

Highland News

An Occasional Compendium of News and Notes
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Edited by Hilary Amit

HCRS Employees Making A Difference

HCRS Staff Contributions Are Appreciated & Recognized

Riverview Home Corporation, Pictou County Y, Special Olympics Nova Scotia, Early Intervention Pictou County and United Way Pictou County are a few of the many organizations that are grateful of the contributions from various HCRS staff.

Riverview was very grateful to have HCRS staff Margaret Chiasson, Kelly Atwater, Ross MacIntosh, Ryan White and Camilla Thompson volunteer for shifts during a forced evacuation of their facility earlier this winter. These five staff acquitted themselves professionally and represented all of us during a very challenging period. We are proud of them.

Pictou County Y nominated HCRS employee Margie Beck to be **Maritimer of the Week** for her work as a volunteer with youth and the United in Friendship Program. Well done Margie and congratulations from all of us.

Special Olympics Nova Scotia nominated HCRS staff Cathy Mason to be mission staff for the world winter games in 2009, Boise, Idaho. Congratulations Cathy . Special Olympics Nova Scotia reached out on short notice to one of their coaches - Ross MacIntosh to attend the winter games in Quebec. Congratulations Ross.

HCRS Staff also serve on various Boards of Directors and committees throughout Pictou County, Nova Scotia and Canada.

25 MacBeth Ave Ready for Occupancy in April 2008

Our newest home replacing 304 Temperance Street is almost ready for occupancy. Last minute glitches in the construction details and the weather have slowed down the completion of this home. The latest estimate will see the contractor turn the home over to Community Service by Mid-April.

Despite the delay HCRS staff, family members and members of the Board of Directors who have toured the facility are thrilled with the potential of this new home. Program Supervisor Darlene Lewis and House Managers Lynne Laffin/Joanne Price are pleased with the level of staffing support funded by the Department of Community Services for this home. They are currently working on staffing rosters.

HCRS staff are developing plans that will strike a balance between old and new furniture for the home. We are also faced with the pleasant challenge of furnishing/equipping/using several new spaces - two lounges, a verandah and a fabulous deck. This in addition to the potential uses of the 6 acres of land surrounding the

property. The design and layout of the home are being studied by other groups throughout Nova Scotia considering building 6 or eight bed homes.

Department conducting review of Per Diem rates

All residential agencies in Nova Scotia are in the process of a per diem rate review. The last time this process was completed was in the 1990's. This time the review will address not only staffing situations but more importantly operational costs. Early indications from Agencies that have completed the process are positive. In fact the staffing model used by the Department in this rate review has yielded good results at HCRS in planning for staff levels at 25 MacBeth Rd. HCRS is in the final stages of preparing the latest request for operational information prior to having a full per diem rate review. The Department intends this to be an annual process.

It is also good to know the Dept. Of Community Services is moving ahead with a review of Vocational Services and has completed a study of residential capacity in the Province.

One Journey Program to ease Staffing Shortages

HCRS and Riverview Home Corporation have partnered with the Department of Community Services and Department of Education to access a staff training program for people who are re-entering the workforce. We are very pleased to note that 10 people have successfully completed a 4 week essential skills training program.

These individuals will have a total of 4 weeks of on the job training and a further 3 weeks of class room training. HCRS will be hosting 5 individuals and all staff are asked to welcome and ensure a thorough **On the Job Training** experience for these individuals.

Human Resources at HCRS:

HCRS is a large organization with about 100 full and part-time employees. It is also a complex organization with many needs and issues that are sometime not covered in either the HR Policy Manual or the Collective Agreement. To help deal with these issues HCRS has a Labour Management Committee which has been asked to review and advise on three issues raised by Staff.

1. Summer vacations and 2 regular staff being off at the same time.

2. Regular staff applying for temporary positions with the same hours.

3. Number of consecutive calendar days that regular part-time staff can work.

The committee met on Thursday March 20, 2008 to review these items. The committees recommendations and minutes will be circulated to all program areas.

HCRS and CUPE 2330 have developed a protocol to approve requests for Job Sharing by staff with regular positions. This protocol has resulted in the approval of two agreements which are currently in the implementation stage. This protocol will be circulated to all program areas.

HCRS has completed the review of service time for members of the bargaining unit effective November 1, 2006. The results have been communicated to each staff person and CUPE 2330.

New Legislation affects HCRS work place

Two new acts implemented in October of 2007 have an impact on our workplace. The first is the Protection of Persons in Care Act. This act is aimed at ensuring that People in Care are supported in environments that are free from abuse and neglect. The provisions of the act are extensive and requires that all persons with knowledge of improper treatment of persons in care as defined in the act must make a report internally and externally. This is very similar in nature, but wider in scope, to the Adult Protection Act, which covers persons in and out of care.

All staff have been provided information on this act during staff meetings. Copies of the relevant procedures and regulations are available at each work site. HCRS staff are reminded that PPCA does not replace any of the internal reporting mechanisms, policies or procedures.

The second act deals with Violence in the Work Place. HCRS is fortunate that a hard working OHS committee, with support from H. Wallace Martell, developed an extensive Violence in the Workplace policy, protocol and risk assessment tool three years ago. Our challenge is to ensure that our risk assessments are current and have broadened in scope to cover any new provisions of the legislation. Work on this project continues at various levels - provincially and locally.

United In Friendship Program

The phenomenal success of this program has not only garnered HCRS employee Margie Beck recognition as Maritimer of the Week, but has also created a significant problem. How do we sustain this program?

The United In Friendship program is funded by a grant from United Way of Pictou County. The program builds on the success of the HCRS Summer Recreation program for children, which last year had a waiting list. A key learning from the

Day Programs and Changing Needs of HCRS Clients

summer program is the need for children to develop social networks.

The United in Friendship program was funded to create social networks for children with diverse needs. The program has achieved that objective and supported several others including a social/advocacy network for families of children with diverse needs. The United Way of Pictou County and the Community Health Board have stepped forward with a total of \$12,500.00 for 2008/2009 and another \$10,000.00 for 2009/2010 to develop capacity in the community to sustain the networks.

United in Friendship will be training 10 individuals over the next year to become facilitators for the Circle of Friends program and inclusion advocates. It is expected that families will retain these individuals to support the community social inclusion needs of their children.

A hearty congratulations to Margie Beck, Sheri Scott and all the volunteers who have made this program such a resounding success. We look forward to another great year and to funding for an improved summer recreation program in 2008.

Social Notes

HCRS staff continue to be a fertile bunch with a another banner year for pregnancies - 5 to date and counting. The mummies to be are Lynne Laffin, Cathy Mason, Jillian Barnhill, Elaine Farrell and Melissa Latter. Congratulations to all of you! It is interesting to note that four of these ladies work for Department 50 headed by Program Supervisor Rocklyn Dorrington. We leave you to draw your own conclusions.

In November 2007 HCRS management staff completed a strategic review of clients' emerging needs. We were well supported in our analysis by

DCS Care Coordinator Marie Walker. Key findings were summarized into a report which has been forwarded to the Board of Directors and the Department of Community Services. Key findings include opportunities for HCRS to:

- develop supports that meet the needs of an ageing population,
- provide meaningful employment and /or retirement supports.
- address needs for social networks.
- address challenges in transportation
- address health services
- address staff training needs to deal with issues of ageing.

House Managers and Program Supervisors will be circulating the contents of this report to staff over the next few months.

Praise From Parents and Advocates

The Board of Directors of HCRS were pleased to receive words of praise for the outstanding support provided by staff to clients. These words of praise came from our toughest critics - the families and advocates of our clients. My congratulations to all of you and my sincere thanks for confirming my deepest respect for your work.

Thirtieth Anniversary Recognition

At a reception hosted by the HCRS Foundation our quiet style of providing quality services was publicly affirmed with presentations from the Department of Community Services, Special Olympics, the Nova Scotia Residential Agencies Associations and a motion passed in the Nova Scotia House of Legislative Assembly. Thanks to everyone for participating and in particular to the HCRS Foundation for generous support.

ILS impacts HCRS Clients

The Independent Living Supports program has provided long awaited opportunities for HCRS clients who are ready to move out of twenty four hour per day support. To date two clients have moved into the ILS program from the old Supervised Apartment program. Two other HCRS clients are planning to transition to the ILS program, one from a small option home and another from the Supervised Apartment Program.

The key features of this program are: a high level of focus on client desires for independence; a cap of 21 hours per week of staff support and a service plan based on client needs.

This program is also making good use of the transition apartments located at St. Bernard Street and Emmanuel Street.