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A Message From the Chair

Dear Friends and Supporters,



As winter blankets our picturesque landscapes, I am delighted to share some heartwarming updates from the Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia. Despite the chilly temperatures, the warmth of community spirit continues to shine through, and we are excited to highlight the incredible strides we've made together.

Celebrating Community Resilience:

Our communities have faced unique challenges this year, and your resilience has been inspiring. From extreme weather events due to climate change, to affordability challenges, Nova Scotians have shown their remarkable strength and determination. We are proud to support projects that promote sustainability, inclusivity, and the overall well-being of our communities.

Grant Success Stories:

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Thank you for your contributions, we've been able to fund a variety of impactful projects. Whether it's supporting many of our Fundy, enhancing local infrastructure, or fostering environmental sustainability, your donations are making a real difference in the lives of those who call Nova Scotia home. Stay tuned for stories from grant recipients, showcasing the positive changes taking place in our communities.

Community Spotlights:

In each newsletter, we will shine a spotlight on a different community in Nova Scotia. This winter, we're featuring *Yarmouth County*, where residents have come together to create a welcoming space for all. Learn about their unique projects, local heroes, and the rich tapestry that makes Nova Scotia so special.

Future Plans and Collaborations:

Looking ahead, we have exciting plans for the upcoming year. We are exploring collaborations with local organizations, government agencies, and businesses to amplify our impact. Stay tuned for updates on how we're working together to build a stronger, more connected Nova Scotia.

As we wrap ourselves in the warmth of community this winter, let us continue to support one another and work towards a brighter future for all. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia.

Wishing you a joyful holiday season filled with warmth, connection, and the spirit of giving.

Warm regards,

Jessica Fancy-Landry, Board Chair, Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia

Highlight: Fish Point Project Committee of the Yarmouth County Historical Society



We are thrilled to share exciting news with our dedicated community members and supporters– the Fish Point Committee was awarded a generous grant from the Joan Feynman Climate Action Grant in 2023!

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This grant has been a pivotal turning point for the committee, enabling the documentation and execution of critical initiatives to safeguard our beloved Fish Point Historic Site. Over the past months, they have tirelessly worked on the rock wall expansion, heightening the ground level, lengthening the walking perimeter on site, expanding our parking area, and initiating the ground formation for a future kiosk, paving the way for more community events. In the face of challenges such as high course tides, hurricanes, and storm surges, they are delighted to report that there has been no further erosion, and our historic site ground area remains protected. This accomplishment is a testament to the efficacy of the measures they've put in place and the positive impact of the Joan Feynman Climate Action Grant.

Their journey began with the realization of the increasing threats posed by climate change, including higher course tides, coastal erosion, storm surge damages, and hurricanes affecting Nova Scotia's coastal communities. With over 70 percent of people in Nova Scotia living, working, and playing along the coasts, the need for proactive measures became urgent. The Fish Point Committee was proud to have found a grant application that aligned with our commitment level, supporting our financial planning for the Fish Point Historic Site Program. Rising sea levels, a consequence of glacier melting, and thermal expansion of water and land temperature rises, have wreaked havoc along coastal regions. Nova Scotia has experienced an rise of approximately 0.32 meters in sea levels during the twentieth century.

Notably, Yarmouth faced a significant storm surge of 1.49 meters during Groundhog Day in 1976. Since 1990, sea levels have surpassed the projected upper limits of 1.4 meters. To address these challenges, they turned to Lidar (Light Detection and Ranging Technology), enabling accurate topographic mapping of coastal areas and projections. By 2100, the projected mean sea level for Yarmouth is estimated to be between 1.4 and 1.79 meters.

The Fish Point Project Committee is deeply grateful to all those who supported them in achieving our 2023 goals. The Joan Feynman Climate Action grant contribution has not only made their project possible but has also fostered a collaborative spirit, bringing together concerned citizens, businesses, the Yarmouth County Historical Society, and local government. Together, they have successfully protected their Historic Site, the local highway, and provided residents with peace of mind regarding their homes and history.

The impact of the Joan Feynman grant goes beyond financial support – it has increased community spirit and helped rectify problems stemming from the effects of climate change. They look forward to continuing their journey of preservation and community engagement with ongoing community support.

Gender Equality Grant



We are thrilled to share the inspiring outcomes of Potlotek First Nations'; recent initiative, supported by the Gender Equality Grant. The project, titled "Apoqn'multiiek Epi'jik"; brought together 75 indigenous women, including members of the LGBTQ2S+ community, for two transformative gatherings.

The primary goal of the project was to foster unity and understanding among indigenous women, acknowledging the commonalities, differences, and shared experiences that shape their identities. Recognizing the historical challenges of lateral violence stemming from decades of

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During the sessions, participants engaged in discussions spanning cultural, political, social, and gender equality experiences. The gatherings provided a respite from the stresses of daily life, offering attendees a valuable opportunity to connect, share, and learn from one another. Observing tangible changes, the organizers noted that, initially, not all groups interacted with each other. However, by the end of the retreat, laughter and collaboration had replaced initial reservations, demonstrated the power of collective healing and understanding. The project successfully served a diverse group of 75 indigenous women.

As a continuation of their commitment to wellness, Potlotek sent 31 women, including LGBTQ2S+ individuals, to a wellness retreat at Oak Island Resort in Western Shore. This experience included group meditation, rune stone readings, divining rods, tarot card readings, chakra readings, shared stories, and group healing. The participants also enjoyed activities such as hiking, beachcombing, and live music, fostering a sense of community and self-discovery.

This initiative went beyond the immediate goals, sparking conversations about financial literacy, employment opportunities, and the potential for a men's wellness event. Participants discussed the trauma, PTSD, and fear of vulnerability experienced by their male counterparts, highlighting the need for inclusive healing spaces.

The retreat facilitated intergenerational healing, with women ranging from 17 to 70 years old coming together to

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share their journeys and perspectives. The impact was evident in observed relationship changes, fostering a deeper appreciation for one another and a heightened understanding of the ongoing struggles faced by Mi'kmaw women.

In the spirit of collaboration, women volunteered for various tasks, discussed their personal journeys openly, and shared meals at a large outdoor picnic. The experience was nothing short of fantastic, emphasizing the strength that emerges when communities come together to support and uplift each other.

Potlotek First Nations continues to be a beacon of empowerment and unity, showcasing the profound impact that community-driven initiatives can have on fostering resilience, understanding, and healing.

Ukrainian Nova Scotia Resettlement Program

In the spirit of giving and compassion, we are thrilled to share the heartwarming news of the recent success of our initiative in collaboration with municipalities across Nova Scotia. In 2023, RCFNS was once again able to extend a helping hand to 32 new Ukrainian families who have chosen Nova Scotia as their new home.

This initiative would not have been possible without the incredible support and generosity of our donors, who selflessly contributed to make a meaningful difference in the lives of these immigrants. As the ongoing conflict in Ukraine persists, these families are navigating the challenges of



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Through the collective efforts of our community and the municipalities, RCFNS distributed gift cards to these 32 Ukrainian families, providing them with a bit of extra support during the year. These gift cards serve as a tangible expression of our collective goodwill and solidarity with those seeking refuge and a new beginning.

In the face of adversity, it is heartening to witness the resilience and strength of the human spirit. The Ukrainian families in Nova Scotia are actively working to establish themselves in their new community, and your contributions have undoubtedly made this journey a bit brighter and more hopeful.

We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who has been a part of this incredible program. Your kindness and generosity have not only provided practical assistance but have also sent a powerful message of unity and compassion. Together, we are making a positive impact on the lives of those who need it most.

As we reflect on the past year and look forward to the opportunities that the new year brings, let us continue to stand united in support of our neighbours and friends, both near and far.

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At RCFNS, we take pride in our mission to build a better, more sustainable future for all. One of the key pillars of our commitment is reflected in our investment strategy – a strategy that sets us apart and underscores our dedication to creating positive change.

We are delighted to announce that our investments are now 100% impact invested!

What does being 100% impact invested mean? It means that every dollar of our foundation's assets is intentionally directed towards investments that not only generate financial returns but also deliver meaningful and measurable social and environmental benefits. We believe that aligning our investments with our values is not only responsible but crucial in driving positive change and contributing to the well-being of our community.

Here are some highlights of our impact investment approach:

Community-Centric Investments: We prioritize projects and initiatives that directly benefit our community, focusing on areas such as education, healthcare, affordable housing, and environmental sustainability. By investing in projects that address local needs, we aim to create a lasting and positive impact on the lives of our residents.

Environmental Stewardship: Our commitment to sustainability extends beyond our community borders. We actively seek investments that promote environmental conservation, renewable energy, and responsible resource management. This ensures that our financial resources contribute to a healthier planet for future generations.

Social Innovation: We support businesses and organizations that champion social innovation and inclusivity. Our investments aim to empower underrepresented groups, promote diversity, and foster a more equitable society.

Transparent Impact Reporting: We understand the importance of accountability. That's why we are committed to providing transparent and regular impact reports, keeping our community informed about the positive outcomes generated by our investments.

As members of our community, your support and involvement are integral to our success. Together, we can continue to drive positive change, making our community a beacon of sustainable development and social progress. Thank you for being part of this journey.

If you have any questions or would like more information about our impact investments, feel

Board Member Recruitment

As we continue our journey to make a positive impact on the lives of those in our communities through RCFNS, we are excited to announce an opportunity for passionate individuals to join our team as board members.

Why Become a Board Member?

Our community foundation is built on the principles of collaboration, inclusivity, and a shared commitment to creating a better future for all. Serving on the board provides a unique chance to play a vital role in shaping the direction of our foundation, influencing decisions, and contributing to the success of our initiatives.



If you have a passion for community development, philanthropy, and making a difference, this is your chance to be a driving force behind positive change.

What We're Looking For:

We are seeking dedicated individuals from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives who share our vision for a thriving and connected community. Whether you bring expertise in finance, fundraising, marketing, legal affairs, or community engagement, we believe that a diverse board enriches our decision-making process and strengthens the impact of our initiatives.

Key Responsibilities:

- Strategic Planning: Contribute to the development and implementation of our strategic goals and initiatives.
- Fundraising: Actively participate in fundraising efforts to support our community projects and programs.
- Advocacy: Be an advocate for our foundation, promoting awareness and engagement within the community.
- Governance: Provide oversight, accountability, and guidance to ensure the foundation operates ethically and transparently.

How to Apply:

If you are passionate about building a stronger, more vibrant community, we encourage you to submit your application by February 28th 2024. Please include a resume or CV, along with a brief statement outlining your interest in joining the board and the skills and experiences you bring to the table.

Applications can be sent to info@rcfofns.com.

Thank You for Your Support:

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of our board members both past and present for their ongoing support. Together, we can continue to build a foundation that empowers, uplifts, and strengthens our community for generations to come.

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Executive Director' Conclusion



As we reflect on the closing chapter of 2023, I am delighted to share the remarkable journey we have undertaken together at the Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia. It has been a year of transformation and resilience, and I am honoured to witness the unwavering strength of Nova Scotia's communities in the face of challenges.

Throughout the year, our foundation has continued to make a positive impact, supporting initiatives that empower and uplift our neighbours. From sustainable climate action projects to gender equality empowerment programs, we have tirelessly worked to address the unique needs of our rural communities. Despite the ongoing global challenges, the determination of our rural communities has shone through, reminding us that when we come together, we can achieve remarkable things.

A significant highlight for us this year has been the opportunity to collaborate with amazing community groups across Nova Scotia, contributing to the creation of thriving communities within our rural areas. Equally important has been the privilege of working with our incredible and diverse board. Their insights and experiences have deepened our understanding of the issues facing communities across this great province. To all who have lent the Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia your valuable time, thank you.

I am thrilled to share that we have reached a pivotal milestone - we are now 100% Impact invested. This journey was crucial for our foundation, and its lasting effects will continue to benefit the communities we serve. It is a testament to our commitment to creating meaningful and sustainable change.

As we bid farewell to 2023, let us carry forward the lessons learned and the achievements gained into the coming year. Our work is far from over, and with your continued support, we look forward to embarking on new ventures that will further enhance the vitality and resilience of our beloved rural communities.

On behalf of the Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia, I extend my deepest gratitude for your continued belief in our mission. Wishing you a joyous holiday season and a prosperous New Year filled with hope, compassion, and community.

Penny Day, Executive Director, Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia



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