



CHEBUCTO CONNECTIONS

2019/2020

ANNUAL REPORT

*Bringing Possibilities
and
Innovation to Spryfield*

Message from the Board

Chebucto Connections is a cornerstone of this community, which is why I was proud to step into the role of board chair in November as we said farewell to a long-standing and passionate supporter and volunteer, Marjorie Willison. She handed over the reigns to a relatively new board and encouraged us to continue on with our review and renewal of the organization's vision, with an eye to the future. We are excited about where it is heading.

Once again, through the year, the organization worked with community partners and government agencies to help people overcome barriers and connect them to the services, programs and resources they needed. We introduced the Community Food Market which provides fresh produce, bread and eggs to those in need. With this approach, people have choice and more of a market experience than a typical foodbank.

The Pathways Program had 320 students enrolled and supported 86 high school students to graduate in 2019. And, while this school year ended under unusual circumstances, we know Pathways graduates have a stronger start for post-secondary education or pursuing other goals with the skills and confidence they have gained through this amazing program.

Adaptability and overcoming obstacles seem to be strengths of this organization, and they were tested as we saw the beginning stages of the COVID-19 pandemic in March. It meant changing the way programs could be offered and how the team worked on a day to day basis to keep both employees and our clients healthy and safe. In closing,

I want to thank Adrianna MacKenzie, the Executive Director and her staff team for their incredible dedication and commitment to their clients and the community. As I look ahead, I believe this is a great organization that will make a difference in the lives of the people who live here for many years to come.

Michelle Lucas
Acting Board Chair

Looking Back: A Year in Review

In the 2019/2020 year Chebucto Connections worked to respond nimbly to the social issues within our community. We did this by listening to feedback from our clients, participating in community events and doing formal consultations on specific subject areas. This approach ensures that we understand the realities in our communities and can make sure our work is directly connected to those needs.

In the Spring of 2019 we finished our ninth year of running the Pathways to Education Program in the Spryfield community. Our skilled staff provided over 300 students with academic support, post secondary planning and exploration, one on one coaching and opportunities to build valuable life skills.

In July and August we piloted a fresh produce market in partnership with the Mobile Food Market. We also continue to serve community members who need support to navigate government systems and services. All of our work aims to address urgent social issues that exist in the communities we serve. Our team of compassionate and skilled staff provide a dignity first approach and work tirelessly to support our clients.

In the background of our work are the cheerleaders, volunteers, partners and donors who help make sure we can try innovative approaches, pay a living wage, keep the lights on and reach hundreds of people every year. In the coming year we hope to grow our donors to enable us to sustain the dynamic work that we do.

FINANCIALS STANDINGS

During our 2020 fiscal year we continued to see strong financial support from our individual donors along with growing support from many HRM businesses. Grants and funding from foundations make up the bulk of our revenue and fundraising is always a primary focus.

As we look ahead to continued growth, we are committed to balancing the budget while providing quality programming in the community we serve. Private donations received allow us to invest in areas that our current grants don't cover such as our Library Club and access to our Community Outreach Worker. Our work here is possible because of the support and commitment from our board, volunteers, staff and donors.

Christina Carter
Operations Manager

	2020	2019
Revenues	\$1,129,387	\$1,150,875
Expenditures	\$1,173,326	\$1,195,333
Excess of revenue over expenditures	\$ (43,939)	\$(44,458)
Revenue	2020	2019
Donations/Fundraising	\$25,734	\$12,658
Foundations/Charities	\$926,439	\$999,434
Government/Grants	\$164,951	\$123,456
Misc	\$12,263	\$15,327
Total	\$1,129,387	\$1,150,875
Expenditures	2020	2019
Operational ie. Audit, Insurance	\$17,016	\$51,009
Salaries	\$119,320	\$80,712
Rent	\$89,574	\$70,443
Fundraising	\$779	\$444
Program Delivery	\$946,637	\$992,725
Total	\$1,173,326	\$1,195,333



PATHWAYS TO EDUCATION

Turning Education into Opportunities

The Pathways to Education program is designed to prepare youth for life beyond high school graduation and to teach them the skills needed to navigate the world around them. This past year, students at Pathways to Education Spryfield had the opportunity to engage in a wide range of activities. Our skilled staff and partner organizations provide an array of opportunities to meet the needs of a dynamic group of youth. Two examples of after school programming activities that took place this past year included:

CAREER AND POST SECONDARY SPOTLIGHT

Exposing Youth to Possibilities

In 2019 we created diverse opportunities for students to explore possibilities for their future and build their skills.

60 Students

Participated in exploration trips to 5 colleges in Halifax and Truro

14 students

Participated in the Bluenose youth run stretching their physical and mental comfort zones

200 Students

Participated in Career week which hosted 60 Career representatives from a wide array of jobs

25 Students

Participated in a volunteer fair with 12 local community organizations

16 hours

Spent cooking meals for the local out of the cold shelter to help people experiencing homelessness

21 Students

Received emergency first aid training and certification to build their skills and confidence

The Makerspace Workshop provided students at Pathways Spryfield with the opportunity to participate in hands-on experiential learning. Facilitated through a partnership with Brilliant Labs, students explored the linkages between computer science, coding, technology, and design.

Recognizing that students needed extra support with advanced math and science, Pathways Spryfield organized special tutoring sessions that connected students with volunteers who possessed the skills. Many of the volunteers were professionals who were not available until after 5 pm. Not wanting the students to miss out on the opportunity because it fell at dinner

time, Pathways Spryfield decided to make it a pizza night as well, and dubbed the sessions “**Math, Science and Pizza Club**”. The tutoring sessions were a huge success.

These are just two examples of the variety of opportunities we create for our students. We know that no two students are alike and in order to ensure they all have opportunities to explore and be exposed to relevant opportunities we work diligently to offer a variety of choice and the one on one support to step into those opportunities.

Delivered in Partnership With:



A PICTURES WORTH A THOUSAND WORKS

Discovering volunteer opportunities and having a chance to make connections with local organizations builds confidence and capacity.



Getting a chance to see and try out the trades make them more of a possibility for underrepresented people in those industries.



Career week gives students a meaningful opportunity to practice their social skills, learn about dynamic careers and make connections.



2019 Student Graduation



DIAGNOSING POVERTY PRESCRIBING POSSIBILITIES

Diagnosing poverty is a collaborative initiative with health care practitioners to connect individuals and families living in poverty to the supports and resources that will help them improve their quality of life. Nova Scotia has one of the highest child poverty rates in the country and we see the implications of that in our work every day.

Support from Watts Wind has helped us maintain a community support worker position so we can help address each clients unique needs with compassion and dignity.

Due to the personal nature of this work we capture feedback through statistics and testimonials because photos can feel invasive for many of our clients. This past year feedback from clients has helped us see that many people in our community are struggling but those same individuals and families are showing up to try and make their lives better.

Over a six month period in 2019 we were able to help 83 people connect to multiple services and supports as seen below in our six month snapshot.

SIX MONTH SNAPSHOT IN NUMBERS

83 Clients

Referred from doctors or client to client connections.
Most needed support with multiple issues

46% Financial Support

Helping clients navigate how to address living in poverty

27% Housing Support

With affordable housing out of reach for most people in poverty we help people access affordable options

25% Legal Support

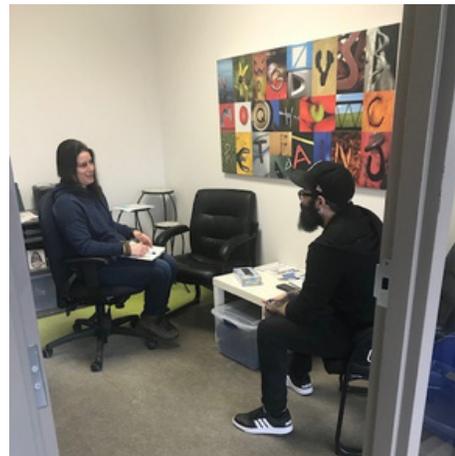
Our partnership with NS Legal aid means people can access social justice legal support in their neighbourhood

19% Health Support

Getting help to navigate physical and mental health supports helps to improve quality of life

17% Food Support

Helping to connect people to diverse food supports in the community to increase their intake of nutrient dense food



Pathways and Diagnosing Poverty staff work closely to best serve families.



A local news story shares this photo (<https://www.thechronicleherald.ca/lifestyles/chebucto-connections-helps-low-income-people-gain-access-to-health-care-in-spryfield-282780/>)

"I needed help through my mental health crisis and Chebucto Connections made that reality happen by doing the work for me that I wasn't able to do at the time. You made it easier and a smoother transition that a lot of people I know would appreciate your service too." -Diagnosing Poverty Client

"My friend said knowing that Chebucto Connections exists and they do what they do she doesn't feel hopeless and lost and maybe things could turn around for her." -Diagnosing Poverty Client

Funding Provide By:



COMMUNITY FOOD MARKET

In 2019 we were invited to explore a partnership with the Mobile Food Market. The opportunity was initially to manage a food pack program previously run by one of our community partners.

We knew our clients would benefit from low/no cost produce and we wanted to create a model that was built on a foundation of dignity, choice and positive social connections. After learning from the experiences of the YWCA's produce pack program, the Mobile Market and the Dartmouth Food Centre we launched our Community Food Market in July of 2019. Our market was open to anyone in the community regardless of income, creating an equitable experience. We kept our costs low through our partnership with the Mobile Market and promoted the market throughout the greater Spryfield area. To ensure a dignified experience market bucks made possible by grants from the province and the local health board, were available to community members to further subsidize purchases. The biweekly market became a staff highlight as we watched the joy our customers experienced bringing home affordable fresh produce

Through the generosity of the community, our partnership with the Mobile Market and a dozen volunteers we were also able to provide 33 free large food boxes for community members in December.



SUCCESS IN NUMBERS

\$7000+ Low cost produce sold

Community members can stretch their food budgets further with low cost produce.

\$4000.00+ produce given away

Market bucks allow those struggling with poverty to choose free healthy produce in a dignified way.

33 free holiday food boxes

Through community support we provided 33 free Holiday food boxes to community members in need

Funding Provide By:



I am in awe of the humane way you treat others. I appreciate your time and energy with the produce packs, especially with the way you deliver them with dignity. Too often social service clients are seen as not having dignity or not deserving of dignity. You believe in us. Thanks.

I made a soup and used a variety of fresh herbs. It looked exotic and tasted delicious. It was an uplifting experience. Thanks you guys!

Thank you, thank you, thank you...words seem so insufficient but here goes... The Bucks Project, coupled together with fresh produce at Cost is an absolute God sent, most welcomed and very much appreciated too, given the reality that the majority of my financial resources goes to pay for my rent, leaving precious little left over; so I could NOT afford such healthy choices.

MENTAL HEALTH

Finding Innovative Paths Forward

Health and Wellbeing is at the centre of our quality of life. Over many years of community development we have worked with partners like the Chebucto Family Centre, Mental Health around the Loop and the Community Health Team to try and match clients with health supports.



Every year we wrestle with the questions: How do we access more supports for our clients? and What types of supports will our clients be willing to access? There is no one size fits all approach to mental health and so in 2019 we worked to find grants to help us pilot an innovative solution to supporting mens mental health. Knowing that many partners in our community were trying out dynamic solutions to mental health challenges we saw an opportunity to explore an area not being addressed in the greater Spryfield area.

T.O.N.E. THERAPY OUTSIDE NORMAL ENVIRONEMENTS

The Spryfield T.O.N.E. Project came to life as a partnership between Free Range Therapy, Brian Braganza and Chebucto Connections. Using a frame work for working with men in non traditional therapeutic settings and funding through the Vibrant Communities fund we were able to support four men to take part in this three month intensive program. The program was designed to help support men and their families who may be living with PTSD, depression, anxiety, addictions, and related struggles.

The men who participated in this program described feeling, heard and in some cases transformed. We witnessed changes in their confidence, capacity and ability to prioritize their mental health. Seeing the success of this program we hope more communities find alternative ways to support mens mental health.



Funding Provided By:



EASTERN CHEBUCTO HUB OPPORTUNITIES

A Strategic Partnership for Collective Impact

ECHO (Eastern Chebucto Hub Opportunities) is a strategic partnership of agencies that serve Spryfield and surrounding areas. Supported by Chebucto Connections ECHO strives to increase impact through working collaboratively to address community issues, and improve access to services for community members. The ECHO partnership supports each others work through collective problem solving, cross referrals and advocacy.

Being part of ECHO means coming together regularly to discuss local issues and strategize on ways to move forward. It means access to professional development opportunities and action committees working on specific issues such as transportation and food. Being part of ECHO also means utilizing the Chebucto Connections Hub space to meet with clients/patients so they can access services locally. By bringing services into the community our residents have improved success with outside supports.

This past year with funding provided by Community Foundation of Nova Scotia on behalf of Green Shield Canada we were able to expand our work with ECHO to assess partner needs and provide a number of professional development or learning opportunities for both the partnership and the greater community.

Some examples of opportunities we provided include:

- **Cultural Competency (YMCA Immigrant Services)**
- **Psychological First Aid (Red Cross)**
- **Adult Protective Services Info Session**
- **Food Safety Training**
- **T.O.N.E. service provider training**

The most successful part of ECHO is the way the collective of agencies have been able to grow shift and change every year in order to meet the needs of both organizations and clients in the moment. As the year came to a close and Covid-19 began to temporarily shut down our programs the partnership again had to shift. In the coming year I am sure we will see ECHO emerge from the pandemic stronger and ready to tack the surfacing needs of our community.

Note: The views and opinions expressed in this publication/website do not necessarily reflect those of Community Foundation of Nova Scotia.

Funding for Echo
Provided by:



United Way
Halifax



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
FONDATION COMMUNAUTAIRE
OF NOVA SCOTIA
DE LA NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE



Executive Directors Message

Another year has passed and I find myself once again in awe of the work that has been accomplished within our organization and within the greater community. Having been with Chebucto Connections for over 8 years it seems each year passes faster than the one before. I have seen our work grow and change during that time and this past year followed a similar path.

Our fiscal year began by asking the question what work needs to be done that we are well situated to do and through consultations and amazing partners we discovered the answer was food. Similarly in March as the country began to shut down we were called to the same question how are we needed? and what can we do to help our community? Once again we saw an opportunity to broaden our impact with food and play an important part as our community struggled to manage during uncertain and overwhelming times.

Between those two points in time I found my optimism tested, at times, to its limits as I witnessed the housing crisis and poverty collide. I saw our work with community members become more and more urgent as more people walked through our door seeking help. Despite this reality, I was reminded countless times of the kindness that exists in our humanity and have felt more hopeful witnessing the tenacity, care, compassion of our staff, community members and neighbours.

As our world enters a pivotal time of change I can feel the uprising of communities who are tirelessly working for a new path forward and a new future. I see people not only dreaming but creating a future that is equitable, compassionate and full of inspiration.

In the coming year Chebucto Connections is entering its own time of change as we rejuvenate and transform our mission and vision to stay relevant and meaningful. I am always proud to be part of such an amazing organization and excited to be a part of helping to address our communities' most urgent social issues creating space for creative and dynamic change in the coming year.

Aдриanna MacKenzie