



ANNUAL REPORT

2021-22



Eastern Shore
Family Resource Association

June 16th, 2022

7:30pm - 8:00pm



Board of Directors 2021 – 2022

Laura Rockwood
Chair

Katie Simms
Vice-Chair

Melissa Bayers
Treasurer

Denise Surette
Secretary

Kaitlyn Hines
Director

Samantha Wood
Director

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“Through our programs and services, the Eastern Shore Family Resource Association supports children, youth and families, and contributes to the quality of family life in our community.”

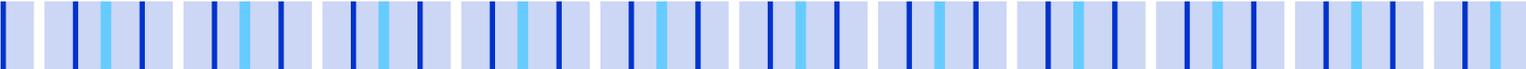
Eastern Shore Family Resource Centre

Staff 2021 - 2022



Executive Director	Nancy Hollis
Healthy Beginnings Enhanced Home Visitor	Tina Devine
Parenting Journey Family Support Home Visitor	Shyneste Downey
Program Director and Parenting Journey Supervisor	Tracy Cowan
Bookkeeper & Administration	Tara González
Program Facilitator and Early Childhood Educator	Anna Cannings
Program Facilitator	Veronica Green
Program Facilitator	Latika Kumar
Program Facilitator and Early Childhood Educator	Taylor Pye
Program Facilitator and Early Childhood Educator	Raven Williams
Summer Camp Facilitator	Ryleigh Messervey
Summer Camp Facilitator	Shelby Riley





Board Chair and Execu

Dear Friends,

Like David Bowie's song "Ch- Ch--Ch-Changes", we at the Eastern Shore Family Resource Association have had many changes during 2021-2022. Changes from virtual programs to in-person programs, changes in extending our programs from September to June and changes in staffing.

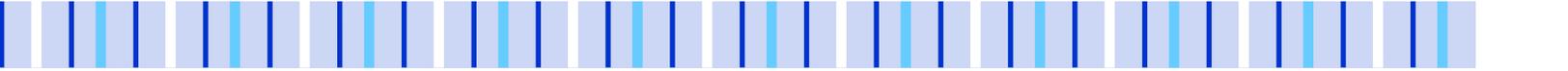
In July 2021, we welcomed Tina Devine as our new Enhanced Healthy Beginnings Home Visitor. She comes with a great deal of experience in education combined with a variety of work and lived experienced. Tina graduated in 2021 from NS College of Early Childhood Education. She will be working closely with the Public Health Nurse in the EHVHB program which is intended to make a positive difference in the lives of children and families by focusing on goals, standards and targets. We are extremely happy to see the Public Health Nurses returning to the Healthy Beginnings program as they were assigned to assist with the pandemic for the past two years. Tina will be busy as the referrals are starting to come in by the PHN.

On December 1st 2021, Shyneste Downey started her position with ESFRA as the Parenting Journey Home Visitor under the supervision of our Program Director, Tracy Cowan. Shyneste has her diploma in Child and Youth Care. Her years of experience working as a Youth Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator are strong assets to the Parenting Journey Program.

We cannot forget about our Program Facilitators and Summer Day Camp Staff - Raven Williams, Taylor Pye, Latika Kumar, Anna Cannings, Veronica Green, Shelby Riley, and Ryleigh Messervey. Families were greeted by these individuals who enjoyed being a part of the lives of our families.

We certainly cannot forget about Tara González and Tracy Cowan who have been an essential part of ESFRA for many years. Tara's knowledge when it comes to administration and finances ensures ESFRA runs smoothly. Tara's creative ability with our social media outlets helps keep our families informed on our daily programs, activities and community events along the "Shore". As for Tracy, after many years as the Parenting Journey Home Visitor, she has agreed to step into our new position of Program Director. Her expertise in program planning and parent education will benefit our families and community organizations along the "Shore".

Eastern Shore Family Resource Association continued to provide quality programs



Executive Director's Message

despite the protocols that were in place due to the pandemic. This was due to the hardworking, dedicated team of professionals and the effective governance of our Board of Directors.

Once again ESFRA acknowledges and thanks our current funders - Department of Community Services, Nova Scotia Health Authority, Department of Labour and Advanced Education (FLIEF) for their continuous financial support in our community.

This year we partnered with Musquodoboit Harbour Farmers Market and Cobs Bread to help address the food insecurity issues along the Eastern Shore. We are so fortunate to be able to participate in both of these initiatives. We are grateful to have participated for the second year in helping families by means of the Musquodoboit Harbour Farmers Market. On top of using the redeemable Market Bucks for amazing local products at the weekly Farmers Market, our families also received a beautiful slow cooker with recipe book to continue creating healthy meals.

We cannot forget our Shore Families who continued to support us by donations of financial, healthy snacks and craft supplies. A huge thank you for your continuous generosity.

I would like to thank the ESFRA Board of Directors for their continuous support and leadership over the past program year - Laura Rockwood, Katie Simms, Denise Surette, Samantha Wood, Kaitlyn Hines and Melissa Bayers. Unfortunately, we have to say a fond farewell to Melissa Bayers and Denise Surette who has spent the last several years on the board. Your guidance, expertise and support will certainly be missed. We wish you all the best.

Last but not least, we would like to *thank* our dedicated staff who carry out our mission on a daily basis. Their hard work, patience and dedication for our ESFRA families goes without saying how much passion they have for the families.

With Kindest Regards,

Nancy Hollis
Executive Director

Laura Rockwood
Board Chair

One of our regular participants who drops by every Wednesday morning says “the raisin bread was just like his mother used to make when he was a boy”. What a huge compliment to Cobs Bread.



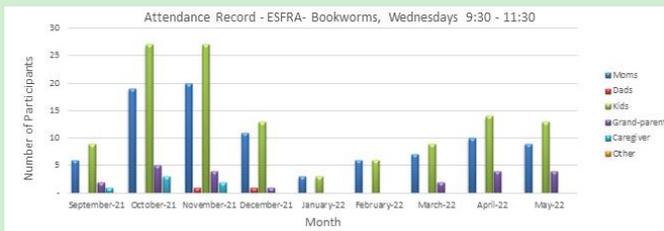
Bookworms at Play



Bookworms at Play is an Early Learning, Family Literacy Program for children ages 3-5 years and their parents/caregivers. This program places a greater emphasis on family literacy through parent-child interactive components, both in class and at home, allowing parents/caregivers to share in the preschool experience with their child(ren). This program was offered in two 15 week semesters twice weekly on Wednesday & Friday mornings. Bookworms at Play was unable to operate on site at the Musquodoboit Harbour Library due to their covid protocols for attendance in this program year. Instead ESFRA offered an additional program at our site in Porters Lake for those families who had registered.

Enhancing connections within our communities is a goal. We love local! So, one of our participants favourite visitors came back this year. We wish to thank Mr. John Gibson of The Royal Canadian Legion 161 for reaching out and visiting our Bookworms and answered questions from his intrigued followers to recognize Remembrance Day and veterans who fought for all our freedoms. Our sincere **THANKS**.

- * One families comment included, "XXX would have happily attended a Bookworms program every day, which was a good learning tool to teach the order and days of the week! One negative comment: it was sad to see that the program was not attended by all participants who had registered. If there was a waiting list, those children missed a good time."



Since 2015 the Eastern Shore Family Resource Centre has supported Breast Feeding families with not only programs, but also a lending program to aid nursing moms.



Being overseen by our Healthy Beginnings Home Visitor, Tina Devine, this year we had the opportunity to lend our 2 Breast Pumps to 4 nursing mothers for longer periods of time. We hope to continue supporting this natural method of feeding, bonding and nurturing in 2022-23.

Breast Pump Loan Program

ESFRA hosted an Open House for all residents of the Shore to drop in and see what we are all about!

Held in December, it gave individuals and families a chance to meet our staff and explore our space in a casual but fun way! Five families and six children attended!

A special thanks to Tracey's Tasty Treats for making us yummy cookies to share & enjoy while families visited the Centre.



Technology Lending Program

The HRM Public Library has embarked on a project to provide families across HRM with extended loan access to FREE technology in the forms of new Chrome Books, iPads and Mi-Fi portable hotspots as a way of addressing and combating social isolation.

Partnering with Family Resource Centres as a way of distributing this technology to families who would most benefit, ESFRA was able to loan out this equipment **to 8 different families** from June 2021 - June 2022.

Families may borrow for a 6-month period & depending on what is available may borrow again!



New Parent Group

Lunch & Learn Virtual Program

Parents with babies up to one year of age were Welcomed. The New Parent Virtual Group has hosted numerous topics over the years and provides support to those breastfeeding. In an attempt to adapt to covid restrictions ESFRA provided a *Lunch and Learn 2021* for this group! It was held the last **Wednesday** of each month (March 31-June 30/21) between **12pm-1pm** virtually (ZOOM). The topics were on the following topics: Attachment (Featured Guest: Tracy Cowan Parenting Journey Home Visitor); Hearing & Speech (Featured Guest: Ashley MacIntosh); Introduction to Solids (Featured Guest: Sam Vatcher, Healthy Beginnings Home Visitor); Trail Walk with Sam Vatcher to get out in person to enjoy the Musquodoboit Harbour Trail!

New Parent Group

In-Person

The New Parent Group is specially designed for first-time parents, and families with large age gaps between their children, for the first year of your baby's life. This program offers parents and their babies an inviting place to meet other new families in the community, receive information on parenting and related topics. We started off the 2021-2022 program year offering NPG in person at our ESFRA site in Porters Lake with 5 families. Despite the worries & challenges, it was nice to see families looking to participate in the program again. Unfortunately, when covid reared its ugly head again in December we decided to put this program on hiatus during the Winter months and resume in March 2022 for the remainder of the year. It was so nice to see the little ones back again!

Healthy Beginnings Enhanced Home Visiting provides additional support to families facing challenges through a comprehensive home visiting program. Families may receive home visiting support for up to three years and/or referral/linkage to other health and community resources. Our Public Health Nurse, Tanya Wagner-Wile, collaborates with the Home Visitor, Tina Devine, to provide support when communication from families is of a medical origin. This team approach has proven to be an asset to all that participate in programs within the Family Resource Centre.



Home visiting focuses on supporting parents, promoting a healthy parent-child relationship, fostering healthy childhood development and linking families with community resources that further enhance the opportunities for healthy growth and development of the child and the family.

A family's "image of their child" - and definition of childhood itself - is influenced by that family's experiences, culture, values, and beliefs. Families come from many different backgrounds. People all draw on a vast range of experiences to form their own "image of the child". The Healthy Beginnings Home Visitor understands that the family is fundamentally the expert in their children's lives and incorporates "Great Kids, INC" curriculum to support them in reaching their goals.

Goals can define *milestones, provide play-based activities, offers effective tools for parenting with intention* and *high-lightening the "why" for growth of a baby while developing a secure attachment.*



In 2021- 2022, after carefully navigating home visits, virtual visits, and phone visits through Covid restrictions, families have demonstrated strength and determination more than ever to set and reach goals. There are currently **4 families** participating in the Healthy Beginnings program for our catchment area and that number is growing quickly.

By participating in the Healthy Beginnings program families can add to their already long list of strengths and resources:

Some might ask -
What can I gain be being a part of this program?

- **breast-feeding goals (surpassing expectations)**
- **concrete knowledge of community resources and how to access them**
- **best practices for keeping children safe**
- **the benefits of creating responsive care routines**
- **the expansion of family literacy**
- **solid information on Public Health resources**
- **understanding of infant milestones and physical literacy**
- **how to promote optimal brain development**
- **in-depth knowledge in all areas of child development**
- **parent/child attachment**

*The "Great Kids INC" curriculum modules to: define milestones, provide play based activities, offer effective tools for parenting with intention while highlighting the "why" for development of a growing baby.

A message from **Tina Devine**

ESFRA's Healthy Beginning's Home Visitor to families:

"I have raised six children of my own, and in the simplest terms, IT WAS NOT EASY! It was from a wise community member's support that I realized the importance of seeking resources and the consciousness that it truly takes a village to raise a child. This led me to where I am in my position/role as a home visitor. I strive to provide families with all the knowledge and support regarding the development of their most precious gift, their family/children. The team approach that Nova Scotia Public Health takes to ensure our Resource Centre has the medical origin to support the families we serve is paramount and I am proud of this collaboration. I look forward to developing more connections as we navigate our way back to some normalcy from Covid.

I'd like to share a poem that directly connects to my own philosophy and my own image of a child."



Tina's Inspiration -

**I tried to teach my child with books,
He gave me only puzzled looks.
I tried to teach my child with words,
They passed him often unheard.
Despairingly, I turned aside,
'How shall I teach this child. I cried?'
Into my hand he put the key,
'Come, he said, play with me.'**

- Anonymous

P In partnership with Dalhousie School of Communication Sciences and Diseases, ESFRA was able to again offer the screening event. The screening process is designed to be fun! It

R involves a series of play stations using speech-language and pre-literacy (PLS-5, K-SEALS)

E screening tools. In addition, Audiology students performed a hearing screening for each child.

- Families received notice from ESFRA Centre staff within a few weeks if the screening indicated that a full speech-language and/or hearing evaluation was warranted.

S We are thankful for this great partnership with Dalhousie, a win-win for everyone! Families get a 'snap shot' of their child's development while Dalhousie students get an opportunity to work with our pre-schoolers and gain some testing experience.

C We were so pleased to be able to resume this worthwhile 2 day community event in April 2022 after 2 years of closures due to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.

H This year we expanded the age range to include children as young as 2yrs and as old as 7yrs.

O The outcomes were as follows:

- O** ◇ 27 families participated
- L** ◇ 11 children 'passed' not requiring any further intervention services;
- S** ◇ 16 children were 'flagged' (out of an 'abundance of caution) and were referred for either speech-language, audiology, a combination of both, IWK Autism team or a recommendation to re-screen next year.

C Parents received mini reports and copies were sent to those professionals as required.

R All ESFRA staff participated in the event to get a feel for how it works. Many thanks as always to

E **Dalhousie Faculty & Students and Good Sheppard Church** in their support of ESFRA

N programs and families living along the Eastern Shore.

Colour Your World!



ESFRA offered this 'drop-in' program once a week for families with children ages 0-5 and continued to gain

popularity throughout the year with 'tickets' selling out quickly to attend! In December 2021, we offered additional Play Dates Are Us opportunities for three theme-based mornings. However, illness and weather impacted families being able to come and enjoy.

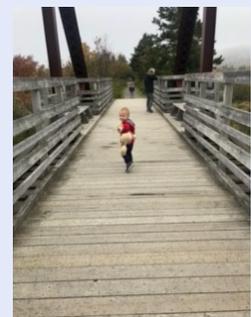
Play Dates are Us!



Roll & Stroll!



We are pleased to be just **one of the 50 grant** recipients for this project allotment. This funding promoted wellness and healthy living. The Thriving Communities Microgrant Program was in partnership with the YMCA & Government of Nova Scotia - Communities, Culture & Heritage Department, to empower groups to respond to community needs regarding recreational & physical activity during the pandemic. Our plans to offer this in the Spring (May 31st & June 7, 2021) were impacted by Covid & unable to be held. The first Roll & Stroll for this program year, was held on October 13th and another on November 9th. While maintaining appropriate social distancing for a group situation, we are pleased to continue our Trail Walk tradition for a casual, fun-filled morning to appreciate our Eastern Shore's nature & beauty!



Hittin' the Trail!

Parenting Journey Family Support Program

Our Parenting Journey Home Visiting Program is a community based voluntary family support home-visiting program for families with children ages 0-18 yrs. Support is offered in the following areas: behaviour guidance, relationship building, improving communication, problem solving skills, stress management, advocacy skills, work-life integration/balance, attend appointments, find resources, make referrals and more. During 2021-2022 our Parenting Journey Home Visitor supported 26 families. Please see below for a short synopsis of service delivery.

- Caseload Totals: **10 families**
- Waitlisted (phone support only): **0**
- Number of children/youth impacted: **45 children**
- Families exited: **16 families**
- Average length of participation: **1-2 years**



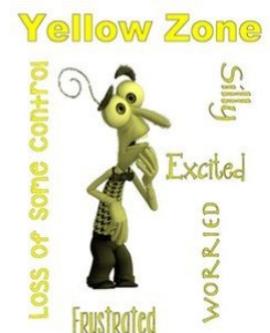
Due to the mandatory closure of the agency the Parenting Journey Home Visitor was still able to provide constant services and support by phone consultation and sharing resources unique to each family's needs (virtual programming, emailing links to webinars, mailing parenting handouts, resources on covid, resources around CERB etc.).



The Grandparent Shift support groups were again unable to resume. The 'Grand Parent Shift' supports grandparents who are primary caregivers for their grandchildren. Unfortunately, this program is not continuing at this present time but we are hoping to eventually resume once we have safely come out of this pandemic and an adequate space to host becomes available.



We are also happy to welcome our new member of staff to ESFRA's Parenting Journey Team. Her name is Shyneste Downey she is the new PJ home visitor. Shyneste joined us in December 2021 and continues to grow in her new role of supporting families on the Eastern Shore. Tracy Cowan, PJ HV since the program's inception, has decided to pursue another area of focus within ESFRA and has moved into the Program Director position. Tracy will continue to be a part of the Parenting Journey Team by continuing to mentor and support Shyneste, as the Parenting Journey Supervisor.



In addition, the PJP has undergone an expansion of the program/service. The PJ HV and supervisor meet regularly with a clinical consultant employed by Eastern Families Nova Scotia to ensure an added level of support for both the PJHV and Supervisor in order to give best service to families on our caseload.

Parent Education: The PJHV provided requested parenting workshops virtually to 2 families not placed on PJ caseload. Once the workshop was completed, the families did not require further service.

Education Along the Shore

A group of organizations along the Shore came together with the interest of creating our own series of parenting workshops. Mainly being hosted online, as well as some in person, the workshops are intended to help families access information in a local setting - eliminating long commutes.

These organizations included: Musquodoboit Valley Family Resource Centre, Schools Plus, LEA Place, Community Health Board Coordinator, The Old School, Halifax Regional Centre of Education Social Workers and ESFRA. All sessions were held Spring of 2021 (March - June). ESFRA's contribution include Great Expectations Prenatal (Mar 25 - May 16, 2021) facilitated by HBHV Sam Vatcher and Navigating Life with your Teen (May 4, 11 & 18, 2021) facilitated by PJHV Tracy Cowan & Schools Plus Emma Pringle-Boutilier.

Food Security:

ESFRA has partnered with **Cobs Bakery** since July 2021 whereby ESFRA staff pick up all unsold bakery items from the day to give out every Wednesday.



ESFRA shares this endeavour with YMCA NS Works extending our reach to help with food security. Individuals and families along the Shore accessing this program are made up of: some strictly coming to our Centre for this initiative, some attending an in house program or some via family home visiting programs.

This program has been well received and it continues to grow.



Working again this year with ESFRA is the *Musquodoboit Harbour Farmers Market*. Their project has given enough *Market Bucks* for 4 families to receive a reasonable sum monthly of 'bucks' to spend at each weekly Sunday Market. This project helps in supporting locally made and grown products as well as families and individuals. Their contribution, we have seen, helps with the rising cost of, well 'everything'!

Ready to Learn Ready to Play side by side

The 2021-2022 program year we decided to offer this program which targets social-emotional development of children again.

One comment received was—**These are such amazing FREE programs that we are so lucky to have close by! Friendly and caring staff too :) my kids have done so well!**

It ran for 2 semesters, fall & spring, for 15 weeks allowing families to participate in both programs for both their 1-2 & 3-5 year-old children. We chose to end the first semester and start the second semester virtually which allowed for the children to connect on some level.

Our staff managed to pull it off without too much inconvenience.

Ready to Learn was offered for ages 3 to 5 years with literacy and school readiness-based components. The Ready to Learn Program was delivered twice per week and is based on PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies Preschool Curriculum). This program highlights and nurtures the development of self-control, positive self-esteem and emotional-social competencies in young children.

While this program is not a parent/child interactive program, there is a required parenting workshop called Handle with Care which supports the mental health of young children for parents/caregivers to participate in on a monthly basis

Handle with Care was offered virtually via zoom in 4 monthly sessions. HWC program involves simple interactive activities for parents/caregivers to help support their children's social/emotional development. The spirit of the program is to celebrate parenting, promote self-care and recognize the value of all caregivers and their role in strengthening the social and emotional well-being of children; to grow in self-esteem, focus and learn. The 4 building blocks include 1 session each on: Attachment, Self-esteem, Expressing & Managing Emotions and Relationships with Others.

Due to the nature of offering this piece virtually proved to be challenging for families to participate for a number of reasons. Thus, we decided to not to offer this component for the second semester. Everyone is done with ZOOM learning!



Promoting Mental Health in Young Children

W

ee Bears is our Signature Parent/Caregiver Interactive Play Group for families with children ages 1 - 3 years.

In 2021-22 program year we were able to resume offering Wee Bears in person at the Good Shepherd Church in Lawrencetown (3 semesters) and at the Family Centre in Porters Lake on Fridays (3 semesters).

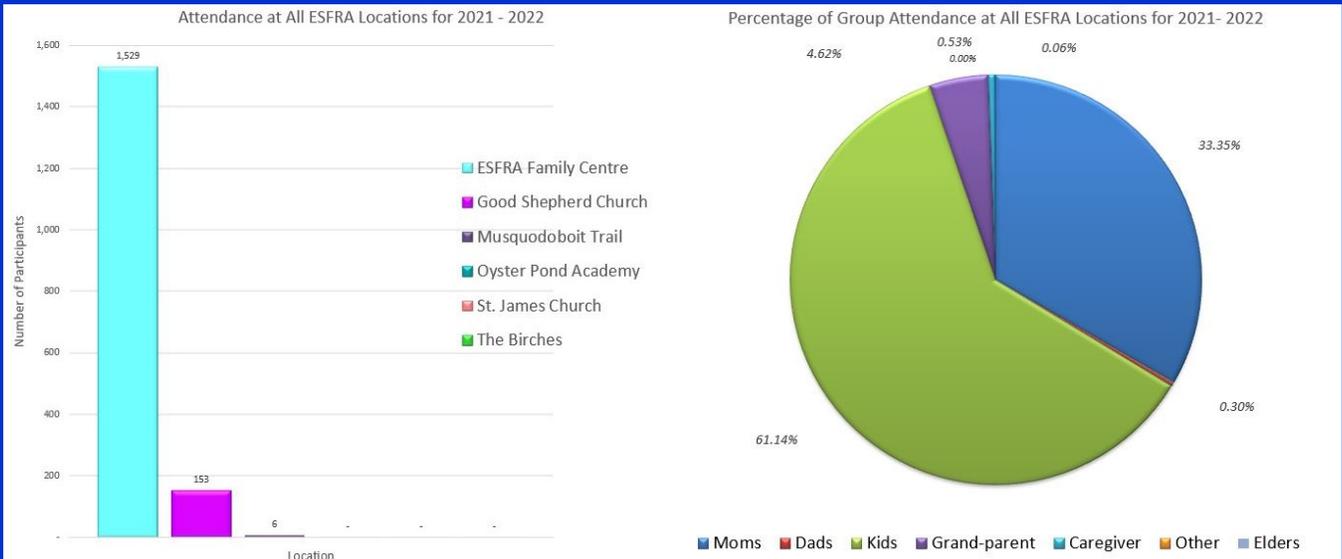


Thank you so very much for continuing to offer these programs. They are loved and very appreciated.

During periodic covid related closures we offered virtual session opportunities but families decided to wait until we were back in person to participate.

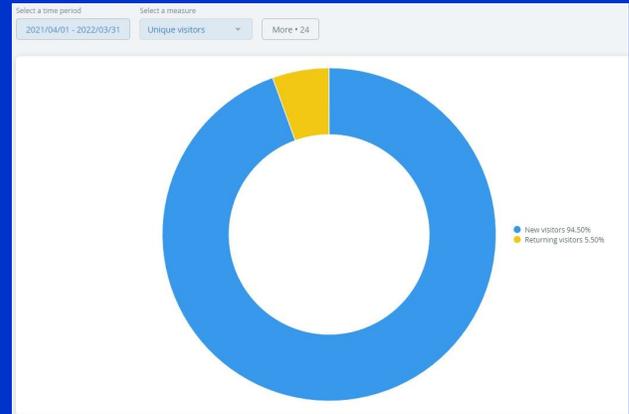
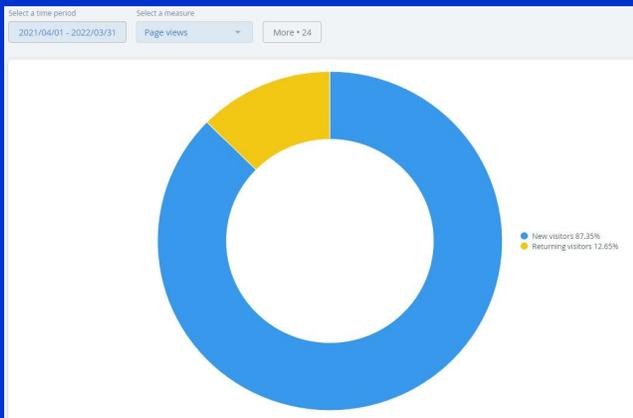
By semestering programs, ESFRA allowed for more participation over the year. This seems to be the method that will continue going forward.

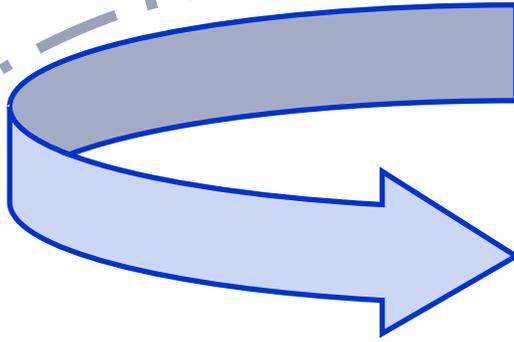




Attendance Statistics

Social Media Statistics





Our community development work and strong community partnerships on the Eastern Shore continue to be a major contributing factor in ESFRA's success in recent years.



- * Cobs Bread (Tacoma)
- * Cole Harbour/Eastern HRM Mental Health
- * Councilor David Hendsbee
- * Darrell Samson - Member of Parliament



- * Donations from the community & program participants

- * Eastern Shore Musquodoboit Valley Community Health Board

- * Family Literacy Initiative Endowment Fund

- * Food Banks Canada

- * Gaetz Brook Royal Legion 161

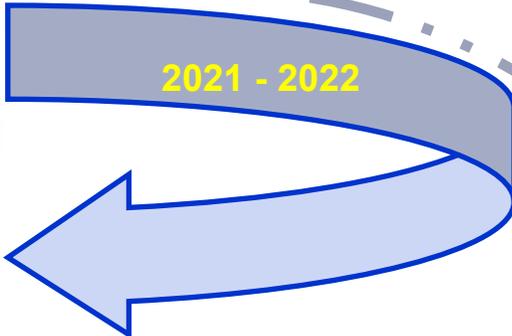
- * HRM Community Recreation

- * Kent Smith - MLA

- * Local Food Banks

- * Lyle Tilley Davidson





Our Executive Director plays a large role in this kind of work and she understands how important it is to strengthen the agency’s partnerships with other agencies (both in our immediate area and the greater HRM), schools and service providers in our communities.



* Musquodoboit Harbour Farmers Market



* Nova Scotia Department of Community Services - major funder



* Nova Scotia Health Authority - major funder

* Porters Lake Business Association

* School's Plus & School Social Worker

* St. James Anglican Church

* The Old School



NOVA SCOTIA WORKS



Royal Bank of Canada

* Tim Horton's – Porters Lake

* Tracey's Tasty Treats

* Tri-Communities Social Worker

* Tri-County Coalition

* United Way

* YMCA NS Works



The Royal Canadian Legion
Eastern Marine Branch 161 Gaetz Brook Nova Scotia





**Treat a child as though he already is
the person he's capable of becoming.**

- Haim Ginott

