



ANNUAL REPORT
2022-2023

*128 Years of
Helping People
Be the Best They
Can Be*





Sunset Community's Public Courts
opening early summer 2023!



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Jennifer Houghtaling
Chair, The Sunset Community

Board Chair Message

At one of our board meetings we discussed leadership and how you can be above or below the line. Being above the line means you are open, curious and committed to learning, being below the line means you are closed, defensive and committed to being right. This philosophy seems to be the underlying thread that pulls the Sunset Community along on our way through the many challenges and decisions we as an organization have to face.

I am continuously amazed by the dedication and passion of the staff. As I read through the board reports from the departments I can feel the pride in the work done by everyone at Sunset. This is a unique and admirable group of individuals and the close knit community that exists here will take on any challenge with great optimism and effort. We came through 2022 making progress on many goals and priorities, some I am most proud of are beginning to understand and take action on equality, bringing a whole new level of awareness through communication of the wonderful initiatives and people within the community, and the forward thinking planning of the CEO, the directors and the board members.

We have made huge steps in bringing the community to Sunset as well, with the new tennis and pickleball courts almost ready for use, and our fantastic Sunset Fair that gets better every year. We will prioritize making the Sunset Community an inviting destination throughout the coming years as we move through transformation. The remedy for us is to become a destination where great things are happening and people want to be. It may take on a new shape, but the underlying thread of support and community will continue.

Thank you so much to the staff for your efforts everyday, and the board of directors for being so engaged and willing to give your time to this wonderful place.

The Sunset Community's Board of Directors 2022-2023

Board Chair/Council Rep
Jennifer Houghtaling

Vice Chair/Council Rep
Kathy Redmond

Member/Council Rep
Rod Gilroy

Member
Jane MacPherson

Member
Holly MacDonald

Welcoming New Members:

Gordon Johnson

Elizabeth Clarke

Incoming Members May 2023:

Robert Barnes

Alan Webb





Julie Hoeg
CEO, The Sunset Community

CEO Message

2022-2023 has been a year of many accomplishments of individuals served, employees, and the organization as a whole. Looking back over the year, there are countless success stories as shared throughout this report. I will focus now on some of the big wins that showcase our unwavering commitment to support progress in all areas in being leaders in true inclusivity and building community connections:

- **To provide housing for our Independent Living Support (ILS) program** during a provincial housing shortage, we partnered with Crossroads Cycle to develop a one bedroom micro-home. This development was made possible by a generous donation from the Pugwash & Area Professional Development Association with a donation of \$50,000. As the year ends we are in the design stages of a 2nd two-bed micro home that will provide more housing options to our ILS program.
 - Our vocational program completed the first phase in its journey to recognize the contributions of **nine participants who are now employees**, and will now be making minimum wage.
 - **The development of our Transition Cove**, within the ARC, has provided independent individuals an environment that supports them to experience independent daily living within the structure of the ARC.
 - **Both social enterprise sites have increased program participation.** The Oxford location underwent renovations to provide additional space and opened a new “lifestyles” program. Both will continue to adapt to participants’ interests as we support the future “My Days” program that will be available to all moving to the community through the transformation process.
 - **Our Independent Living Support Program continues to expand**, and we are committed to providing the resources and support to the program to ensure we can meet the increase and demands of all moving into homes in the community.
 - **Our focus on developing partnerships with landlords, builders and funding for affordable housing initiatives will ensure adequate and affordable housing supply.** \$60,000 in seed funding from CMHC supported the design of our future housing development “Sunrise Landing” which if successful will provide up to sixteen homes in phase one in the community of Pugwash, offering housing to participants wishing to stay in this area as they move from the ARC, employees, and other community members.
 - Our Support Services Department and Holistic Services Department worked collaboratively to develop a **Cooking Program as well as our Seashell Cove kitchenette is now a full service, safe kitchen area for all living on the Cove** to be able to participate in preparing their own meals. This was a huge win for all involved.
 - Our Board of Directors welcomed **four new members** this year, bringing forth a great deal of experience and expertise to guide us strategically through the future. Their areas of skill include philanthropy, finance, justice, and business, which will help guide our leadership team as we adapt and prepare for the future.
 - The release of the **“Remedy Report”** indicates DSP’s transformation of our ARC will be happening at an accelerated pace and with a shift from small option modular homes to individualized funding and flexibility in options. The Sunset Community is well positioned to support all individuals moving from the ARC with informed choices to be in the communities they chose and to live with and be supported by the people they prefer. We are innovative and we will adapt services to provide the future options individuals want and will thrive in.
 - **Sunset Community’s Public Courts** opening early summer 2023!
- None of our past or future success would be possible without the genuine care and dedication of all employees across the organization. We are all learning and growing together as we evolve and respond to the demands to do more, to do better, and to ensure the individuals we serve are offered every opportunity to live their best life.
- Thank you to each and every one of you who belong to our amazingly committed and loving Sunset Community.**
- Julie Hoeg



Gina Rushton LPN
Director, Health & Holistic Services

Health & Holistic Services

Here we are another year has come and gone, just like that we have moved from Covid dominating our planning to the release of the “Remedy” now being forefront to our plans and daily initiatives.

This year’s report focus on all we do to support our staff to support residents be the best that they can be by showcasing our collective successes. We do this together as a community without boundaries made up of our all our departments that so faithfully support the ARC, Community Living Options and social enterprise. Hats off to us all as we practice more outside of the box thinking than ever before. There is nothing we cannot achieve with our “how can we make this work attitude”. None of which would be possible without the courage, resilience, dedication, innovation, commitment and from the heart support of all members of Sunset Community. I genuinely admire our health and holistic services team and would like to extend my sincere gratitude to each of you for your knowledge, skill and expertise. I deeply respect your dedication to providing compassionate quality care. I salute your accomplishments and the impact they make in the lives of the residents, families and community every day 365 days a year 24/7, that keeps everyone’s dream moving forward.

“The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it and join the dance”

— Alan W. Watts

Key accomplishments have included:

Restructuring in the ARC in October and the creation of the transition cove. This also had the benefit of creating flex positions which has in turn created many opportunities for residents to flourish socially as well as to have trips home with family, parks, the zoo, concerts, multiple outings on the weekends.

We recently reviewed the **orientation process** to ensure a better experience for new hires and are making changes to ensure improved learning outcomes that will happen in modules as well as strive to retain employee’s long term. This will be enhanced through adoption of Surge Learning Management System to be implemented over the summer.

Established a relationship with AWARE NS to provide training for staff in safe handling/ mobility/ Code white and silver, this ensures standardized training, which is provided across the sector.

We recognize and appreciate the strong relationship developed with our **CUPE leadership** achieved through respectful transparent dialogue that has led to stronger focus in supporting staff to be the best that they can be while supporting residents to achieve their goals.

We are in the planning phases of supporting staff and residents to have a **better understanding of individual human rights** and embed this into our day to day engagements, what key rights are, where we are at currently and how do we ensure we are meeting identified rights as we become more diverse.

In closing, I am personally forever grateful to have had the opportunity over the many years to have been a part of the ever-evolving Sunset Community and experience my own personal growth along the way!

I look forward to continuing in this journey, we have come a long way and cannot wait to see what the next 100 years will bring!

— Gina Rushton

Independent Living Support Program

In 2020 we supported the transition of three individuals from the Adult Residential Centre to our Independent Living Support Program, under the newly offered enhanced support hours. **The ILS participants have flourished in community.**

In total the program from now until then has **grown from eleven to sixteen participants**; obviously growth in this program will be significant moving forward. To that end, we are ever reviewing current process/practices and developing new infrastructure to best secure our future as a provider of choice.

Over the last several months, we have been working tirelessly toward building strong relationships with local property management firms and property owners to ensure smooth and timely transition for people wanting to transition into community living, nothing short of miraculous given 1% vacancy rate, then factor in accessibility further limiting options. The most significant relationship we are currently building is with a property development company, James and Walter Developments that is breathing new life into properties in the Amherst area. These units are a mix of affordable housing and standard rentals. We have been able to establish a relationship that includes the possibility of adding accessible features to these units based on needs of participants. A current participant will be moving into one of these units midsummer, with another participant likely to move into a unit shortly thereafter. Additionally with DSP blessing we are moving forward with planning for four residents from ARC to move into James and Walter Developments that have identified Amherst as their chosen area to live, they have also chosen the person they would like to live with.



Driftwood Cottage

Our group home, Driftwood Cottage remains consistent with eight long-term residents, very little resident movement here for many years. **In fact, those when given the choice to move out to other options chose not to move.** The future of Driftwood as an eight person home is unknown at this time as we move to four person maximum homes.

Residents living here are looking forward to the warmer days of summer to jump into goals they have identified through PCR process such as beach trips, trips to downtown for socializing, community events, and recreation, trips to Amherst for community events such as music and sports, as well as for shopping. Plans are underway to offer a trip to Prince Edward Island in the late summer months. Other plans to offer trips to places such as the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park, Dutchmen's Cheese Farm, and New Glasgow Jubilee amongst others are in the works, as well as proactive planning for ongoing opportunities in the winter months, such as enjoying hockey games in Amherst, Springhill or even Truro.

Adult Residential Centre

Over the past year, we continue to include various focused approaches to promote community inclusion, growth, and independence for the residents we support, sharing just a few highlights:

- **A resident who resides on Seashell cove planned a one-month visit from start to finish visiting his parents in Ontario whom he had not seen for 20 years, he was supported as needed including self-administering meds prior to departure.** He booked the bus, train tickets (changed train x three), accommodations. He is a keen artist who often has art sales in the lobby and is working with open-air art gallery in Pugwash to display some of his paintings. Another milestone is that of significant weight loss since coming to live at Sunset, he has been working on strengthening exercise as well; this has been a huge confidence boost. He is well supported, as are all residents in their weight loss efforts as well as health eating habits by our dietitian Angela Ward.
- **Two residents along with two staff went on an overnight trip to Cape Breton,** stayed at a hotel and explored different castle grounds, beaches and Fortress Louisburg. Funds from Pay It Forward made this trip possible by paying for staff accommodations, meals and other associated costs. Pay It Forward fund was made possible by a generous donation from a former resident's sister (her brother had passed away more than a year ago), sister Vita donated money to Sunset. Together we agreed upon developing a Pay It Forward fund to enhance the lives of others who live here to enjoy opportunities they may not otherwise have due to funding limitations. I shared examples of what her brother's money has been used for to date, each time money is used from this account it is acknowledged who it is from. Vita was very moved by choices of disbursements made in her brother's memories.
- "With support and education surrounding the recent release of the Remedy Report, one resident who felt she would never leave her Sunset Home, often referring to it as her "very favorite family home" **is now looking forward to moving to Amherst, with continued support from her Sunset staff.**
- **Residents have led the re-creation of Resident Council,** which will provide a unified voice to ensure choice and decision.
- **All residents are being supported to the degree they are able, now in areas never before explored;** activities include opening personal bank accounts and developing money management skills, which will be needed as they move to community settings. Residents are being supported to open adoption records; obtain government IDs, connection to external tax filing support, estate planning, appointing delegates and funeral planning. All of these additional activities have been supported utilizing our existing staffing resources. We recognize and appreciate Leah in her substantial efforts in leading these areas with the team, and looking to our future will benefit from additional Community Integration Facilitator roles to help each individual moving out of the ARC be best-equipped for their successful future.





Human Resources

Recruitment and Onboarding

Over the Fiscal Year, the Sunset Community hosted 119 interviews and subsequently **welcomed 49 new employees to the team.** Of the 49 new employees, 26 hires are Residential Counsellors, 19 hires were for Support Services, and four (4) management/non-union hires.

This Fiscal Year also brought a few changes to our Management team. Amanda Purdy was promoted to the Manager, Holistic Services in April of 2022 (replacing Mary-Lynn Hurley), and Roxanne Laird was promoted to the Assistant Manager, Support Services. Roxanne replaces Michelle Lavender, who received a promotion to the Manager, Support Services position.

We continue to receive support from Nova Scotia Disability Support Program's Recruitment and Immigration consultants. They are continuing with their relocation incentives and funding for events that aid in retention and non-standard training. We anticipate having to rely more on these consultants as we pursue the recruitment of foreign nationals to meet our growing labour needs.

Retention

We explored various ways over the course of the year to improve retention, such as draws for gas cards, adjusting schedules to improve work-life balance, and just after the Fiscal Year ended, we completed an Employee Engagement Survey. A Survey Committee, of half-Union, half-Management personnel to create an action plan for implementation to improve the overall employee experience.

Employee Training & Education

Food Handler Training: 2 classes preformed, 10 staff completing training.

Fire and Life: 16 classes preformed resulting in 101 staff completing training from April 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022.

Medication Training: 5 classes preformed resulting in 21 staff completing training from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023.

Sessions planned in May 2022 were cancelled due to outbreak. Training postponed in August and Sept due to staffing levels. Sherri completed several 1-on-1 training sessions throughout January 2023. Classes from January - March 2023 were cancelled due to outbreak and/or staffing levels.

First Aid Training: 10 sessions completed with 70 staff trained from May 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023.

MANDT Training: 4 sessions successfully completed with 35 staff trained between May 2022 and March 31, 2023.

Additional educational investments:

Supportive Decision Making Training: 5 sessions completed, 38 staff & 13 participants trained.

Labour Relations Conference: 4 employees attended

Saint Mary's University Certificate Program – Skills for New Managers: 3 new managers completed course

NSCC Disability Support 2 yr Program: 2 employees enrolled, year one of program

Registered Nursing Degree: annual contribution to tuition

Psychological Safety/Trauma Informed Grief Awareness Education w/ Serena Lewis: full day session provided

Know Your Roles – Governance Education: Board & CEO

Goodlife Health & Wellness Leadership Program

ADP: Completing Year End training

Communication Skills Course

Construction Safety Course

Congratulations to our **2022-2023 Above & Beyond Award Recipients:**

Tasha Darragh

Sandy Dickson

Patricia Beaton

Annie Clarke

Kevin Emmerson

Melissa Totten

Elaine Baptiste

Tevin O'Brien

Bibi Ali

Katelyn Carter

Aaron Hicks

Haylee Grant

Ali Fraser

Retirements

This year many long-term employees retired after many years of dedicated service to the Sunset Community Inc. In recognition of your service to the organization, we would like to express our gratitude to:

Marlene Tuttle
37 yrs of service

Barry Smith
35 yrs of service

Carolyn Langille
34 yrs of service

Wanda Spence
33 yrs of service

Cathy Vincent
33 yrs of service

Annie Clark
33 yrs of service

Cheryl Nicholson
32 yrs of service

Joy Porteous
27 yrs of service

Mary Lynn Hurley
14 yrs of service

Elaine Baptiste
7 yrs of service



Dean Pounder
Director, Community Development

Community Development & Inclusion

As we embark on another year, it is with great pride and excitement that we present our annual report for the year 2022/2023. This report is a testament to the incredible work undertaken by our department and the entire organization, showcasing the extraordinary efforts put forth to support those we serve in gaining valuable new experiences and reaching their full potential.

Throughout the year, our department has been at consistently working to empower individuals in areas of interest whether that be turning an idea into a business, getting peoples creations in front of the general public or supporting the digital growth of individual's small businesses.

In the realm of education, our organization has been a driving force in delivering numerous learning opportunities. Recognizing the transformative power of knowledge, we have facilitated a diverse range of programs and courses, enabling individuals to enhance their skills, broaden their horizons, and pursue their passions. From technical skills to creative pursuits, our commitment to accessible education has opened doors to many individuals, fostering personal growth and advancement.

Our efforts have not been limited to individual success stories alone. We have expanded our reach and impact within our community of Pugwash and beyond. By actively engaging with local organizations, stakeholders, and community members, we have strengthened our bonds and fostered a sense of unity and shared purpose.

As we reflect on the achievements of the past year, we are filled with gratitude for the unwavering dedication, passion, and resilience demonstrated by our team and the wider organization. Together, we continue to build a supportive environment that thrives on the belief in individual potential and the power of community. We have witnessed dreams taking flight, knowledge being embraced, and a community growing stronger.

As we move forward into the future, we remain committed to our mission of people helping people be the best they can be, and making a lasting impact on our community. We will continue to adapt, innovate, and explore new avenues to support and uplift those we serve. We believe that by working together, we can create a future where possibilities are limitless and dreams become realities.

On behalf of the entire department and organization, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated team, the individuals we serve, and the community that inspires us. It is through your unwavering support, collaboration, and belief in our shared vision that we continue to strive for excellence. Thank you for being part of our incredible journey.

— Dean Pounder

*Embracing
Growth,
Empowering
Success!*



Lifestyles

Over the past year, our dedicated Lifestyles team has been committed to providing exceptional recreational opportunities based on the interests of the individuals we serve. **In the year 2022/2023 alone, we have successfully organized 3,508 one-on-one activities and 464 group activities** and attending events such as the Special Olympics in Amherst, participating in curling sessions in Pugwash, joining church services, swimming at the YMCA, tending to our garden, visiting local farms, embarking on fishing trips, engaging in chair fitness, playing softball, practicing yoga, exploring the world of painting and crafts, going on shopping trips, enjoying bingo sessions, baking on Sandy Cove, indulging in spa days, and playing pool games. Additionally, we have taken scenic drives and delighted in the art of baking on Sandy Cove.

The **Rendever virtual headsets**, which have provided individuals with an astonishing 2,272 experiences. Through these headsets, we have had the opportunity to virtually explore different videos, games, locations, and performances. From swimming with dolphins to touring Buckingham Palace, engaging in skydiving and car racing, and attending concerts, the possibilities are truly limitless.

Our Sensory Coordinator has been instrumental in providing a comprehensive **sensory program**, delivering various engaging activities tailored to individual needs. Furthermore, under the guidance of our Occupational Therapist and Manager of the Health Center, the Sensory Coordinator has successfully facilitated **1,206 one-on-one engagements, offering a wide range of stimulating sensory experiences.**

Additionally, I would like to highlight the **resounding success of the Sunset Fair**, a collaborative effort between the Sunset Auxiliary and the Sunset team. Last September, this event marked a milestone, as it was widely regarded as the largest and most successful event we have hosted in years. The festivities included live performances by the band Derailed, delectable cotton candy, popcorn, and ice cream, engaging vendors, exciting games, and a delightful complimentary tea and dessert provided by our dedicated Dietary team. The Sunset Fair truly exemplified the power of teamwork. We eagerly anticipate its return this September and hope to see you there!

— Kelly Trenholm



Vocational

Over the past year, the Vocational Service department has undergone a significant change, as a result, **nine participants** who were previously receiving incentives for their participation in our programs are now **earning minimum wage** that reflects the value of the work they do. Achieving this goal required extensive discussions and planning involving our dedicated staff, management team, and administration. Together, we worked diligently towards implementing this change, and on April 3, our new employees began their positions at minimum wage.

Currently, three individuals are employed in the Laundry Department of the Oxford Thrift store, while two others were hired by Sunset Industries. One individual is working in the Laundry Department, and the other is working in our Thrift Store. Additionally, four new employees joined our main ARC building: two are working in the Laundry Department, and two are working in the Maintenance Department. These individuals are thrilled about their new positions and the recognition they receive for their hard work.

Throughout the year, we also introduced a **job readiness program to better prepare participants for community employment**. As part of this initiative, we developed portfolios that showcase the participants' accomplishments. These portfolios serve as a valuable tool for potential employers to assess the skills and abilities. As we worked on these portfolios, two participants expressed a desire to enhance their employable skills. They decided to enroll in online courses on Food Handling and Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS). Both individuals successfully completed these courses and now possess additional skills to present to potential employers. Others are now following in their footsteps. By embracing a person-directed approach, we are fostering an environment that values and supports the growth and development of each individual within our program.

— Carrie Nix

Community Integration

At the Sunset Community, one of our primary goals is to foster community inclusion by empowering individuals to actively participate in diverse, community-based activities. We collaborate with various community groups to help individuals engage meaningfully in their local neighborhoods, examples of these community connections include:

Tai Chi classes held at the local Catholic Church provide a calming environment for individuals to improve their physical and mental well-being while forming bonds with fellow participants.

The Pugwash Library serves as a gathering place where community members can connect, collaborate, and engage in various activities that foster social unity and a sense of belonging. The library is a hub for knowledge and provides access to a wide range of resources and programs that promote literacy, intellectual growth, and personal development for individuals of all ages.

Playing darts at the local legion offers a social and skill-oriented experience. It fosters a sense of camaraderie, builds community inclusion, and boosts self-esteem through friendly competition and the opportunity to connect with others from different backgrounds.

The Twisted Stitchers is a community of fibre artists who regularly meet at the Pugwash library. This group provides a welcoming space for individuals passionate about working with fibres to come together, express their creativity, and engage in meaningful discussions. This group not only allows individuals to develop their fibre arts skills but also provides a supportive environment where friendships can flourish.

Spending time at the L.A. Animal Shelter provides a unique therapeutic experience, it allows individuals to engage in meaningful interactions with animals in need. Animal contact has proven to be immensely valuable for mental health, offering comfort, emotional support and fulfillment through acts of service.

Membership in the local legion offers a multitude of benefits to both individuals and the community. Being a part of a country-wide community organization provides opportunities for social connections and encourages a sense of pride and belonging among its members.

— Leah Brander



Participants' Small Business Creation

The Coffee Guy

In the late summer of 2022, Mark Wood embraced his passion for serving fresh coffee and began to consider the possibility of starting his own business. First, he met with the owner of Epoch Coffee in Moncton to learn some basic barista skills. Armed with new knowledge and a \$500 business loan Mark started to work towards building his own business. He began by conducting market research with his potential customers, sourcing supplies, and buying the needed equipment.

"The Coffee Guy" now serves, fresh ground, French pressed coffee five mornings a week to his customers at Sunset Community. Mark's journey with coffee has been a catalyst for the development of numerous valuable skills. From customer service and time management to budgeting, branding, cleaning, inventory management, data entry and advertising, Mark has learned many skills across a wide range of areas.

As Mark continues to embrace future learning opportunities, we eagerly anticipate witnessing his growth and the ongoing success of "The Coffee Guy."

"I love what I'm doing and sharing it with people." — *Mark Wood*



Maritime Mosaic

In the fall of 2022, Edith Mackay and Mike Cole began preparing to become part of the artisan community at Maritime Mosaic in Amherst, Nova Scotia. Edith, an experienced seller of Christmas stockings, bookmarks, and greeting cards, and Mike, an emerging painter, were both eager to showcase their unique creations. Alongside preparing their artwork, Edith and Mike created owner profiles, learned how to track inventory, and set competitive prices for their pieces.

Edith and Mike's dedication has laid a solid foundation for their success as they begin their entrepreneurial journey. With determination and passion, Edith and Mike embraced the challenges and opportunities offered to them at Maritime Mosaic. After successful sales during the Christmas season and a busy summer season on the horizon, they anticipate a surge in visitors and the chance to present their creations to a wider audience.



Terri Brander
Director, Support Services and
Social Enterprise

Support Services & Social Enterprises

The past year was another busy one for Support Services. Our Support Services team are very proud to work in this environment, helping others live meaningful lives.

— Terri Brander

Dietician's Annual Update

Sunset Cooking Classes have been a great hands-on learning experience for all the residents that have been involved since the classes have started. Class participants are educated on proper hygiene, personal and food safety practices, kitchen safety and many basic prep and cooking skills. Residents are given basic nutrition education including how to balance meals, plate models, portion sizes, label reading, how to shop for cost-effective, budget-friendly foods, buying store brand vs name brand, and cooking in bulk. Residents are educated on macronutrients, why they are important and how they make up a healthy diet. After completion of the course, residents are given the opportunity to reflect on their learning and are presented a certificate of completion.

Wellness Clinics continue to be a great success with participation numbers ranging from 30-40 staff/resident per clinic. Staff are provided the opportunities to check their weight, blood glucose and blood pressure as well learn about nutrition-related topics that they can connect to their own health, the health of their families or their residents' health. Wellness Clinics also provide nutritious recipes, education handouts, tasty snacks and stimulates engaging questions and conversation amongst participants. Staff also have the opportunity to ask nutrition and health-related questions that related specifically to themselves.

I continue to contribute bi-monthly nutrition information in the form of articles/blogs and recipes that provide basic nutrition education to our online readers. Submissions have included the importance of heart health; Holiday Eating, Eating on a Budget and the Importance of Iron.

I continue to offer suggestions and recommendations to residents wishing to engage in recreational strength-training exercises. Residents are provided demonstration, cueing and tips on how to move safely and effectively throughout the exercise as well as breathing techniques, posture and rest time are discussed.

— Angela Ward, RD

“We all can treat one another with dignity and respect, provide opportunities to grow toward our fullest lives and help one another discover and develop our unique gifts. We each deserve this and we all can extend it to others”

– Mark Twain





Dietary and Environmental

During the past year, the department experienced several changes in staff:

- Regrettably, we bid farewell to Don Goguen this winter, a valued leader of our team. Don made significant contributions to our department during his time with us and we wish him all the best in his future endeavors.
- We are delighted to announce the **promotion of Michelle Lavender to position of Manager of Support Services**. Michelle's extensive knowledge of our operations make her an ideal fit for this role.
- We extend a warm welcome to **Roxane Laird, our new Assistant Manager**. Roxane brings a wealth of experience in dietary and environmental services, along with a fresh perspective.
- We are happy to announce that **we have successfully on boarded 8 new casual employees, 2 of which have obtained full time positions**. We are also excited to have accepted **2 non-union employees** from the vocational program, who have accepted part time positions in our laundry department.

Dietary:

- We are pleased to announce that our cook, **Alison Fraser**, successfully completed her first block in her **apprenticeship program**. Her dedication and enthusiasm for culinary arts has made her a valuable asset to our team. We look forward to supporting her continued growth and development.
- We are in the process of purchasing a new **Pronto Steamer**, allowing us to continue to provide healthy and tasty meals to our clients. We will be starting our summer menu in June and look forward to the possibility of taking our dining experience to the outdoors and enjoy some barbecues.

Environmental:

To ensure our staff remain well equipped and up to date, we conducted a **training session and refresher in floor care**. This aimed to enhance their skills and improve efficiency. With the recent purchase of a new floor buffer adding to the effectiveness of our floor care operations

— Michelle Lavender, Manager, Support Services

— Roxane Laird, Assistant Manager, Support Services





Maintenance Report

We receive over a thousand requests each year.

2022 Operational Projects and Purchases include:

- The storage building was emptied in readiness for the **YMCA Childcare Centre project**.
- The drain from the laundry in the old boiler room was replaced and cemented in place.
- The green Malibu was retired and sold for parts.
- **A cement pad was installed and the new garden gazebo** funded by the Auxiliary was built onto it in the Patchwork Garden.
- A new maintenance position was filled for the off-site programs.
- The Driftwood Cottage generator was finally repaired and installed in time for hurricane Fiona.
- Fiona caused damage to trees around the property, electrical masts and lines, and heat pumps.
- The old elm trees were taken down from the front of the property.
- A new plow truck was purchased in December.
- **A new smoke hut** was built by the laundry entrance ramp.

2023 Operational Projects and Purchases include:

- One of our maintenance employees retired after 35 years of service throughout the organization.
- 20 new thermostatic mixing valves install throughout the building to help with the hot water issue.
- We **purchased a 2018 Chevrolet Impala** in March. The cars were switched around as Sunset Industries did not have a car for transport since the green Malibu was taken out of service..
- A new stud wall and wiring was installed for a **stove and some kitchen cupboards on Seashell Cove**.
- A large **custom shower enclosure** was installed in the Seashell bathroom.
- A project to install better internet service at the training centre was completed – this included running new data lines, installing brackets and antennas on the outside of both the main building and the training centre to beam the signal across.

— Carol Pounder

Social Enterprise

Oxford Thrift Store, Café & Laundromat

2022/2023 been a very successful year, sales have increased, program offering has increased, and the number of participants has increased.

This year has been exceptional at the Oxford Thrift Store. Sales continue to grow with the help of Covid restriction being lifted, an increase in population of Oxford due to immigrants moving to the area to work for Oxford Frozen Foods, increasing the number of auctions held on a weekly basis and increasing the number of products being offered in the auction.

The two apartments are now occupied with two Independent Living Support program participants and our café continues to serve ice cream and hot drinks without any in store seating.

Raw sales data shows that there was a 39% increase in revenue for the entire operation in Oxford for the 2022/2023 year. Prices for items in the store were increased slightly, which has attributed to approximately an extra \$10 000.00 in sales. The store presence in the community continues to grow and we have become an anchor to the downtown business community in Oxford.

This year we **renovated the bathrooms at the store, moved the kitchen and managers office and created a multipurpose room to hold our day program**, currently 2 days per week. This program is offering craft and social activities to people living with disabilities in the Oxford area. We currently have 12 people participating in this program and expect it to continue to grow over the next year.

Our vocational training is assisting another 11 people with learning skills in the store, while also having some time for them to enjoy other activities that we offer throughout the year. Our monthly karaoke has proved to be a favorite activity for participants and customers.

On April 1, 2023, **three of the participants became part time employees** of The Sunset Community. There are 26 individuals accessing our facility on a weekly bases for employment, training and activities. This past year we received funding from DirectionS and DivertNS to purchase a rag-cutting machine. We are now offering bags of rags to customers and businesses in the area while helping to divert textile material from the landfill.

I also would like to mention that without the hard work and commitment of the staff at the Oxford Thrift Store, we would not be the success that we are.

Thank you for this opportunity, I look forward to the future accomplishments that will take place in Oxford.

Sunset Industries

Our site in Pugwash offers five shops/programs (up from the original three). We now provide options for participation in contract services, woodshop, lifestyles, laundry and thrift store. Currently funding consists of 6.8 full time positions, and one manager.

The Contract Services Program has transitioned also with new products and the introduction of arts and crafts as part of weekly activities. The contract room has continued to assist with various projects throughout the year. This adds value to some of the woodworking projects as well as producing new products within the contract room (i.e. knitting dishcloths, Cricut creation, etc.).

The Woodshop has operated at a steady pace throughout the year, creating picnic tables, Adirondack chairs, washer toss sets etc. Participant schedules have recovered to normal after Covid restrictions were lifted. The woodshop operation is getting back to a steady pace and will continue to accept orders from customers with the hope of expanding our offering with a partnership that is being developed with Crossroads Cycle.

The Lifestyles Program has thrived this past year. This program provides hands on arts and crafts work, caring for plants, and making all sorts of jewelry and seasonal products, which we sell through our thrift stores. Participants love this program and have a high degree of engagement.



The Laundry Shop – our laundry service continues to grow as more and more people learn about it. We now have four commercial laundry customers (Windsor Salt, Thinker's Lodge, Ski Wentworth and the Hillcrest Motel). We continue to provide a fluff and fold service to the public.

Our participant numbers are up and we are currently supporting 29 participants throughout all our shops, although the majority have moved from full-time to part-time participation. This has allowed us to provide training and activities to more participants and more time slots on a weekly basis. We currently have transitioned two participants to part time employees with The Sunset Community.

From a financial perspective, **Sunset Industries is growing again.** Our thrift shop is pulling in more revenue now and our new laundry has expanded our customer base with both commercial and public customers.

I would like to thank the staff for the hard work and commitment they put into the programs, preparing the auctions and keeping things running smoothly throughout the year. Without them, we would not be able to offer the programs and training we do for the participants.

— Wade Adshade, Manager, Oxford Thrift Store



Dedicated in Loving Memory



Cora Donkin



Christine Yorke



Stephen Thomas



Helen Maxwell



Dwight DesRoches



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