beau mois de sensibilisation des personnes aidantes et au plaisir d’avoir de vos nouvelles bientôt !

## Hello Caregivers!

We are thrilled to be able to now offer services in French for our Acadian and Francophone community in Nova Scotia.

Caregivers Nova Scotia has offered much of our website information in French <https://www.caregiversns.org/francais/>, and have a French language Caregiver Handbook available digitally <https://www.caregiversns.org/francais/manuel-du-soignant/> from our website.

There are big developments to announce that have come from a wonderful partnership with la Fédération de Femmes Acadienne de la Nouvelle Écosse (FFANE). FFANE have prioritized breaking the isolation of Acadian and French speaking Caregivers in NS (<https://www.ffane.ca/projets/personnes-aidantes/>) through several projects, and have developed many great resources, including “As-tu Deux Minutes”, where Mrs Louise Gervais, naturopath, presents several small techniques to help manage the more difficult situations that can arise when one

is a caregiver. They also host a monthly Pause-Mieux Etre, in partnership with the Network Sante de la NE. These one-hour virtual breaks are intended first and foremost for Francophone, Acadian and French-speaking caregivers in the province to help them break their isolation, inform them and offer them a space to share. They are also a great opportunity to learn more about certain specialized topics, from palliative care to the experiences of caregivers of their children to work/caregiver balance and many others.

Caregivers from across Nova Scotia shared their experiences with us. From their interviews, we created articles that were published in the Nova Scotia Courier, as well as on our social networks. If you’d like to write about your experiences as a caregiver and share them with others, you can contact Elizabeth Vickers-Drennan at FFANE.

We are also thrilled to announce the publication of a new French language Caregiver Handbook (2022), which was a big collaborative project with FFANE, Réseau Sante and Caregivers NS that will be available digitally in May 2022, Caregiver Awareness Month in Nova Scotia and Canada.

Last, but certainly not least, Caregivers Nova Scotia will be launching a virtual French language Caregivers Support Group that will be meeting on the first Wednesday of each month from 6:30 - 8:30pm. At our caregiver support groups, the focus is on you, the caregiver. Whether you feel like talking or you’re more comfortable just listening, we offer a confidential, non-judgemental, friendly atmosphere to meet other caregivers with similar experiences, regardless of age or health condition of your care recipient. If you are interested in joining our French Caregiver Support Group, please contact JoAnne Connors, our French-speaking Caregiver Support Coordinator at 902.421.7390/1.877.488.7390 or [Halifax@CaregiversNS.org](mailto:Halifax@CaregiversNS.org). This Support Group will be facilitated via ZOOM and is open to the whole province.

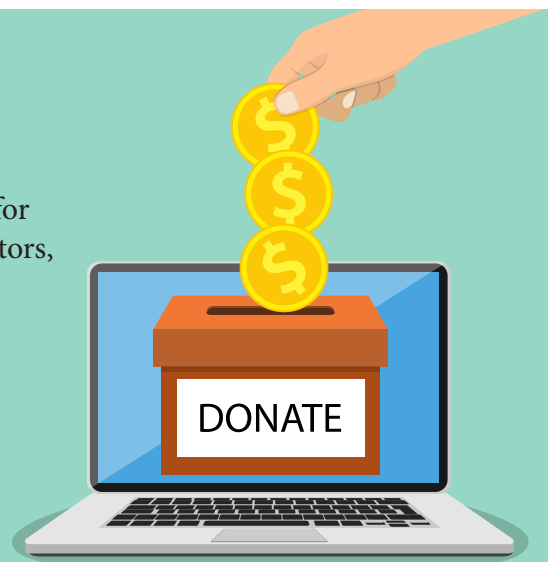
Happy Caregiver Awareness Month and we look forward to hearing from you soon!

## Donate Today

Caregivers Nova Scotia provides programs, services, and advocacy for caregivers. With ongoing support from our funders, Board of Directors, allied organizations, and caregivers themselves, we’re dedicated to providing recognition and practical assistance to friends and family giving care.

**Donate today by visiting [www.caregiversns.org](http://www.caregiversns.org).**

Registered Charity No. 87932 1420 RR0002



# Let's Work Together to Help Reduce Social Isolation

By Leanne Taylor, Caregiver Support Coordinator, Northern Region

Isolation...thanks to COVID-19, is a word that we have heard a lot. We have had to keep our distance from each other to stop the spread of the virus. We all did our part by lowering the amount of people we had contact with including those who meant the most to us. There were times when we were only allowed to go out in public for essentials. This caused many people to suffer from social isolation. Social



isolation describes the absence of social contact and can lead to loneliness. It is a state of being cut off from normal social networks, and can be triggered by factors such as loss of mobility, caregiving responsibilities, unemployment, or health issues. Isolation can involve staying home for lengthy periods of time, struggling to access services, having no community involvement, and little to no communication with friends, family, and acquaintances. Unfortunately, there were many people already living with social isolation long before the pandemic started. There are caregivers and others that are struggling with social isolation. If you are experiencing this, or you recognize someone in your life that may be struggling with social isolation, there is support and help available.

If you are an unpaid caregiver we encourage you to contact us at Caregivers Nova Scotia. One of our Caregiver Support Coordinators would be happy to discuss options to help reduce the barriers that are causing the social isolation. There are Caregiver Support Groups throughout the province, and are available to join in person, by phone, or virtually.

The Seniors' Safety Program offers free support for seniors. The program enhances communication between seniors by providing information, educational sessions, and referral services to seniors through direct contact with the Seniors' Safety Coordinator. [https://novascotia.ca/seniors/senior\\_safety\\_programs.asp](https://novascotia.ca/seniors/senior_safety_programs.asp).

211 Nova Scotia is a free service available 24/7, by dialing 211 or visiting <https://ns.211.ca/> Nova Scotians can quickly and easily learn about community and social services they need anywhere in the province. 211 provides information on mental health services, helplines, and more.

There are many programs available in communities to encourage socialization, increase physical activity, or to learn something new, including many online programs and opportunities.

Living through this pandemic has taught us how valuable a conversation is on the phone or online when we are not able to go out. Be aware of those who may be struggling with social isolation and reach out to them. If you are feeling socially isolated, reach out for support today.

Let's take care of one another.

---

## What Is Grief?

By Therese Henman-Phillips, Caregiver Support Coordinator, Capital Region

Grief is often defined as the emotional, spiritual, mental and physical reaction to the loss of someone or something that we love. We often think of grief in terms of our reaction to death, but any intense loss would more accurately describe it. The intensity of grief will vary depending on what that loss is and our connection to it. In my role as a Support Coordinator with CNS, grief and loss is prominent in our work. We see it early in our relationship with caregivers. At this stage, caregivers often experience a profound sense of loss and subsequent grief as they live through the changes in their loved one, associated with the progression of aging or disease. They may also be grieving the losses that are occurring in their own life as well as in the life of the person for whom they are caring. Many caregivers are unable to identify this impact referred to as "ambiguous grief". As death occurs, active grieving is more easily identifiable to them. Caregiving is an intense and deeply personal role, filled with both joys and challenges, adding a layer of complexity to grief.



Everyone's experience with grief is unique. There is no right or wrong way to grieve and no timetable for which it can be measured. Underneath it all, are feelings. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross identified 5 stages including denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. While you may see these stages, grief is not a straight line. Factors that contribute to the intensity of our grief include such things as our relationship and past history with the loss, your own personality, faith and cultural influences as examples.

The reality is that grief can have an impact on our thoughts, emotions, behavior and our bodies. Every aspect of life can be altered. Being open and realistic about the process you are going through, paying attention to your body's cues and practicing self care are important concepts. Be kind to yourself, find people who can support you, and take time to reduce your stress by participating in rewarding activities that are distracting. It's ok to pause from grieving. It's important to find balance between grieving and moving forward.



No one typically gets over a significant loss, but over time, you learn to manage that loss. The feelings will not be erased, but will be less intense. Recently I was exposed to Dr. Lois Tonkins and her “Growth Around Grief” theory. She describes that grief actually remains exactly the same size as it was to start but that our lives grow around it. We learn to spend time with it while continuing to experience life. Grief, she suggests, becomes our friend.

While some are able to navigate their grief, others will find this more challenging. Covid has made this even more difficult where closure at the end of life has been prevented. Long term grief and the associated depression is a concern. Know when to seek professional assistance. Reach out to your health care provider or your local Support Coordinator who can put you in touch with support groups or professional resources in your area that can assist you in moving forward.

---

## Young Caregivers

By Brenda Sangster, Office Administrator

At Caregivers Nova Scotia, we have identified many underserved populations of caregivers, in particular the young caregiver. These are 15-24 years-olds who are giving care to a family member needing assistance due to physical, cognitive, and/or mental health condition, chronic illness, frailty, or advanced aging.

Young caregivers are unique amongst their peers. They seldom self-identify fearing associated stigma. The Young Caregivers Association (<https://youngcaregivers.ca/>) reports that

- There are more than 32,000 young caregivers in Nova Scotia, and 1.25 million in Canada
- On average, Canadian young caregivers are providing between 14 and 27 hours of care per week, the equivalent to a part-time job
- Unpaid care given by young caregivers corresponds to an annual savings of \$25,000–\$50,000 for the family and/or healthcare system
- Canada trails behind other countries in their support of young caregivers.

When there is no other adult available, a young caregiver may be required to assist with care, provide parenting to other siblings, and take on household and financial management far beyond what would typically be expected of their age and development or ongoing or intermittent periods.

They are at risk of trading in their “normal” childhood and adolescence for the demands of caregiving, essentially altering this developmental stage of their lives. Often the demands of caregiving come about quickly so there is no time to gradually prepare or learn the skills necessary for this role.

Lacking time for themselves or time with their peers, they miss out on age-appropriate activities and struggle to fit in with their peers due to their maturity. They are especially vulnerable to social isolation, mental health challenges and lower educational attainment. Balancing school and caregiving can be a challenge characterized by chronic lateness, absenteeism, insufficient time for assignments, anxiety, and problems focusing. Experts suggest that there is at least one young caregiver in every classroom.

There are also positives from the experience with increased empathy, sensitivity and compassion. They can be stronger as adults and better able to care for themselves and often continue through life in this caregiving role.

In the age of technology, there is an increased possibility that the young caregiver can go unseen and unnoticed. It is possible for young children to be completing many tasks such as banking or ordering food online without the general public being aware of their role in the family.

Being recognized and assisted in the school setting will help minimize the short- and long-term impacts on a young caregiver. Nova Scotia is fortunate to have in place the *SchoolsPlus* Program <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/schoolsplus/> through the *Nova Scotia Action Plan for Education* which serves all children, youth, and families who need additional supports and services.

As well, *Camp Triumph* (<http://www.camptriumph.ca/>) is a unique summer camp, which fills a need for an often-unrecognized group of children. Camp Triumph is for children who have a sibling or parent with a serious chronic illness or disability.

Caregivers Nova Scotia seeks to support the young caregiver through their caregiving experience promoting better outcomes. Collaborating with our young caregivers and stakeholders, we hope to identify what supports and services would specifically benefit this population locally. Please encourage young caregivers to contact us to find out how we can be of service.





# Spring Home Maintenance Guide

By Catherine Parent, Caregiver Support Coordinator, Eastern HRM Region

Spring is here and Summer is fast approaching. It is a beautiful time of refresh, regrowth, and renewal. Weather temperatures are improving and we will be transitioning between our indoor and outdoor environments' more now that winter has ended.

The following home maintenance checklist may provide guidance while you prepare for the upcoming seasons. The checklist includes tasks that may be completed individually and tasks which may require a professional service provider to complete. Whether you reside in an apartment, condominium, or in a free-standing dwelling, this list is meant to provide you with the safest start to a bright and pleasant new season.

## The Spring Home Maintenance Checklist

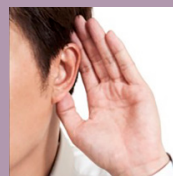
- **Thermostat Adjustment** – Warmer spring and summer temperatures mean cooler inside temperatures desired. Consider turning down your thermostats to help manage energy costs.
- **Smoke Alarms and Fire Extinguishers** – Check CO2 alarms and change the batteries in all smoke detectors. Have fire extinguishers serviced so that they are in maximum working order.
- **Doorways and Windows** – Are rail systems clean and clear of debris? Do they all open freely with ease?
- **Air Conditioner and Furnace Systems** – Are dryer vents clean and clear? Are these systems due to have servicing checks completed?
- **Attic Space** – Complete a check for any signs of leakage or signs of any uninvited creatures who have made their way inside.
- **Spring Cleaning** – It's a great opportunity to freshen and air out your environment. This can reduce allergens in the home.
- **Rain Gutter System** – Check and remove debris in your rain gutters. Be sure that fluids can channel through freely and drain away from the home.
- **Shingle Check** – Are repairs required to the shingles attached to your home?

- **Septic Tank/Sewer Systems** – It may be the time of the year to look at having your system inspected and emptied after the winter thaw.
- **Foundations and Basements** – Check for any cracks in the walls where meltwater can enter. Monitor and have the cracks sealed where necessary. While you are checking, monitor for any sign of mold that may be present and might need to be addressed.
- **Driveways and Walkways** – take a look at the levels and smoothness of these surfaces. Is refacing required to keep you safe in your outside space?
- **Deck and Patio** – Give your deck and patio a power wash and look for signs of possible repairs required. While checking, test out the railing systems on your decks and patios for stability and security.
- **Exterior Faucets** – Check for signs of leakage prior to restoring water to your outside faucets.
- **Exterior Lights** – Replace light bulbs where necessary. Remember to include the house, pathway, and any smaller garden lights.
- **Outdoor Furniture and BBQ** – Thoroughly inspect and clean your outside furniture and barbecue. Monitor for repairs that may need to be completed prior to use. This may be a great time to swap out the propane tank, if needed.
- **Lawn Mowers and Electrical Tools** – Visually inspect, do an oil change, check the spark plugs, and sharpen any blades that may need sharpening.

Adapted in part from this article: <http://www.theweathernetwork.com/ca/amp/news/article/your-spring-maintenance-checklist>



If you would like to receive a colour copy of our newsletter by email, please subscribe by going to our website at [www.CaregiversNS.org](http://www.CaregiversNS.org) and sign up at the bottom of any page.



## Got Feedback?

We're listening. Give opinions and provide feedback on services, newsletter, programs, ... everything CNS.

Please contact us.

1.877.488.7390 or [www.CaregiversNS.org](http://www.CaregiversNS.org)