



What's New?

5 years of Collaboration

Hundreds of stakeholders from across New Brunswick gather for the second summit event, "Exploring our Stories and Shaping our Future."

Advocates for Recognition

Social Work students continue to push for increased recognition of Informal Caregiving in New Brunswick.



Community Celebrations

Local community celebrates the grassroots connections they have built over the past six years.

Thinking Back, Looking Forward

2017 was a momentous year for the Collaborative and its members. Not only did we celebrate the 5th year anniversary of the Collaborative for Healthy Aging and Care by hosting our second summit event, we also formed two new award partnerships with the Province of New Brunswick and the Office of the Lieutenant - Governor.



As the year comes to a close, there is no better time to reflect on all that has been accomplished in 2017. For this reason, the Winter edition of *Neighbours in Aging* will provide some end-of-year reflections as we prepare to head into the New Year.

St. Thomas Social Work students highlight the unique challenges, experiences, and needs of informal caregivers recently interviewed for a St. Thomas research study and outline recommendation as to what steps can be taken next to better support this population.

Newly appointed Age-Friendly Communities here in New Brunswick are recognized for their dedication to creating a supportive environment for individuals of all ages.

We'd love to hear from you!

Have a story you would like to share? Do you know of an initiative in your community that is having big impact? Please get in touch with us.

Neighbours in Aging is your newsletter and we welcome your stories describing the healthy aging journey as it is experienced in NB. Email your stories, ideas and updates to admin@nbcollab.ca

Looking forward to hearing from you!

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Continued recognition of our “Hidden Allies”

Informal Caregiving Research in NB

By Samantha Steeves and Emily MacEachern



Hearing the Voices of an Invisible Population

Since September 2017, St. Thomas University Social Work students Emily MacEachern and Samantha Steeves have been completing their Social Action Placement at the Collaborative. Working under the supervision of Dr. Michelle Lafrance and her research on informal caregivers in the province, Emily and Samantha transcribed 25 qualitative interviews to learn more about the daily realities of informal caregivers. After completing their data analysis, the students presented their findings to St. Thomas Gerontology students and attendees of the 2017 Summit, alongside other academics in the province. Students have been working diligently to create awareness around the experiences and challenges related to informal caregiving in the province.

Findings Uncovered

1. Burnout/compassion fatigue
2. Feeling invisible in their caregiving role
3. Financial strains
4. Inconsistent information across sectors
5. Lack of community resources/supports

Recommendations

Short term:

Recognition of the importance of informal care work. Over 165,000 people in New Brunswick are informal caregivers. They are an invisible population and the work that they do often goes unnoticed.

Keep the conversation going - One must remember that informal caregivers can never be over-acknowledged. Let them know that their voices are heard! If you know someone who is providing care to a loved one, ask them how they are doing or what they need. Be supportive!

Long term:

Creation of an accessible **one-stop-shop** with a list of all services that are available in a community. This is important because informal caregivers often do not know where to start when looking for services, resources, or support. They want to know what is available. As they are often overworked, having all the necessary resources in one location is essential to this population.

Providing services and resources that are **adequate and meet the needs** of informal caregivers in the province. Far too often they are provided with services that do not meet their needs. Use a bottom-up approach, listen to what they need as opposed to telling them what they need.

Policy reform of both governmental and independent agencies. With many stakeholders involved, all must be careful to review how their policies both hinder and help caregivers. Again, connect with your community and speak with informal caregivers. They will tell you what they need.



Excellence in Aging Award

2017 Recipients Recognized

In September 2017 the Collaborative was thrilled to form a new partnership with the Lieutenant-Governor's office of New Brunswick, accepting the role of overseeing the nomination, evaluation, and selection process of the Lieutenant Governor's Excellence in Aging Award. The award recognizes New Brunswick citizens, organizations and communities that have had a positive and unique impact on the way people age in the province.

Nominations for 2017 came from a diverse selection of areas, including long-term care, community organizing, care navigation, and advocacy work. After careful consideration, the selection committee was delighted to choose two recipients for the award this year.

Tantramar Seniors College



The first recipient is an organization that provides hundreds of seniors the opportunity to learn and strengthen social connections. Established in 2008, Tantramar Seniors College is a volunteer, seniors-governed, membership-based organization providing non-credit course to seniors in the Westmorland, Cumberland, Albert and Kent counties.

Previous university or college experience is not required and there are bursaries available for those who cannot afford the membership fee.

There are a variety of course topics to choose from, some of which include: investing; vegetarian cooking; gardening; creative writing; and local history. The list is endless! What's most unique about the college is that nearly all the courses are taught by seniors who volunteer to share their passion for a subject.

With a membership of 400, there is no doubt that many NB seniors are taking the opportunity to learn from their peers and share their passions with others. For fore information about the college and a complete list of courses, please visit their [website](#).

Jean-Luc Bélanger



The second recipient is an individual who has dedicated many years to the advancement of aging discourse in the province. Jean-Luc Bélanger's contribution to community life and development is broad and varied. Over the past 20 years Mr. Bélanger has participated in multiple committees and projects that address aging issues. Some of these include: Founding president of the Université du 3e âge in the Restigouche region; co-founder of the Jeux Des âinés de l'Acadie; founding member, President, and Executive Director of the Association fancophone des âinés du N.-B.;



and member of the NB Council on Aging. The list goes on and on!

Those who nominated Mr. Bélanger also highlighted his dedication to Francophone seniors in the province, noting that he has worked tirelessly to ensure their rich contribution to the New Brunswick community is recognized and appreciated.

Over the years, Jean-Luc Bélanger has worn many hats, each with passion, energy and enthusiasm. Thank you Mr. Bélanger for your contributions!

Age-Friendly Journey - Update

Three NB Communities Recognized in 2017

From the last edition of *Neighbours in Aging*, readers may recall the article that outlined New Brunswick's Age-Friendly Recognition Program. Launched in September 2016, the program recognizes New Brunswick communities' efforts to build environments where seniors feel a strong sense of belonging, are connected, can live in security, and enjoy good health. Since then, applications for 2017 were evaluated and three NB communities were selected for recognition!



Three NB Communities Recognized

- [City of Moncton](#)
- [Municipalité régionale de Tracadie](#)
- [Communauté rurale de Cocagne](#)

Congratulations!! To learn more about their journey to become Age-Friendly, just click on the communities above! Each community has a unique story!

How can a community become Age-Friendly?

Resources are available to support municipalities and communities across our province to start their journey to become Age-Friendly. For [resources](#) on becoming age-friendly, visit [Wellness NB's website](#).

Applications will be accepted for the 2018 award up until March 31st, 2018.

“Be Part of the Energy”

Celebrating Nackawic Area Wellness Group

Many of those who participated in the Summit may recall Beverly Jacobson, an attendee whose passion for her community was exemplified as she spoke of the programs and services she and her fellow community members have worked tirelessly to provide for the town of Nackawic (and surrounding areas). Curious to hear more about what they are doing, I contacted Beverly after the summit to learn more. This article will highlight the inspiring conversation I had with Beverly Jacobson and Gail Farnsworth, founding members of the Nackawic Area Wellness Group.





What is the Nackawic Area Wellness Group?

Six years ago, a small group of Nackawic residents came together with a vision to give back to their community by supporting their neighbours in need of a helping hand. Calling themselves “Community Friends”, the group began holding fundraisers to raise money for those who may need some assistance with anything from meals, bills, to transportation. As time passed and the group gained momentum, there was a shift from identifying individual needs to those of the entire community. From there the Nackawic Area wellness group was created.

How is the group structured?

What’s unique about the group is that it virtually has no structure. While there a few individuals who manage the monthly newsletter, updates and emails, the rest is all done on an as-needed basis. The group holds a monthly meeting, but if you can’t make it, that ok! The process of assigning volunteers to tasks and events is about as grassroots as it can get – whoever is available! Make the phone call and someone will be ready to provide their time.

The group is supported by Western Valley Wellness, who they meet with every three months for updates on new programs, education, resources, and funding opportunities. The group also relies on fundraisers, donations, and in-kind support from other community organization in the area – a truly collective effort!

What programs and services do they offer?

Over the years, the group has offered more than 90 programs, services, and educational opportunities in the area. Some of these include: transportation to local activities; senior games; card making; end-of-life education series; yoga; coupon workshops; tax program; sewing classes; hiking; and various lunch and learns.



How has this group impacted the community?

When asking Beverly and Gail to comment on the value of this type of group, a few words were shouted out: “joy; positivity; energy; and companionship!” They noted that what is most impactful is getting community members out of isolation and engaging with one another. They are building community capacity without any incentive needed – everyone wants to be involved!

In closing the interview, I asked to reflect on the advice they would give to other NB communities who are interested in better connecting their community. Both women stated it is important to celebrate your community and all its members. Gail noted, “Don’t be afraid of what you don’t know”. Find a group of like-minded people, build partnerships, and just DO IT!