

The Beacon

Summer and Fall 2024

Volume #18, Issue 2



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Thank you to the
Department of Seniors
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Hello Caregivers, Community Partners and Friends

May is Caregiver Awareness Month, and we are recognizing, celebrating, valuing, and elevating all that caregivers do – this month, and always. We receive many calls and emails each month from caregivers around the province sharing their stories of challenges, strength, hardships, resiliency and hope. We are honored to be stewards of these stories and to offer support. We thank caregivers for all that you do, all that you give and want you to know you are valued, and you are not alone.

We welcomed Kim Henry, Office Administrator to our team (learn more on page 7) and said goodbye to Lisa Knocton, Caregiver Support Coordinator in Eastern HRM. We wish Lisa well on her future endeavours.

We have a busy and exciting year ahead at Caregivers Nova Scotia. We are piloting a project for young caregivers this fall in partnership with the Young Caregiver Association funded by Petro Can Caremakers. We are hiring three new staff members to join our team to help with Communications, Education and Outreach with funding through the Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care. We are also

updating our Caregivers Handbook with a new printing happening later this year. And, finally at the end of 2024 we will begin a pilot project on Social Prescribing for Caregivers in partnership with the Canadian Institute on Social Prescribing and funded by the Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence powered by the Azrieli Foundation.

Jenny Theriault
Executive Director



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Budget Conscious Shopping Ideas

Therese Henman-Phillips, Caregiver Support Coordinator

People, and in particular caregivers, are feeling the pinch of inflation. Caregiving is often unpaid, and while it can be satisfying, caregivers often experience a greater financial burden, stress, and economic consequences. All of these can impact their health and that of their care recipient. While more financial support is always welcomed, I would like to share some information gathered locally on how some caregivers and individuals are addressing this challenge and to provide some tips for “frugal eating”. I would at the outset like to thank the Halifax Regional Library (Alderney site), along with the Dartmouth Community Health Team who hosted a session on this topic and shared the wonderful resources they garnered from the community. Both of these organizations are excellent resources. I would also like to thank the many colleagues and caregivers who provided tips in addition to the information included here. Hopefully, some of these ideas will resonate and be helpful in your planning and budgeting:

- First and foremost, avoid shopping when you are hungry as it can lead to unnecessary purchases!
- Become familiar with today’s food prices so you are not overpaying for items.
- Buy in bulk for non-perishable items and freeze perishables when they are on sale.
- Utilize coupons. Search online for coupons for regularly purchased brands. Peruse the coupon boards as you enter stores usually located near the grocery carts. Many shelves also have coupons in store.
- Some areas have community markets and offer amazing deals on produce. Check out what is available in your community or from local farmers. Imperfect produce can also be cheaper to buy as they are not uniform but the quality and flavor remain.
- There is a meat market that is popular and local to HRM and reportedly worth the trip for some from outside the city. Coordinate or carpool with neighbors and friends for such events. Traveling too far can be expensive given the cost, but if someone is heading that way, they may be willing to assist and share costs or pick items up on your behalf.
- Don’t forget to check out your local community grocers as well as they offer deals that can compare to big box stores.
- A few retailers offer price matching for the exact product. Sign up for free flyers or download a free app such as [Flipp](#) which shows the current flyers and sometimes previews the upcoming ones. On the app, you can create a recurring weekly grocery cart for items you get consistently. Each week the app populates the list and tells you where items are on sale.
- Keep a close eye on items as they are being scanned at stores to ensure you are getting the price advertised. Be aware of [The Scanner Price Accuracy Code](#). If there is a scanning error you may get the item for free (up to \$10).
- The [Flashfood](#) app lets you search for massively discounted foods that grocery stores are trying to offload as well as [Too Good To Go](#) which allows you to rescue unsold food at your favorite spots.
- Be sure to always load your loyalty points when you go shopping. Some programs can be combined with credit card points for example to increase point power. Always remember however to pay those cards off!
- Libraries and community hubs offer food calendars that direct community members to food banks, free meals, and free programming that offers food. Along with the opportunity for food, it also provides for social interaction.
- Most stores offer rain checks for sale items—just ask at the customer service desk. Some stores offer other perks if an item isn’t available such as points.
- Some food banks will deliver for a small fee if community members show a doctor’s note indicating the need when mobility or transportation are issues.
- Some drug stores have amazing weekend deals—especially on staples such as eggs and milk. Note the days so you don’t miss out.
- Dollar discount stores offer grocery items such as bread, canned goods, and vitamins.
- At some warehouses or wholesale clubs, you don’t need a membership to access some services such as pharmacy. They can be significantly cheaper than elsewhere if you are nearby or able to plan for that savings. There are also not-for-profit pharmacy programs with referrals.
- Check out any discounts offered that you can take advantage of given your memberships and associations.
- Make a grocery list and stick to it. Know the layout of the grocery store so you can target the needed areas and look at expiry dates when buying to ensure shelf life. Comparing price as well as volume, brand name versus no name, and buying in bulk sections for things such as spices can be cost-saving. Less expensive items can be found higher and lower on the shelf so look further than what is in front of you.
- Meal planning can be a lifesaver. Buying in season can be cost-effective as well as meal planning around what is on sale.
- Do all your meal prep for the week on one day, and then either freeze or store it in the fridge, ready to go. For variety, you can then alternate meals. Consider community cooking to share meals with your neighbors and allow you variety.
- Save by limiting going out for coffee, and instead making it at home. If you are going out, bring a large, insulated thermos of pre-made coffee instead. Consider water which is better for hydration and health.
- Try not to use apps for delivery and just call places directly to order take-out food. Consumers and local businesses save money because there are no service charges. Sign up for the free appetizers most restaurants offer if you plan to visit.
- Store food properly so they do not become waste. Vegetables that are about to turn bad can be used for soup broth. Think about how you can use food leftovers for stock or another meal version etc. If you don’t think you are going to use something in time before it spoils, freeze it! Check

expiry dates at home regularly.

- Leftovers make a great mobile meal to deliver to a care recipient particularly if you are not fond of eating it several days in a row and it may get thrown out.
- Buying frozen or canned versus fresh fruits and vegetables allows you to have them on hand and use them when needed without worrying about spoiling.
- Whenever you peel root vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, or parsnips, consider food waste and bake the skins you have peeled away for starch, a tasty snack, or chip.

- There is a high price for convenience foods. For example, pre-made salads or pre-shredded cheese. Consider making your own to reduce costs.
- Some restaurants have a bulletin board where you can take a free meal and return the gesture at a time when you are able. A hand-up when needed!
- Add red lentils or beans to soups and sauces. It is a great inexpensive way to add protein and help keep you full longer.
- Many communities offer free programs that encourage frugal healthy eating, planning, budgeting, and sharing. Engage in a workshop that might support further ideas to assist.
- Seeds can be inexpensive. Start a few pots at home to supplement your budget. Community gardens are a great resource and plots can be very economical.

I was amazed at all the great tips, in no particular order, that were shared by the community and caregivers. In these economic times, we need all the help we can get. If you have something to offer that wasn't included here, please reach out and share at support@caregiversns.org!



The Importance of Connection - Social Isolation in Nova Scotia

Lyn Stuart

Recent guidelines from the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) shed light on the critical issue of social isolation. A concern that is particularly pressing in Nova Scotia. This newsletter aims to provide you with essential insights and local statistics to help you support yourself and your people effectively.

- **Social isolation** can be understood as a **measurable lack** in the number of relationships a person has.
- **Loneliness** is **more subjective** and can be understood as the feeling we get when our social relationships are lacking in terms of quality or quantity compared with what we expect them to be.

In Nova Scotia, approximately 20% of the population is aged 65 and over, a figure that is expected to grow in the coming years. With this demographic shift, instances of social isolation are on the rise, exacerbated by rural living conditions and the ongoing impact of the pandemic. Nearly 30% of Nova Scotian seniors experience some form of social isolation, creating increased health risks and mental health challenges. The increased risk of death is similar to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Social needs are different for everyone, and the feelings of isolation present differently as well. The first step to addressing social isolation is understanding your own social needs and feelings. Some things that can contribute to isolation are retirement, the death of family or friends, changes in living arrangements, poverty, lack of transportation, gender and sexual identity, sexual orientation, and ethnicity.



Caregivers have been noted by the CMHA as being at higher risk of social isolation.

Some key highlights of the new policy and some practical tips -

1. **Community Engagement:** The CMHA emphasizes keeping engaged with your community. In Nova Scotia, where community ties are strong, leveraging local networks and resources can significantly reduce feelings of isolation. Is there a senior center or library in your local area? A volunteer opportunity or a support group?
2. **Technology Access:** Ensuring that seniors in Nova Scotia have access to technology is crucial for maintaining connections. Initiatives to enhance digital literacy are gaining popularity and can be found at local libraries. Ask your librarian about lending devices like iPads and free access to technology!
3. **Physical Well-being:** Regular physical activity is encouraged. Our beautiful province hosts many beautiful scenic trails to walk on. Many community centers lead exercise programs and Walk Nova Scotia hosts free events throughout the year.
4. **Mental Health Support:** Accessible mental health support is vital. There are many free virtual programs online through NS Health on things like mindfulness and self-care. Some clinics offer free sessions with therapy students at different times throughout the year as well, or you can self-refer through our public health system. Support groups can offer a place of connection, can address feelings of isolation, and can assist you with building a support network.
5. **Monitoring Your Well-being** can be key to keeping yourself well. Remember, make an appointment to check in with yourself - caregivers need care, too!
6. **Animal-assisted therapies** have been shown to be effective against social isolation. Animal ownership, or volunteering to care for a dog with organizations like the Elder Dog Network or your local SPCA can provide some therapeutic connection.

In conclusion, as Nova Scotian caregivers we are at higher risk of isolation. By staying informed, leveraging local resources, and fostering strong community connections we can ensure that the people we are caring for and ourselves lead more fulfilled and connected lives.

Community Partner Spotlight - 211 Nova Scotia

Leanne Taylor

In this edition of the newsletter, we are highlighting one of Caregivers Nova Scotia's community partners. 211 Nova Scotia is a free, confidential information and referral service that can connect you to thousands of programs and services offered by local community groups, non-profits, and government departments across Nova Scotia, and it has supports that are available 24/7.

211 NS can help with information regarding housing, food, transportation, supports for older adults, supports to help with violence/abuse, children/youth/families, new comers, 2SLGBTQ-TA+, mental health & addictions, pets, and so much more.

211 Nova Scotia can be contacted by calling 211 or 1-855-466-4994, or email help@ns.211.ca. Reach out to a VRS (srvcana-davrs.ca) to connect to 211 Nova Scotia for service for deaf/hard of hearing community. Live chat and text are available, there are scheduled times for this service on their website.

Visit the website for ns.211.ca for more information. 211 can connect you to a translation service that is available in 240+ languages.

At Caregivers NS we have reached out to 211 to find many resources and supports for caregivers. We are always greeted by a friendly, knowledgeable staff member who helps us to find the right resource, if available, to meet any situation.

Caregiving from a Distance

Sheila Landry

Caregiving for a loved one can be overwhelming, beautiful, isolating, rewarding, and everything in between. When you are caring for someone remotely, it can add an extra layer of guilt and a feeling of being disconnected. Putting a few safeguards in place for the care recipient and yourself can be beneficial for both of you during this journey. With a little organization and some support, you can be a productive and supportive caregiver from afar. Caregiving does not always mean hands-on care. It can take on many different roles, such as scheduling homecare and support to come in the home. Dealing with finances and legal matters is another large role that can often get overlooked. When you find yourself faced with a situation where you are caring for someone from a distance there are several things you can do to stay connected and play an important role in the life of a care recipient.

- Contact your local Caregiver Support Coordinator with Caregivers Nova Scotia if you live in the province. If you are outside Nova Scotia, call the coordinator closest to your loved one. They can help you navigate and connect to resources within the community.
- Sit down with the care recipient either in person or virtually and identify the areas of concern and where help is needed. Person-centered care and planning is always the best approach. Allowing your care recipient to have a say in the care ahead will have everyone on the same page and allow any questions or concerns to be addressed.
- Create a list of important phone numbers to have on hand. Start a book with all important information from appointments and meetings with dates and times.

- Identify the Risks: Ensure the home is a safe environment and aids are in place to assist and allow your loved one to be as independent as possible. A home fall alert system is a great way to have a little piece of mind if falls are a concern. Is the person safe to stay at home or is it time to move to get the advanced care needed?
- Stay Connected by planning regular calls, facetime, and playing games online such as Wordle or Connections on the New York Times website. This can provide a connection other than just being in that caregiving role.
- Be an active part of the care team. Attend appointments virtually or by phone. Stay connected to in person caregivers by regularly checking in and supporting them by becoming a listening ear.
- Practice saying yes, when someone offers to help. People instinctively like to feel helpful. Have a list of things that need to be done and when someone asks "Is there anything I can do to help?" You will be prepared.
- Help support the caregivers or providers who are there in person by having meals delivered by a local meal provider such as VON Meals on Wheels or gift cards to local restaurants that can deliver.

Caregiving from afar can be taxing; trying to juggle work, and family schedules in amongst caring for someone who is miles away. Remember to ask for help when needed. No one is meant to walk hard journeys alone. Always remember to give yourself grace and take time to take care of yourself. You can not give of yourself if you have nothing left in the tank to give.

Find Your Bliss: Turning Glimmers into Glows

JoAnne Connors,
Caregiver Support Coordinator, Capital Region

In our Caregiver Support Groups, we've been discussing a concept called "Glimmers" and how to magnify them into what we call "Glows." Coined by psychotherapist Deb Dana, Glimmers are those tiny sparks of happiness that can illuminate even the darkest days. They're incredibly valuable because maintaining a regular sense of well-being can contribute significantly to our overall health and tranquility. Therefore, it's essential to pause and acknowledge these small, positive moments in our lives. By embracing our Glimmers and staying fully present with them, we can transform them into Glows that we can revisit in our minds whenever we need a boost of comfort and joy.

What brings joy or inspiration varies greatly from person to person because we all have unique experiences, preferences, and values that shape our perspectives.

For some, the awe-inspiring beauty of nature or witnessing acts of kindness may be sources of wonder, while for others, different experiences may serve as uplifting moments.

Glimmers are highly personal and often tied to specific stories or memories. By intentionally focusing on a Glimmer and enriching it with its associated narrative, we cultivate a Glow—a cherished reservoir of positivity and comfort. It's worth noting that Glimmers stand in contrast to triggers. Triggers are cues that evoke feelings of danger or discomfort, potentially leading to negative emotions or heightened vigilance. In contrast, Glimmers serve as cues of safety and relaxation, allowing our minds to unwind and feel secure.

When someone experiences a trigger, it signifies that their body is reacting to a perceived threat, leading to sensations such as fear, nervousness, anger, or sadness. These physical responses, like trembling or sweating, can be particularly challenging for individuals who have endured trauma, as triggers may vividly recall past painful experiences.

Glimmers represent potent moments of heightened mental and emotional awareness. They offer sudden bursts of inspiration, clarity, motivation, or even life-altering realizations. These transformative experiences can deeply influence our lives, igniting creativity, enhancing productivity, fostering stronger relationships, and nurturing greater self-understanding. By embracing and celebrating our Glimmers, we cultivate a reservoir of positivity that can illuminate our journey through life's challenges and joys alike.



Trouve ton bonheur : Transformer les lueurs en gloire

JoAnne Connors,
Coordinatrice de soutiens aux aidants,
Région capitale

Dans nos groupes de soutien aux aidants, nous avons discuté d'un concept appelé "Glimmers" et de la façon de les amplifier pour en faire ce que nous appelons des "Glows". Créées par la psychothérapeute Deb Dana, les lueurs sont ces minuscules étincelles de bonheur qui peuvent illuminer même les jours les plus sombres. Elles sont incroyablement précieuses car le maintien d'un sentiment régulier de bien-être peut contribuer de manière significative à notre santé et à notre tranquillité générales. Il est donc essentiel de faire une pause et de reconnaître ces petits moments positifs de notre vie. En embrassant nos "Glimmers" et en restant pleinement présent avec eux, nous pouvons les transformer en "Glows" que nous pouvons revisiter dans notre esprit chaque fois que nous avons besoin d'un regain de réconfort et de joie.

Ce qui apporte de la joie ou de l'inspiration varie grandement d'une personne à l'autre, car nous avons tous des expériences, des préférences et des valeurs uniques qui façonnent nos perspectives. Pour certains, la beauté impressionnante de la nature ou le fait d'être témoin d'actes de gentillesse peuvent être des sources d'émerveillement, tandis que pour d'autres, des expériences différentes peuvent servir de moments édifiants.

Les lueurs sont très personnelles et souvent liées à des histoires ou des souvenirs spécifiques. En se concentrant intentionnellement sur une lueur et en l'enrichissant du récit qui lui est associé, on cultive une lueur, un réservoir précieux de positivité et de réconfort. Il est important de noter que les lueurs s'opposent aux déclencheurs. Les déclencheurs sont des indices qui évoquent des sentiments de danger ou d'inconfort, ce qui peut entraîner des émotions négatives ou une vigilance accrue. À l'inverse, les lueurs servent d'indices de sécurité et de relaxation, permettant à notre esprit de se détendre et de se sentir en sécurité.

Lorsqu'une personne fait l'expérience d'un déclencheur, cela signifie que son corps réagit à une menace perçue, entraînant des sensations telles que la peur, la nervosité, la colère ou la tristesse. Ces réactions physiques, comme les tremblements ou la transpiration, peuvent être particulièrement difficiles pour les personnes qui ont subi un traumatisme, car les déclencheurs peuvent rappeler de façon frappante des expériences douloureuses passées.

Les lueurs représentent des moments puissants de conscience mentale et émotionnelle accrue. Elles offrent des bouffées soudaines d'inspiration, de clarté, de motivation ou même des prises de conscience qui changent la vie. Ces expériences transformatrices peuvent profondément influencer notre vie, en stimulant la créativité, en améliorant la productivité, en favorisant des relations plus solides et en nourrissant une meilleure compréhension de soi. En embrassant et en célébrant nos étincelles, nous cultivons un réservoir de positivité qui peut illuminer notre voyage à travers les défis et les joies de la vie.

Welcome Kim Henry to the Caregivers NS Team!



Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Kim and I joined Caregivers NS in February of this year, and I am thrilled to be a part of the Caregivers NS team! My educational background is in Gerontology which I studied at St Thomas University in Fredericton NB and my work experience has included program recreation for seniors in long term care settings to most recently 18 years with Victorian

Order of Nurses (VON). During my time with VON Halifax, I worked in Community Support Services, coordinating and facilitating programming that included Meals on Wheels, Medical Transportation for Seniors as well as Adult Day programs. My time at VON provided me daily opportunities to help seniors age in place as well as support them with their activities of daily living. It also enabled me to support family members and friends that took on the role of caregiver.

My work in the non-profit sector and specifically my desire to advocate for the senior population has been immensely

rewarding but in the last decade, I've had the opportunity to provide support on a very personal level. As a result, I have witnessed first-hand the challenges the senior population as well as their caregivers, face every day. My family and I supported my parents in a number of ways which allowed them to remain in their century old farmhouse in rural New Brunswick until the time of their death. This was, as is for many, a hugely important desire of theirs to remain in the home which was passed down through the generations and in which they raised a family of eight children. When sickness and end of life prevailed, it was a privilege to care for them and to provide support to my siblings who lived closer, in their caregiving. This whole process however is not without worry, stress, and fatigue. Caregiving through this personal lens was eye opening.

There is much work to be done to ensure that caregivers are recognized, fully supported, and advocated for in government and other pertinent forums. I hope during my time at Caregivers NS my contributions will have a meaningful impact on those I work with and for those on a caregiving journey.

Hummingbird Bread

Ingredients:

3 ripe bananas, mashed
1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup brown sugar
1 large egg
1/4 cup canola or vegetable oil
1 and 1/2 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup sweetened shredded coconut
1/2 cup pineapple, diced and patted dry
1/2 cup chopped pecans
Cream Cheese Frosting:
4 ounces cream cheese, softened
1/4 cup butter, softened
1/2 cup powdered sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/3 cup chopped pecans

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).
Coat a loaf pan with nonstick cooking spray.
In a large bowl, mix bananas, sugars, egg, and oil until well combined.
Add flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt; mix.
Fold in coconut, pineapple, and pecans.
Pour into loaf pan. Bake for 55-60 minutes. Cool on wire rack.
For frosting, beat cream cheese and butter.
Add powdered sugar, vanilla, and cinnamon.
Spread on cooled bread; sprinkle with pecans.



I Know It Is The Right Decision, So Why Does It Feel So Wrong?

Jennine Wilson

I've heard it said, "I know it is the right decision so why does it feel so wrong?"

This statement can hold true for many difficult decisions during our life span. Like the first time you told a friend that you could no longer be friends or a significant other that it was not working out and you were ending the relationship, quitting a job, or creating a strong boundary with family.

Caregivers encounter frequent difficult decisions all along the journey and the difficulty becomes two-fold when the person you used to make difficult decisions with can no longer participate. How does one wrestle with this paradox of knowing it is right, but it feels so wrong?

A Sahara Jane lyric based on the wisdom of her father was helpful to me when I thought about this paradox: "This reality is ruthless, sad and lonely, but the truth is it will change while the truth stays the same"

I believe holding what is true versus the changing reality can help meet the roller coaster of emotions one deals with when making and having made a difficult decision.

Truths like showing up with love is always enough, knowing and respecting another's wishes in an act of love and that every individual's health is important, are valuable things to remember. It is also important to remember that wanting the best for each other goes both ways, life contains grief and sorrow, which joy can continue to expand around, and that the essence of a person comes through in the precious moments. That we experience pain is because there is love, and know that your knowing is right.

Focusing on the truth may not ease the pain of difficult decisions but I hope it can help contend with any feelings of guilt.

I cared for a friend whom I knew I needed to back away from. I had met my limit and needed to acknowledge and respect it. In the depths of knowing it was the right decision and the tears of feeling it was wrong this poem emerged.

*As the sun descends
I wonder
Feelers of the world and beyond
Wave riders
Seated warriors
When and how
Do the reins in your hands
Hone so keenly
That tension and release
Balance
Perceived within and beyond
Horse and rider are one
Below hooves ground softly and solidly
Above head and heart extend openly
In tune harmony holds
Observers see
Grace, calm, and healing light
I call to that place of strength
As the moon restfully rises
Bring resolution tonight*

I hope those who resonate with the statement I heard can find a way to sit with the paradox and follow through with what they know is right. Identifying your truths and holding them dear can help you with the unease of the paradox.

CNS AGM

Caregivers Nova Scotia Annual General Meeting will be held on June 24th at 4:00 pm at the Future Inn, Halifax, NS.
Register at 1.877.488.7390 or email info@caregiversNS.org

To celebrate **National Caregiver Month** we are hosting a public consultation webinar with the Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence, where you can provide input into the creation of a National Caregiving Strategy. The webinar will be held on Tuesday May 7th at 3:30 pm.

Learn more and register today by calling 1.877.488.7390 or email info@caregiversNS.org



Creating a brighter future of care

 Webinar

May 7, 2024
3:30 to 5 p.m. ADT

 National Caregiving Strategy

 Caregivers Nova Scotia
for friends and family giving care

 Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence

Caregivers Nova Scotia acknowledges that we live and work in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded lands of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is governed by the Treaties of Peace and Friendship. We are continually learning more about how to engage and move forward with the work of truth, reconciliation, and equity. We recognize that without action, an acknowledgment is empty. It marks the beginning of the work ahead of us, not the end. We are all treaty people.