

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

The Community Foundation



THE COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION  
building a greater saint john

Photo: Brilliant Labs - Area 506 Youth Participants



COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATIONS  
OF CANADA

**VitalSigns.**

Community  
Report

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building a greater saint john

Hello Friends,

The Greater Saint John Community Foundation has been fortunate to spend the past 48 years serving as a trustee of gifts, supporting a wide array of charitable organizations, and inspiring community leadership along the way. Our vision at the Community Foundation is to ensure a sustainable future and improve the quality of life in Greater Saint John.

2023 was a huge year for the Community Foundation. Our 2023 donations totaled \$7,133,560; a record shattering year. We disbursed just over \$3 million in grants to charitable causes, which included nearly \$200,000 in student awards for youth in Greater Saint John. Nine new endowment funds were established this year, which you will learn more about in this report.

This is all thanks to our generous, community-minded donors. Their support has a profound impact on our community and this report highlights some of the positive impacts of those investments in the Greater Saint John region.

We are pleased to present today, our Vital Signs Report. Vital Signs® is a community-driven data program that is led nationally by Community Foundations of Canada. We hope that you will find this report an informative and inspiring snapshot of a few of the current social needs in Greater Saint John and that it will spark conversation, and active engagement with local issues. The Vital Signs report serves as a tool to demonstrate community needs and inform granting decisions.

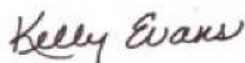
We have recently completed a 3-year strategic plan (2024-2027) that focuses on our visibility & reach, community leadership & advocacy, equitable practices & culture and leadership development. We believe that these strategic priorities embody what we have learned over the past several years and will propel us towards a more sustainable future.

Thank you for your trust and generosity. With your continued support, we are confident that together we will continue to build a Greater Saint John.

With gratitude,



Heinz Schaerer, Chair



Kelly Evans, President & CEO



## Board of Directors



Heinz Schaerer  
Chair



Kristin Ross  
Vice-Chair



Cathy Fawcett  
Secretary



Matthew Snelgrove  
Treasurer



Tracy Friars  
HR Lead



Jennifer Brown



Judith Brown



Robert Crowley



Mike Duncan



Haiping Fu



Janet Thompson-Price



Duncan Webster



Fraser Wells



Andrew West



Cathy Wright

YOUR COMMUNITY  
MAKES YOU.  
AND YOU MAKE  
YOUR COMMUNITY.

## Staff

Cindy Floyd, Sarah Frauley, Kelly Evans, Carrie Tanasichuk, Harry Daley, Trisha Erb, Claire Ashton

*\*Congratulations to Cindy Floyd on her retirement in March 2024. We thank her for her hard work and dedication to The Community Foundation.*



## Committees

### Governance Committee

Heinz Schaerer (Chair), Kristin Ross, Cathy Fawcett, Tracy Friars, Janet Thompson-Price

### Finance/Audit Committee

Matthew Snelgrove (Chair), Heinz Schaerer, Robert Crowley, Judith Brown

### Investment Committee

Michael Duncan (Chair), Fraser Wells, Haiping Fu, Matthew Snelgrove, Tracy Friars, Andrew West

### Community Impact Committee

Kristin Ross (Chair), Fraser Wells (Vice-Chair), Haiping Fu, Cathy Wright, Andrew West, Judith Brown, Michael Duncan, Michelle Thibodeau-Coates, Duyen Nguyen, Laila El-Baghdadi, Jasmine Seeley, Steve Oshai, Justin Sweeney, Alex Warren

## 2023 Financial Highlights

\*A full set of audited financial statements can be found on our website:  
<https://thecommunityfoundationsj.com/about/reports/>



	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 26,519,098</b>	<b>\$ 20,325,754</b>	<b>\$ 21,774,651</b>
<b>Rate of Return</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>-12.2%</b>	<b>14.0%</b>
<b>5 Year Average Rate of Return</b>	<b>7.2%</b>		
<b>Revenue</b>			
Grants & Donations from External Funders for Distribution	1,197,655	1,944,242	1,972,004
Fees for services rendered	379,200	359,863	324,266
Net Investment Income	2,448,132	(2,486,928)	1,954,828
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>4,024,987</b>	<b>(182,823)</b>	<b>4,251,098</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>			
Grants awarded to local charities	3,069,705	2,620,457	2,267,121
General Support Expenses	1,022,335	958,502	894,612
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>4,092,040</b>	<b>3,578,959</b>	<b>3,161,733</b>
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>(67,053)</b>	<b>(3,761,782)</b>	<b>1,089,365</b>
<b>Opening Net Assets</b>	<b>19,278,071</b>	<b>21,588,576</b>	<b>19,892,213</b>
Net Surplus/(deficit)	(67,053)	(3,761,782)	1,089,365
Donations to the Foundation	7,133,560	1,451,277	606,998
<b>Net assets at Year End</b>	<b>26,344,578</b>	<b>19,278,071</b>	<b>21,588,576</b>



# SERVICES

Our team has extensive experience working directly with community organizations to enhance their impact. Supports offered include:

## ✓ Capacity Building

We can work with your staff and board to build your organization's capacity through a variety of facilitated offerings. From strategic planning to mission oriented team-building, we can provide customized tools that will enhance your impact.

## ✓ Professional Development

We offer several professional development opportunities for your staff and/or board members tailored to the unique needs of community organizations. We offer full-day and half-day workshops on a variety of topics, as well as an intensive 8-session 'Evaluate Your Impact' course.

## ✓ Evaluation Support

Our evaluation experts can work directly with your organization to help plan, design, and implement an impactful evaluation.

## ✓ Tailored Supports

Our dynamic team can work with you to create the customized support needed to help your organization reach its full potential.

# our mission

To serve as a trustee of gifts, support charitable organizations and inspire community leadership.

# our vision

To ensure a sustainable future and improve the quality of life in Greater Saint John.

## FREE ONLINE TOOLS

### GSJ BURSARY CONNECTOR

At [www.gsjbursary.ca](http://www.gsjbursary.ca) we're connecting students with education-based bursaries in an easy, all-in-one platform.

Our Bursary Connector platform is free to use for everyone. If you're an organization who offers bursaries to students in Greater Saint John, please register and add them to our database. It's easy!

Our Bursary Finder is a top-notch filtering tool to help students sift through our entire database for bursaries that suit them best.

### GSJ VOLUNTEER CONNECTOR

At [www.gsjvolunteer.ca](http://www.gsjvolunteer.ca) we're connecting volunteers with volunteer-seeking charitable organizations in an easy, all-in-one platform.

Our Volunteer Connector platform is free to use for everyone. If you're an organization who is seeking volunteers in Greater Saint John, please register and add your positions to our database. It's easy!

Our Volunteer Connector is a top-notch filtering tool to help volunteers sift through our entire database for opportunities that suit them best.



## Leave a Legacy

Some people already have a good idea where they would like to donate their money. There is also a surprising number of generous people who just want to give where it's needed most. They want to give back and strengthen the community they love as part of their financial or estate plan.

Either way, we'd like to make it easy for you to invest philanthropically in a way that isn't a "one time gift and it's gone". The endowment approach invests your initial capital donation. Profit from your original investment is gifted every year forever, to charities doing fantastic work.

## Start a Fund

Establishing a fund with our community foundation is simple and effective. The GSJ Community Foundation takes care of all the administration work so you can focus fully on your charitable interests.

## Give Monthly

Monthly giving is such an important and rewarding way to show your support for the fund closest to your heart. As a recurring donor, you'll be part of the fabric of The Community Foundation, playing a direct role in growing your chosen fund. You're truly part of the team.

## SPRING INTAKE

Outflow Ministry Inc. (\$25,000) Shelter to Home

Compassionate Grief Centre (\$26,720) Counselling for Adults with an Intellectual Disability

PRUDE Inc. (\$29,541) Sustaining Impact through PRUDE Inc.'s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Initiatives

Bee Me Kidz (\$50,000)

Fresh Start Services for Women Inc. (\$44,500) HearthStone Housing Navigation Project

Saint John Music Communities Inc. (\$10,000) Saint John Rock Camp for Girls and Gender Creative Kids

New Brunswick Youth Orchestra (\$20,000) Sistema NB - Saint John

United Colors of Fashion (\$35,360) Sewing Hub

P.U.L.S.E Inc. (\$39,398) Improving Food Literacy & Accessibility Project

Saint Rose School Playground Revitalization (\$22,000)

L'Arche Saint John (\$9,000) Growth Readiness

## FALL INTAKE

Brilliant Labs Inc. (\$32,196); STEAM Camps

Canada Games Aquatic Centre (\$10,000) Community Access Program

Canadian Red Cross (\$31,978) Health Equipment Loan Program (HELP)

ConnexionWorks (\$33,930) Micro-Grants for Youth Entrepreneurs

Elizabeth Fry New Brunswick (\$35,000) A Leadership Enhancement Initiative for Sustained Impact

Hospice Greater Saint John (\$35,000) New Truck

Kaleidoscope Social Impact (\$50,000) Bridging to Social Finance

Saint John Learning Exchange (\$12,000) Indigenizing Teaching & Learning

Saint John Theatre Company (\$30,000) Stolen Sisters - Greater Saint John Education Outreach Tour

Saint John Tool Library (\$40,000) Strategic Initiatives Project

United for Literacy (\$14,896) Free Literacy Programming for Children





# Community Impact Grants

2023 Community Impact Grants

## \$198,050 dollars awarded in 2023 to students in Greater Saint John

The Allan Percival Smith Memorial Fund \* The Barbara and Don Ring Memorial Bursary Fund \* The Belleisle Valley Health Centre Scholarship Fund \* The Bill Gale Bursary Fund \* The CFUW-Saint John Scholarship Fund \* The C.N. Wilson Fund \* The Charles F.W. Starkey Memorial Scholarship Fund \* The Cheryl M.G. Robertson Bursary Fund \* The Constable Doug Larche Memorial Bursary Fund \* The Constable Royce Isenor Memorial Scholarship Fund \* The Cook Family Fund \* The Daniel F. Johnson Memorial Scholarships in History Fund \* The David 'DK' Kelly Memorial Bursary Fund \* The Dr. Eli Davis Memorial Fund \* The Dr. Florence M. Christie Fund \* The Dr. J.P. & Anita McNerney Fund \* The Dr. Malcolm M. Somerville Bursaries in Business Fund \* The Elmer and Jean Thompson Family Bursary Fund \* The Garfield T. Meltzer - Jewish War Veterans Scholarship Fund \* The Gregory J. Bangay Memorial Bursary Fund \* The GSJ Health & Wellness Fund \* The Jack \* Lois & Cindy Kidd Bursaries Fund \* The Jim Connolly Bursary Fund \* The John Kelly Recreation Bursary Fund \* The Joseph Sarto Hickey Carpentry Bursary Fund \* The Joshua Porter Gunn Bursary Fund \* The Juanita L. Black Bursary Fund \* The Kiwanian Norman Hicks Memorial Bursary \* The Milton & Patricia Bassen Bursary Fund \* The Nagaraj Family Fund \* The Nauwigewauk Education Foundation Bursary Fund (The Grant Beyea Memorial Bursary & The Joe Thompson Memorial Bursary) \* The Naval Memorial Fund \* The Old Ladies Home of Saint John Fund \* The Rachael Dawn Duffley Memorial Scholarship Fund \* The Robert MacMurray Memorial Bursary Fund \* The Rothesay High School Alumni Bursary Fund \* The Saint John Law Society Fund \* The Super Steel Band Bursary Fund \* The Suzanne Doyle-Yerxa Award Fund \* The Walter & Joan Flewelling Fund.



Robin Fruytier is picture left with HCol. Cheryl M.G. Robertson, The Royal United Services Institute of New Brunswick and Hon. Dr. Noel A. Kinsella, P.C., Honorary Captain Navy, HMCS Brunswicker receiving the 2023 Naval Memorial Bursary.

**Hon Dr. Noel Kinsella was a fundholder, donor and friend to the Greater Saint John Community Foundation. who passed away in 2023. He is sadly missed and never forgotten.**



## Bursary Funds

### The Dr. Jose Ledezma Memorial Bursary Fund

Bursaries will be awarded annually to students from Greater Saint John enrolled in the Nurse Practitioner Primary Health Care Program at the University of New Brunswick.



### The Higgins Family Bursary Fund

In appreciation of the support local residents have shown for the family, Kendall and Arlene have established The Higgins Family Bursary Fund. This fund will provide bursaries for graduating high school students in the Greater Saint John area that plan to enroll at any campus of the New Brunswick Community College.



### The Michael Saunders Bursary Fund

The income from this fund will fund a bursary annually to a resident of the North End of Saint John who has been accepted into a trade program at any NBCC Campus.

### The Nauwigewauk Education Foundation Bursary Fund

The Nauwigewauk Education Foundation Inc. (NEFI) was established in 2002 to provide bursaries to support post-secondary education for students living in the Nauwigewauk/Darlings Island local service district. The Nauwigewauk Education

Foundation established two new bursary funds with the Greater Saint John Community Foundation in 2023:



**The Joe Thompson Memorial Bursary** was established in memory of Joe Thompson, a well-known teacher and school district administrator. He was a mentor to many new teachers entering the teaching profession and this bursary is a fitting tribute.

**The Grant Beyea Memorial Bursary** was established in memory of Grant Beyea, who was one of the founding members of NEFI.



## Unrestricted Funds

### The Lian and Nichole XuXu Fund

Nichole XuXu is a resident of Toronto, Ontario and has a strong affinity and respect for the Greater Saint John area. Nichole established this fund in loving memory of her mother, Lian. The annual income from this fund will be used to support local charities and non-profit organizations in Greater Saint John.

### The Chapman Group Fund

Through her leadership and influence, Tanya Chapman is constantly looking for ways to create positive change and improve the lives of those around her. The annual income from the Fund will support the mission and vision of the Community Foundation and provide impactful community grants in Greater Saint John.



## Funds for Local Charities

### 1st Westfield Scouting Al Thompson Legacy Fund

Al Thompson was a long-time resident and volunteer in Grand Bay-Westfield who passed away in 2021. He was a leader in the Westfield Scouting Movement and this fund recognizes the contributions he made and the influence he had on many youth, adults and the whole community. The annual income from the fund will be used to support the activities of 1st Westfield Scouting.



### The Kokocki Family Endowment Fund

The Kokocki Family Endowment Fund was established to honor the late Karen Kokocki. The fund exists to provide support for L'Arche Saint John, which works with people with intellectual disabilities. Karen shared her joy for life with volunteers, artists, teachers, friends, and family, in a manner consistent with the mission of L'Arche.

## Field of Interest Funds

### The Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception Legacy Fund

The SCIC have a strong and deep intention of gathering the wisdom of their community life, work and mission to date and blessing the future.

The Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception Fund was created in 2023 as a legacy for the people of Greater Saint John to respond to current and future needs and enhance collaboration and partnerships within the social purpose sector.



This fund will support the charitable causes traditionally supported by the SCIC.

Learn more about these and all of our funds:





COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATIONS  
OF CANADA

**Vital**Signs.

**2024**



*Looking East (2020) image courtesy of the artist, Cliff Turner*

**Community Report  
Greater Saint John**

We are settled on the traditional, unceded lands of the Wolastoqiyik, Mi'kmaq and Peskotomuhkatiyik people who formed the Wabanaki Confederacy, signing peace and friendship treaties with the Crown in 1760. From where the Community Foundation sits, we can see cargo ships travel in and out of the Port; to our north-west is the point where the Wolastoquey river meets the Atlantic Ocean, once one of the busiest trading places for the Wabanaki. We are grateful for the stewardship of Indigenous people; for their ongoing efforts to protect lands and waters, and we strive for respectful relationships with all the peoples of this province as we search for collective healing and true reconciliation. **We are all Treaty people.**



*Rooftops South (2020) image courtesy of the artist, Cliff Turner*

## What is a Vital Signs® Report

Vital Signs® is a community-driven data program that is led nationally by Community Foundations of Canada, and locally by community foundations across Canada, including the Greater Saint John Community Foundation.

For this, our first Vital Signs® document in over a decade, we wanted to preview the program by platforming a slice of the crucial and informative work of some of the researchers/ organisations in our region who contribute to better understandings of complex issues, and add context to national and provincial data through their own data collection & analysis.

## Informed Granting

The Vital Signs report will serve as a tool to enhance the impact of our community grants. Applicants will now have easy access to relevant data they can use to clearly communicate the need they seek to address and the intended impact of their work. In addition to this, our grant review committee will be able to integrate Vital Signs indicators into their review process, giving them another tool to make decisions that align with community needs.

## Our Region

Our proximity to the Bay of Fundy and its kilometers of coastline, numerous rivers and substantial land area that includes over 2,200 acres of nature park space, 65+kms of trails, and 35+ acres of community parks, as well as charming towns and a historic uptown core makes Greater Saint John a beautiful place to live. Though it is also a place replete with challenges, some of which we will explore in the pages to follow (including threats to this natural environment), we want to acknowledge how fortunate we are to live, work and play in our beautiful home of Greater Saint John.

total population

135,622

44

median age



age

16% 17% 47% 20%

0-14 15-29 30-64 65+



families

2.8 average size of census family

1.7 average number of children

18% single-parent families

newcomers to Canada 7%

visible minorities 8%

perceptions of SJ:

57% think SJ is a good place to visit

45% think SJ is a good place to work or do business

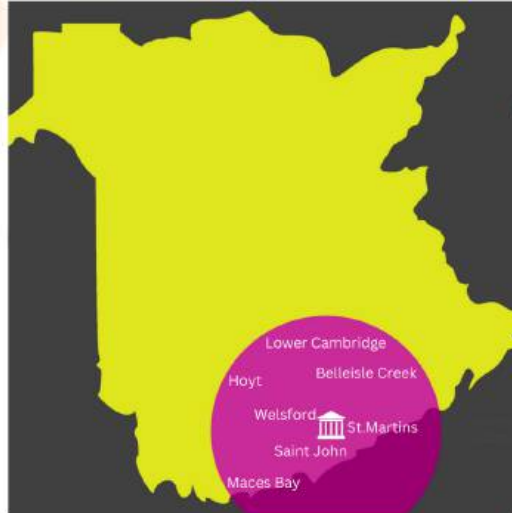
39% think SJ is a good place to live

Envision Saint John (2022)

**211** is the information and referral service that connects New Brunswickers to critical human, social, community and government support.

Last year residents in our service area made 1,060 inquiries to 211. From these requests, 211 identified 1,555 needs.

Housing access and affordability were the top needs.



Our service area spans a radius of 50 km from the present site of the County Court House Building on Sydney Street in the City of Saint John. It includes five municipalities: Saint John, Hampton, Grand-Bay, Westfield, Rothesay and Quispamsis.

Average Temperatures °C

2013  
summer 16.7°  
winter -4.7°

2023  
summer 25°  
winter -8.2°



## Child/Youth Wellbeing

In **January 2024**, New Brunswick's new Child and Youth Wellbeing Act was assented, and for the first time, children and youth in the province have their own act. Key changes from the previous Family Services Act (1980) include legislation on the voice of the child: of soliciting and incorporating their views and preferences into decisions made that most impact them. The Act and accompanying regulations aim to prevent some of the harms and injustices commonly experienced by children involved with Child Protective Services, by offering better supports to their kin to minimize the potential for children to be removed from the care of loved ones and their community, and through extending Social Development's support into adulthood (for some program features up to 26 years).

The province wants to and needs to do better at tracking outcomes for children and youth who enter & exit their care. There is a strong body of evidence, supported by the work of the Human Development Council, that demonstrates **clear pathways from child welfare systems to incarceration and homelessness**.

All children deserve to be properly cared for with love and permanence, and this requires a community response. Every year the Community Foundation has the privilege of working with organisations who are striving to fill the gaps in our systems that further marginalize some of our most vulnerable young citizens.



### Connection with homelessness:

A Point in Time (PiT) Count is an enumeration and a self-report survey of people experiencing homelessness at a specific point in time. On April 17th and 18th, 2023, the Human Development Council (HDC), in partnership with the government of NB and community organizations, conducted its largest ever PiT Count, surveying people at homeless shelters, unsheltered locations, and correctional facilities across New Brunswick. A PiT Count is one tool of many that the HDC uses to understand the scope of homelessness in NB.

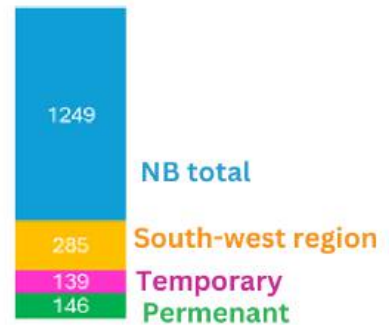
**31%** lived in foster care or a youth group home prior to experiencing homelessness

Of those who gave a time estimate, 39% said they became homeless within a year of leaving care.

**39%**

from HDC Point in Time (PiT) Count, 2023

### Children in Care from Social Supports NB





## Child/Youth Wellbeing

Policy 703 (2020) was originally developed as a tool to protect and affirm gender diverse kids. More recent revisions through Policy 713 (*Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*, 2023) state that children under 16 years old will require parental consent to use chosen pronouns, and that teachers will be required to inform parents of any sexual education curriculum to be covered weeks in advance.

This presents significant implications for the safety, wellbeing and rights of children and youth in our province. Its implementation will directly impact mental health outcomes for gender diverse children and youth, sexual health outcomes for all children and youth (including the prevalence of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections), the roles of educators/school staff and social workers, as well as parents/caregivers.

In December (2023), The Canadian Civil Liberties Association was granted Public Interest Standing in a Policy 713 lawsuit against the Government of N.B.

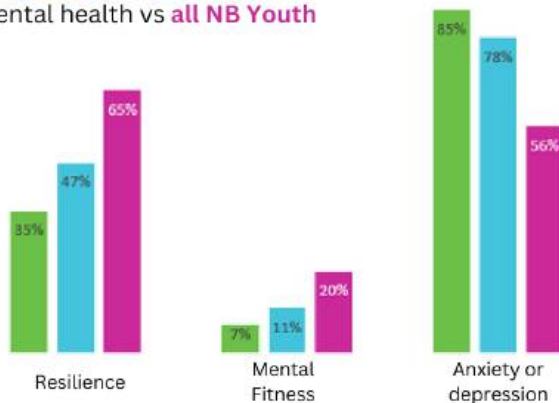
1,100+  
of NB's  
34,000  
high school  
students

Identify outside the  
male/female gender binary

*"I've made so many  
friends and it's my  
support on bad  
days"*

19 youth reported  
making a new friend  
at RLC

Non-binary and 2SLGBTQIA+ youth report more adverse  
mental health vs all NB Youth



from NB Student Wellness Survey (2022-2023), grades 6-12



Chroma is a non-profit providing support for 2SLGBTQIA+ people in the Saint John region. Chroma commits to advocating for and collaborating with our community, as well as providing 2SLGBTQIA+ education to all. They promote positive initiatives for the community and conduct research to highlight gaps in services and policy to encourage positive change

So far, in the 2023-2024 school year, **96** unique high school aged youth have attended **Rainbow Lunch Club**, a lunch hour drop-in for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth and their allies that services Uptown Saint John.

*"RLC means a safe place for my friends  
and I come when we are not welcome  
in other places"*

## Affordability

Inflation rates skyrocketed in recent years and we have all been feeling the financial strain. This is especially true for low-wage earners and people who are unemployed who experience poverty and resulting food & housing insecurity.

The cost of living feels untenable for many of our citizens, and, as we see here, the basics (such as housing and food) are not affordable for many in our region.

# \$23.35

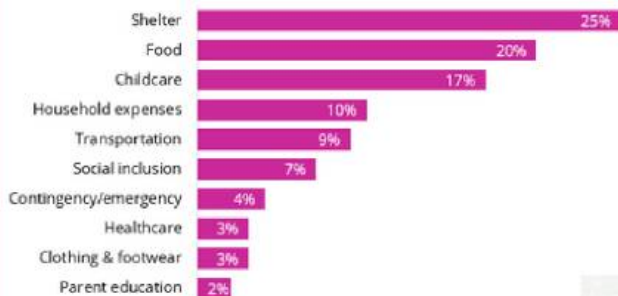
### SAINT JOHN LIVING WAGE

For a family of two adults working full-time and two children aged 2 and 7

MINIMUM WAGE

# \$15.30

Shelter and food are the most expensive budget items

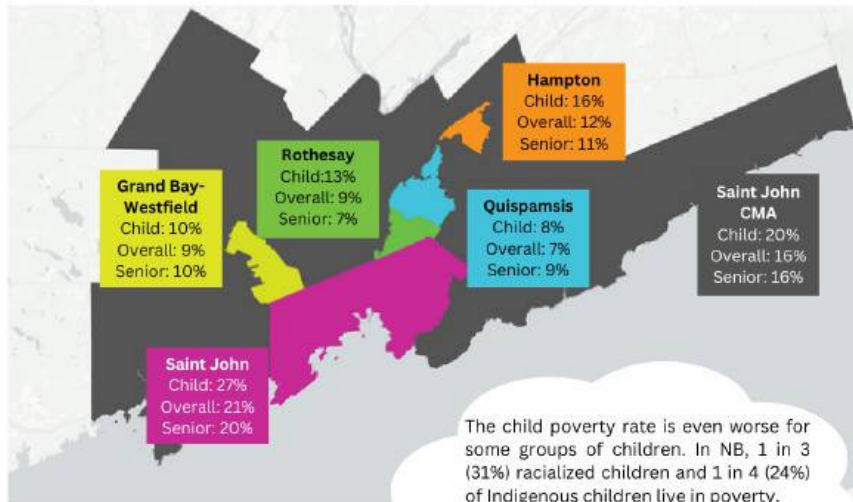


Human Development Council (2023). Living Wages in New Brunswick.

### Poverty Rates

HDC releases an annual report card in partnership with Campaign 2000 on the state of child and family poverty in New Brunswick. Child poverty rates are unevenly distributed across New Brunswick's cities.

The Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) of Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John see differences in child poverty rates between the central city and neighbouring suburban municipalities. Saint John's child poverty rate (27%) is over three times higher than the rate in Quispamsis (7%)!



The child poverty rate is even worse for some groups of children. In NB, 1 in 3 (31%) racialized children and 1 in 4 (24%) of Indigenous children live in poverty.

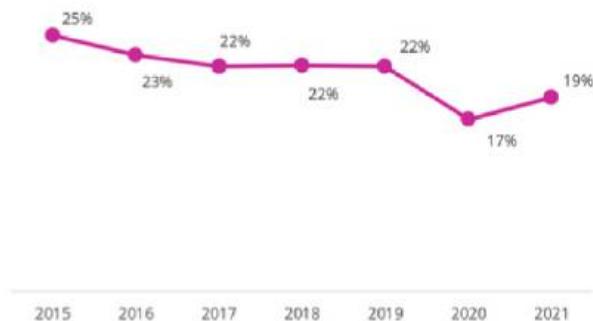
Human Development Council (2023). New Brunswick's 2023 Child & Family Report Card

# Affordability

## Poverty Rates Over Time:

When we look at the New Brunswick child poverty rate over time, we can see that the rate increased in 2021. The number of children living in poverty in the province rose from 23,000 (17%) in 2020 to 26,360 (19%) in 2021.

After declining during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic (due to government income support), the child poverty rate is trending back upward:



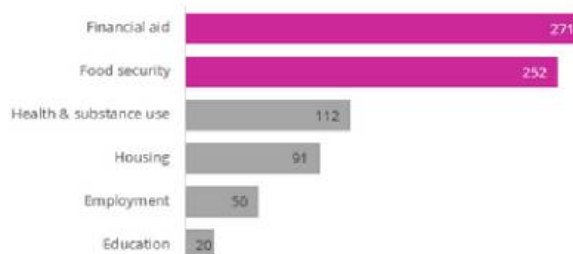
The 2021 child poverty rate is lower than those reported in the four years prior to the pandemic. However, the risk of the rate trending upward to pre-pandemic levels remains high if the cost of living continues to climb and income supports are not increased and promptly distributed to families in need.

The other thing to note in this historical view is the impact of the Canada Child Benefit (CCB). Introduced in 2016, the CCB is a tax-free monthly payment to help eligible families cover the cost of raising children under 18 years of age.

The CCB—much like the temporary income support programs introduced in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic—is instrumental to poverty reduction. **The CCB lifted 16,730 New Brunswick children out of poverty.**

## Neighbourhood Developers

The Carleton Community Centre (West), the O.N.E Change (North), P.U.L.S.E (South) and the Crescent Valley Resource Centre (North) all tracked the areas in which residents accessed their support over two years. **Financial aid** and **food security** were the most common resident needs.

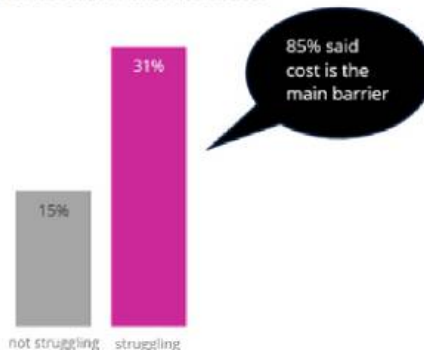


Neighbourhood developers project reporting (2022)

## The Digital Divide:

Launched in 2020, Civic Tech Saint John (CTSJ) is a 100% volunteer-driven group of passionate citizens who believe in increasing community participation by applying technology, data, and design to solve community challenges for the overall betterment of Saint John. Civic Tech Saint John partnered with local community centres to create a survey to better understand the digital access needs of residents.

Nearly 1 out of 3 people **struggling to make ends meet** do not have internet access



Civic Tech Saint John Digital Divide Project (2022)

## Food Security

Canadians are facing an affordability crisis. Data shows that 2022 saw the highest rate of inflation in 40 years. As more and more people are experiencing financial difficulty, food banks are seeing an increase in need.

Of the 10 provinces, New Brunswick has the second highest percentage of food insecure households. In 2022, **23%** of New Brunswickers were living in food insecure households.



Canadian Income Survey (CIS) 2021. Data on food insecurity for CIS 2021 were collected in Jan-Jun 2022. Source: Statistics Canada Table 13-10-0834-01.


In 2022, **3 out of 10** children in NB lived in food insecure households



Canadian Income Survey (CIS) 2021. Data on food insecurity for CIS 2021 were collected in Jan-Jun 2022. Source: Statistics Canada Table 13-10-0835-01.

In 2023, **29,846** New Brunswickers visited a food bank - **10,322** (34%) were children.



 **The cost of food in NB is up 16%\* over the past two years.**

Food prices are expected to continue to rise in 2024.

Infant formula: \$40.03 (+27%)

Bread: \$3.77 (+15%)

Potatoes: \$4.94/kg (+18%)

Margarine: \$7.58 (+26%)

Ground beef: \$11.30/kg (+13%)

Eggs: \$4.59 (+9%)

Bananas: \$2.13/kg (+8%)

Apples: \$6.17 (+7%)

\*Canada's Food Price Report 2024

# Homelessness & Affordability

**Housing stock** and **affordability** continue to be critical issues for New Brunswick, leaving citizens who already experience economic marginalization and social exclusion the worst off. In Saint John, the recent, tragic deaths of 3 unhoused people living in encampments (after fires) further emphasize the urgent need for diverse, flexible and expanded housing solutions.



1.3%  
vacancy  
rate



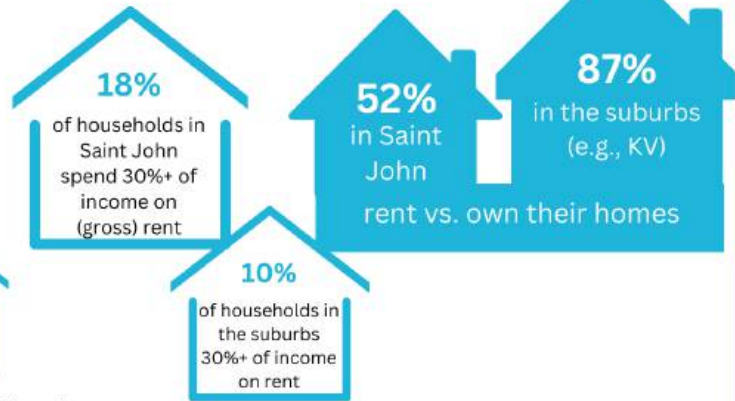
Municipal data suggests that the average abandoned building will remain boarded up for 8+ years before it goes to tax sale.

If the property is not purchased, the Province purchases it. It enters into the possession of the Department of Finance. Often it remains with Finance for 2+ years before it is processed and moved to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure.

It remains in that department for a few years before it is declared surplus. **In total, this ends up being 12-20 years before a tax-delinquent property is declared surplus property and made available to municipalities and, sometimes, not-for-profits.**

Saint John Land Bank, 2022

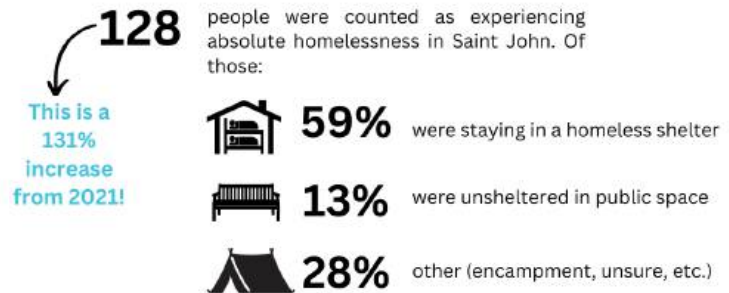
There are differences between the city of Saint John and the outlying suburbs (such as Rothesay, Quispamsis, Hampton, etc.)



## Homelessness:

The Human Development Council (HDC) manages New Brunswick's homelessness data. Their dashboard is compiled with data from the Homelessness Individual and Family Information System (HIFIS) and the By Names List - a real-time list of all people known to be experiencing homelessness in the community.

In April 2023, the HDC, in partnership with the government of NB and community organizations, conducted its largest ever PiT (point in time) Count, surveying people at homeless shelters, unsheltered locations, and correctional facilities across New Brunswick. They found that in Saint John:



HDC Point in Time Count, 2023: <https://sjhdc.ca/report-category/homelessness/>

## Local Insights



The Housing, Mobilization, Engagement and Resiliency Lab (**HOME-RL**) is an innovative social science lab at UNBSJ engaging in applied research and experiential education.

The Housing Summit Report summarizes findings from a World Café held on National Housing Day, 2022, bringing together voices of stakeholders across the province to provide suggestions on how to improve affordable housing in N.B. Here are some insights from the report:

- 1 **Housing is a human right & basic need that must be met.** We have a National Housing Strategy and related implementation act that mention the human right to housing. Yet this right is often not reflected in programs and funding provided.
- 2 NB tenancy policies do not include basic tenant protections, such as meaningful rent control: **in 2021 and 2022, rent increases in Saint John exceeded 6%.**
- 3 **Rural housing issues go unnoticed** because there is no data to reinforce the needs & claims of rural communities.
- 4 Lacking housing stock and disrepair are excuses offered by out-of-province landlords uninterested in working with tenants. These claims allow **out-of-province investors to drive up the cost** of their housing through renovations and high rent increases.
- 5 **Persons with disabilities experience higher rates of housing need;** there are not enough accessible units; new developments must be inclusive and accessible.



**Envision Saint John** is our backbone economic development organization. Envision's role is to attract people, visitors, business, and investment to the Saint John Region

The housing crisis throughout the country has been greatly impacted over the past four years, and the Saint John Region is experiencing a surge in population growth, while the housing development industry has struggled to adapt to increasing inflation and higher interest rates.

**In 2022, the Saint John Region needed to construct between 1,200-1,500 new residential units to meet population growth demand.** In 2022, there were:



It is possible that population growth could continue at this level and even exceed it in the future. Addressing structural challenges that are limiting the growth of housing supply will be critical for the region.

Increased residential density is going to be an important tool to manage the cost of housing and maintain attainability of housing. **If population growth continues to outpace the increase in our housing supply, the price of real estate will continue to escalate.**

Regional population projections predict that the Saint John Region will continue to grow and housing supply will continue to be a challenge that the region will need to address.

Envision Saint John, 2024 & Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation (CMHC)

## Healthcare

As in the rest of Canada, our healthcare system is grappling with many different issues. Long wait times for medical procedures and specialist appointments are a significant issue. Access to primary care providers can be limited. We are also experiencing an aging population, placing increased strain on the healthcare system as older individuals typically require more healthcare services. These challenges are not new, but were worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data from the New Brunswick Health Council shows that our experience with the healthcare system is **getting worse**.

Fewer people have a health care provider



Citizens who have a primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) for Health Zone 2, New Brunswick Health Council's Primary Health Survey (2022).

More people report difficulty navigating the health care system



Citizens who report trouble finding their way around the health care system in the past 12 months for Health Zone 2, New Brunswick Health Council's Primary Health Survey (2022).

Fewer people are able to get an appointment within 5 days



Citizens who were able to get an appointment with their family doctor within 5 days for Health Zone 2, New Brunswick Health Council's Primary Health Survey (2022).

## Youth Substance Use:

PlanetYouth and the Government of New Brunswick have launched a 5 year pilot project to reduce youth substance use developed from the Icelandic Prevention Model. A baseline survey of 709 youth from the Saint John area found that:



In our Health Region, for every 100,000 people there are

doctors

**270**

life expectancy at birth:



**80 years**



People who report having a 'strong' or 'somewhat strong' sense of belonging:

**73%** all people (aged 12+)

**92%** youth (aged 12-17)

**77%** seniors (aged 65+)

**21%**



report most days are 'quite a bit' or 'extremely' stressful



**13%**

rank their mental health as 'low' or 'fair'



**New Brunswick Social Pediatrics** implemented the Parent-Child Assistance Program (PCAP) in 2018 in response to extreme generational poverty in Saint John. PCAP is a community-level program that provides sustained and comprehensive supports to women and birthing people who use substances or alcohol during pregnancy, resulting in "exposed" births.

PCAP is one of several programs that NBSP has developed to:

- identify and mitigate factors that disrupt healthy childhood development,
- promote and support wellness across the entire family,
- empower children and families to escape generational cycles of poverty and poor health

The average PCAP family includes a mom and two children:



- 27 years old (19-44)
- Single (90%)
- Grade 10 Education
- ACE score of 6
- Victims of Abuse (94%)
- Chronic Medical Issue (55%)

PCAP uses evidence-based best practices including harm-reduction, prevention, and individualized wrap-around interventions, reducing stigma in order to support health & wellbeing for parents & their children.



80% of participants who became pregnant abstained from drugs or alcohol during that pregnancy



69% are abstinent from substance-use upon graduation

### The Cycle of Generational Poverty in Families

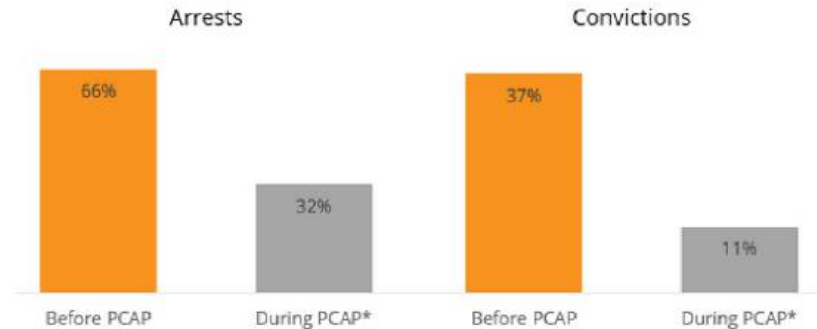
#### PCAP Client Childhood History

- 95% reported a history of alcohol issues in their family.
- 85% reported a history of substance use in their family.
- 72% had involvement with child protection, foster care, or were adopted.
- 94% experienced physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse in their lifetime.
- 65% reported first using substances between the ages of 11-14.

#### Risk Factors for PCAP Children

- 100% have a parent who experiences alcohol- or substance-use disorder.
- 90% experienced divorce/parental separation.
- 89% have a parent who has experienced mental health issues.
- 66% have a parent that has been criminalized.
- 39% were exposed to violence in-utero.

PCAP Graduates had less involvement with the Criminal Justice System:



\*Rate among PCAP Graduates who completed the program

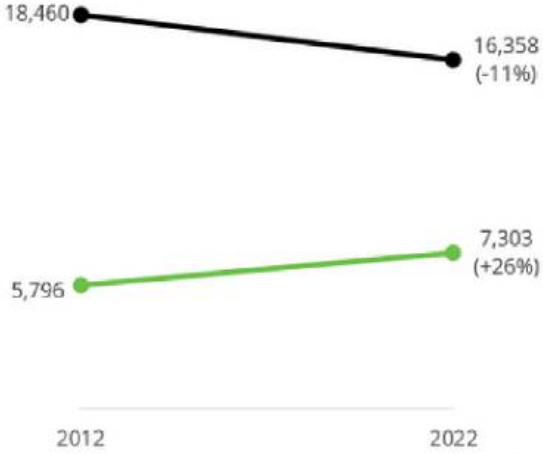


# K-12 Education

In New Brunswick, the provincially-funded public education system, Kindergarten to Grade 12, is offered through a dual system of English and French schools. There is the **Anglophone School District-South (ASD-S)**, offering both English Prime and French Immersion, and the **District Scolaire Francophone Sud (DSFS)**.

ASD-S has 69 schools with 23,661 students. DSFS spans a large geographic area; however, in our region there are 2 schools with 871 students.

Data from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development shows that from 2012 to 2022, enrollment in **English Prime** in ASD-S has decreased 11%, whereas enrollment in **French Immersion** increased 26%



School Year 2022-2023, Summary Statistics. Prepared by: Policy & Planning Division, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development April 2023

Led by Anglophone South School District (ASD-S) and the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative (BCAPI), the **When Children Succeed (WCS)** project provides K-2 students in seven elementary schools serving Saint John’s low-income neighbourhoods with additional teachers and resources to help overcome learning barriers caused by poverty.

Since the program was launched in 2018:

- The literacy data, year after year, (despite different measures being applied each year) consistently showed the students’ literacy gap had closed.
- There is still work to do to close the numeracy gap. In all cases, WCS students began the year well behind their peers in the control group, and in all cases, they narrowed that gap.
- WCS classrooms report an increase in student engagement, positive behaviours, social skills, confidence, and overall attitude. Chronic absenteeism is down.
- An average of 750 K-2 students benefited from the project, each year. The annual investment of \$1.5 M for the project translates to \$2,000 per student. This project equips the children with the essential education foundations for success in life. The benefits for all are priceless.

Because of this program, WCS students are on a more even footing with their more fortunate peers as they move through elementary school – giving them the opportunity to end the cycle of generational poverty.

## Post-Secondary Education

In our region:

**14%** of adults do not have a high school diploma

**54%** have a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree

### University of New Brunswick - Saint John:

Saint John is home to a satellite campus of University of New Brunswick (UNB).

**1,918** students were enrolled at UNBSJ in the 2022-23 academic year (97% were full-time students)

**21%** were International students

**\$8,177** full-time undergraduate Arts & Science tuition fee (+4.5%)

**\$19,148** International student tuition fee (+4.5%)

Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission

### New Brunswick Community College:

The New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) has six campuses across the province - one of which is in Saint John. The NBCC Saint John campus boasts full-time study programs, including in the fields of Administrative Professional, Business Administration, Electrical and Electronics Engineering Technology, Health, Information Technology, Mechanical and Industrial, Social Sciences as well as Trades.

**12,294** students were enrolled at NBCC (all campuses) in the 2022-23 academic year

**18%** were international students

**84%** of graduates are employed in a related field

**93%** of graduates remain in NB

NBCC Annual Report 2022-23



# Employment

Unemployment is the lowest it has been in 4 years



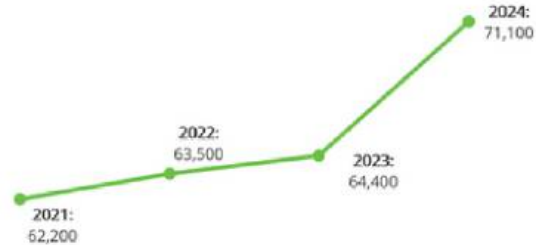
Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0378-01 Labour force characteristics, three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality



WorkLinks is a program of the Learning Exchange providing free employment services through skill development, individualized coaching, and job development. WorkLinks has innovated to adapt to changes in the labour market over the past decade. In its 10th year (April 2023- March 2024):

- 270** learners received employment coaching
- 122** jobs were secured (99 full-time and 23 part-time)
- 90%** overcame one or more barriers to employment
- 50%** of jobs were secured by a jobseeker who has experienced poverty
- 40%** upgraded their skills or education while at the Learning Exchange

Similar, employment levels have been growing



Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0378-01 Labour force characteristics, three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality

## Labour Disruptions:

2023 was a year for labour strikes nationally, with “disruption” (measured using person-days not worked) reached an 18-year high. In New Brunswick we recall the CUPE strike in 2021 that included over 20,000 workers and lasted 16 days, forcing the closure of schools. This was the largest strike in Canada that year.

Last fall, Saint John inside workers (CUPE Local 486) were on strike for a month before reaching an agreement with the City and the Saint John Board of Police Commissioners.

## Newcomers:

Regionally, newcomers now make up **32%** of Employment Counsellor caseloads for the Working NB Saint John office.

Working NB expects that to reach as much as **50%** in the next few years.

## Environment

We are known for our picturesque coastal setting, historic architecture, and vibrant communities. The Bay of Fundy is home to the highest tides in the world - the height difference from low to high tide is approximately 8 metres.

We are fortunate to have many parks, hiking trails, and conservation areas. For example, Rockwood Park, one of Canada's largest urban parks, is home to over 40 km of hiking and biking trails. Stonehammer UNESCO Geopark, the first Geopark in North America, is centred around Saint John. The park contains rock formations that date back to the Precambrian era and some of the rocks may be a billion years old.

Like the rest of the world, our region has started to feel the effects of climate change. We can expect warmer annual temperatures, warmer winters, increased rainfall events, rising sea levels, and change to storm frequency and intensity.

The **Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP)** is a community-based program initiated by Environment Canada in 1991 to help Atlantic Canadians restore and sustain local watersheds and adjacent coastal areas. For thirty years, ACAP has conducted successful in-school environmental education programs, summer camps, ecological inventories, water quality monitoring programs, habitat restorations, watercourse restorations, wetland enhancements, contaminated site remediation and engaged thousands of area residents in community cleanup initiatives.



average commute time (in minutes)

**91%**

of commuters use an automobile as their primary mode of transportation

SJ Transit riders in 2023:

**1,937,659**



In 2023...



**1,200**

people were reached through educational field trips and after-school programs



**612**

volunteers cleaned up

**4,555**

kg of litter



**347**

volunteers planted

**2,552**

native trees and plants



The **Belleisle Watershed Coalition (BWC)** is a charitable environmental organization established in 2013 to support scientific research, aquatic restoration, and environmental education within the Belleisle watershed and Lower Saint John River Valley. Their projects focus on water quality, environmental monitoring, fish and aquatic habitats, riparian assessment, enhancement, and management, and community outreach.



In 2023, the BWC **planted 2,033 native trees and plants**, an increase of 26% from 2022!



**Cyanobacteria**, commonly called blue-green algae, are a type of bacteria naturally present in rivers and lakes. With the right conditions (temperature, sunlight, flow, and food - nutrients) populations can grow quickly and clump together to form what is called a bloom.

Cyanobacteria feed and grow on nutrients from decaying organic matter (like aquatic plants), in runoff from the land, and in sediments at the bottom of the water. Blooms typically occur in warmer months starting in late spring to early summer. Some cyanobacteria species produce toxins. These toxins are called cyanotoxins and are harmful to human and animal health.

Both ACAP and BWC regularly monitor cyanobacteria blooms. In 2023, cyanobacteria blooms were confirmed at the following locations:

- Meenan's Cove
- Renforth Wharf
- Royal Kennebecasis Yacht Club
- Hatfield Point
- Kiersteadville
- Earle Cove

## The Arts

Our region is home to many professional artists, as well as community-based arts and educational organizations. We have a variety of performing arts companies, venues, galleries, festivals, museums, and libraries.

**Imperial Theatre** is an 842-seat historic building that has enriched our community through live performance and outreach programming. Their mandate is to enrich the community by providing a professional quality, multi-purpose facility; to engage audiences through world-class entertainment experiences; and to inspire the presentation of local productions and the development of the arts.

In 2023, they had 60,632 attendees at 154 performances and events!



**L'Arche** founded **Creative Connections** (CC) in 2016. Now, the front porch of L'Arche Saint John, CC nourishes creative confidence, emotional health, and important friendships for artists with intellectual disabilities. Seasonally, the program supports physical and mental health through our accessible Community Garden on the Westside. Our program artists work in a variety of styles, media, and at varying levels of experience. They are guided by our dedicated program assistants, volunteers, and through instruction by professional artists.



Image of Hooper Studios in Hampton, one of approximately 12 fine arts studios in our GSJ region.



I.D. Two people are in frame standing. On the left is Gray, who is facing towards April, on the right, and laughing. April's gaze looks down as she laughs. They are wearing colourful paint smocks.

In the last fiscal year L'Arche had 57 CC participants and 328 volunteer hours. They also sold \$4,200 of art!



**ArtsLink NB** is a member-based arts service organization, founded in 2009 to advance the arts in New Brunswick by linking and unifying artists and arts organizations and promoting their value. They represent New Brunswick arts professionals of all disciplines from across the province.

### Arts Funding in 2022-23:

**\$6,350,577**

the amount **Canada Council for the Arts** allocated for New Brunswick-based individuals and organizations (2% of their total allocation within Canada).

**\$796,000**

the amount **Canada Council for the Arts** allocated for Saint John-based individuals (13% of the NB total).

**\$155,493**

the amount the **New Brunswick Arts Board** allocated to the Saint John region (13% of the NB total).

**\$2,432,429**

the amount of **Arts and Culture Funding** the Government of New Brunswick allocated to the Saint John region (27% of the NB total).

**1.87%**

of people in our region are artists as their primary profession.\*

\*This is an underestimate of artists in our region, as many shield themselves from the artistic labour market's inherent uncertainty by diversifying their activity (often this is required just to eat and pay bills).

## A call for feedback, partnerships and contributors...

Thank you for engaging with this Vital Signs® report. Please consider this a working document: a small collection of local, provincial, and national data – nowhere near a comprehensive analysis of the many complex and dynamic issues at play in our communities. What we present here forms a snap-shot of some of the available data touching on a range of the people and features (primarily) of Greater Saint John.

We recognize gaps that include more specific information on intersectional experiences and other considerations within Greater Saint John. In some instances, this is because there is a lack of available information. In others, we may have failed to reach out to the right people collecting, disaggregating and analyzing this data; it may also be because we (as a community) haven't collectively paid enough attention, unintentionally, contributing to experiences of exclusion and marginalization. Ultimately, we made choices about what to include in this introductory document based on what was found and shared.

This is a preview of our Vital Signs® program, which we will evolve to pay more focused and deeper attention to additional complex issues in Greater Saint John and to platform the valuable work of more and different organizations.

If you are a member of an organization or community who would like to inform Vital Signs® by offering feedback on what you have seen here, or by having your work platformed in future publications, please reach out. We look forward to a collaborative Vital Signs® journey.

For this report we accessed data from the following:



*We would like to dedicate Vital Signs® this report to Ms. Wanda Roche (pictured here in one of her many signature hats). A bastion of style and grace, Ms. Roche was also a vital & generous member of her community and was instrumental in kicking off and co-organizing our Vital Conversations with older adults. Wanda died tragically on February 13, 2024, and her absence is felt deeply in Crescent Valley where she will never be forgotten. We strive to follow Ms. Roche's example of humanitarian compassion and community leadership. Rest in power, Wanda.*



THE COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION  
building a greater saint john

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Vital Conversation® on  
older adults & belonging  
at the Crescent Valley Resource Centre in Nov, 2022