

Well-being in Focus

IT'S WELL-BEING WEEK 2024 - SEPTEMBER 22-28!

Well-being Week is a time to learn, engage, support and take action around the many factors that impact our health and quality of life. It's a week to build momentum and empower people to continue making meaningful steps to better our well-being today, tomorrow and beyond.



What is well-being? Why does it matter? Well-being is an overall positive quality of life where an individual's needs are met across many aspects, including physical, mental, social, economic and environmental. Access to affordable housing, nutritious food, clean water, justice, money, education, equality, safety and our connections with one another influence our health much more

than we realize. Differences in access and experiences with these [Determinants of Health](#) lead to health inequities. Choose this week to learn more about how to improve your health, and the health of your community by clicking the link above!

Our province has six Regional Wellness Coalitions (RWC's) that play an important role in building healthier communities. Supported by the Department of Health and Community Services and NL Health Services, RWC's have been connecting with community groups, organizations, schools and municipalities for more than 20 years! Well-being Week is an occasion to showcase the capacity-building work our coalitions have been working on. Our community initiatives, outreach and grant programs provide networking opportunities for its members through the engaging of partners, cultivating positive relationships and sharing resources that will help Newfoundland and Labrador become a healthier province.

As we observe Well-being Week, join us as we take a tour around our province to visit some of our towns that have good news stories to share about living healthier.

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NL Health
Services

Did you Know?

Our Coalitions hosted 6 gatherings and networking days during 2023-24!

The Boys and Girls Club Jumpers

Northern Regional Wellness Coalition

Skipping rope is a physical activity that many generations and cultures have played. Jumping techniques were shared while traditional songs and rhymes were crafted to promote jumping and help skippers keep the beat.

Today, it's a highly competitive sport but more importantly, it's a cost-effective activity - all a child needs is a smooth surface, a pair of sneakers and a skipping rope. Promoting the benefits of jumping or skipping rope encourages healthy behaviors among children today, and helps reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke later in life (Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada).

This summer, the St. Anthony and Area Boys and Girls Club partnered with the Northern Wellness Coalition to offer a skipping program called the BGC Jumpers. Over seven weeks, 110 attended the program. Children learned decompression practices, new jumping skills and the importance of maintaining a healthy body and mind. They also reported having had a lot of fun!



Photo Credit: St. Anthony & Area Boys and Girls Club



"We noticed that children were more engaged in being physically active and interested in participating"
- Program Coordinator

NL Public Libraries Join Coalitions

Avalon East & Eastern Regional Wellness Coalitions

One of the unique characteristics of our Coalitions is the varied collection of community groups and organizations that form our networks. New groups joining our coalitions on a continual basis means an ongoing infusion of ideas, connections, and interest in well-being. Over the past year, Eastern Regional Wellness Coalition (ERWC) and Wellness Coalition-Avalon (WCAE) formed a relationship with Newfoundland and Labrador Public Libraries (NLPL) that resulted in 31 NLPL libraries becoming part of their local Coalition!

Our Coalitions and NLPL share common goals of:

- promoting health and well-being at the local level,
- sharing information and resources that enhance the health literacy of individuals and communities
- creating opportunities for the community to come together and learn from one another.

Libraries are so much more than places to borrow books! They are an open door to life-long learning that partner with a wide variety of organizations and experts to offer a diverse array of programs. Want to learn to cook, garden, or practice mindfulness? Attend a workshop at your library. Are you worried about radon in your home? You can request a testing kit from their [online catalogue](#). Do you want to get more active or help a loved one with memory loss? You can borrow a kit from one of their special collections at a branch near you.

Libraries serve as important community service hubs, including serving as sites for vaccine and breastfeeding clinics or hosting telehealth visits. In addition, libraries promote equity, diversity, and inclusion through activities such as Indigenous storytelling, drag story hour, by lending anti-racism and anti-bullying kits, and providing inclusive toys and spaces. Welcome public libraries to the coalition family!

Photo Credit: Newfoundland and Labrador Public Libraries





Recreation NL's goal is to increase awareness of active living through targeted events, community resources and communication supports.

To learn more about active living visit:
www.recreationnl.com/active-living/

Sprouting Growing Skills

Labrador Regional Wellness Coalition

Having fresh, nutritious produce is a great addition to any meal and there is nothing fresher than being able to “sprout” your own! In partnership with Food First NL, the Labrador Wellness Coalition held a seed sprouting education session to teach individuals how to sprout their own seeds using a simple jar



Photo Credit: Food First NL

method. Individuals who registered for the session were provided the seeds and supplies needed to participate, as well as additional items to help them continue to develop these skills and sprout for the future.

The facilitator provided demonstrations and valuable information about the process, as well as tips on the types of containers that could be used and the materials available for use. The session feedback received from participants was very positive. In just three days we had an attendee report that their seeds had begun sprouting!

Once sprouted, seeds can be used to top things like salads and sandwiches, or they can also be added to smoothies for some additional nutritional value. This is a great alternative when greens and other vegetables are expensive or scarce - an issue that is fairly common when we consider the challenges of food security. Keep sprouting!

Did you Know?

Collectively, our six Coalitions have 58 Steering Committee members across the province!

Central Youth are Hooked on Fly Tying

Central Wellness Coalition

In the Spring of 2023, the Central Wellness Coalition awarded seed monies to purchase the supplies necessary to introduce the craft of fly tying to students in the Central region. Fly fishing is an activity steeped in Newfoundland and Labrador tradition and has many benefits. Not only did students have the opportunity to be one with nature, but while generational wisdom was shared among participants, they were also introduced to an activity that promotes the importance of social and mental health.

Photo Credit: Corey Sampson,
 School Health Promotion Liaison Consultant



Teaching youth about salmon fishing was enthusiastically supported by teachers and community volunteers. Students were shown fly tying and fly casting techniques, learned about the conservation of river systems and salmon stocks in addition to outdoor safety. Due to an overwhelming response, organizers were able to secure funding through a national mental health grant program - ensuring the delivery of at least 12 more programs! One small community grant provided the momentum to kickstart an initiative that has grown into a much bigger program while demonstrating the key elements to successful partnerships .

Taking Meaningful Steps

Northern & Labrador Regional Wellness Coalitions



Dr. TA Loeffler, adventurer, mountaineer, author, and professor is well-acquainted with the relationship between community and overall well-being. In March of 2023, members of the Northern and Labrador Coalitions participated in a virtual session with TA and learned about her life lessons and the community support she received while she trained, reached and climbed the world's highest mountains - her personal journey towards well-being.

Our towns, or where we live, work and play are important to our health. *Why is it so important to have a strong connection with your community?* Many researchers maintain that people who feel connected to their community tend to have lower blood pressure, better cholesterol levels, and a lower risk of obesity. They are also more likely to exercise regularly and eat a healthy diet (Stein, 2023).

The Northern and Labrador Coalitions support people at the community level to encourage the pursuit of health and well-being. Our Regional Community Grants Programs and outreach activities create opportunities to connect with residents who want to experience healthier living in their communities.

TA's message was very relatable. Working towards personal well-being can be experienced climbing mountains, or it can begin with that first step at a senior's walking group in a rural community. Taking those meaningful steps will better our well-being today, tomorrow and beyond.

Reference: Stein, S, Psy.D. (2023). Psychology Today: The Importance of Community. Online at: www.psychologytoday.com
Photo: TA climbing a ladder in the Khumbu Icefall, Mount Everest. Credit: www.taloeffler.com

Thriving in Trout River

Western Wellness Coalition

Photo Credits: Kelly Pevie, Principal, Jakeman All-Grade

Trout River is a small, rural, and remote community, nestled within the valley of the Tablelands, Gros Morne National Park. It is a beautiful place, but for residents, it can be isolating with fewer options for physical activity, recreation, and socialization. However, the local school, Jakeman All Grade (JAG), their staff and students are using every opportunity to leverage support for initiatives to bring the community into the school and the students into the community!

The Western Wellness Coalition was a partner in some of those efforts:

- ◆ With Western Wellness Coalition (WWC) funding, the Trout River Lions Club hosted a Kids in the Kitchen program, where high school students learned to cook nutritious meals before leaving home for post-secondary school.
- ◆ JAG and the local By Da Bay Trails Committee received coalition funding to purchase snowshoes to help families maximize their access to winter physical activity.
- ◆ In partnership with TD Friends of the Environment, the WWC made contributions to help develop an outdoor garden and learning classroom. The WWC provided shade sails to ensure a safe outdoor space.

The community of Trout River is cultivating community partnerships to create a place where everyone can thrive and grow!



Coalitions Celebrate 20 Years!

Avalon East & Eastern Regional Wellness Coalitions

This past June, the Eastern Regional Wellness Coalition (ERWC) and Wellness Coalition-Avalon East (WCAE) hosted their annual networking events. These events marked the milestone of 20 years since the Regional Wellness Coalitions were established!

ERWC's theme was *Anniversary Wishes & Wellness* with members meeting at the Bill Davis Chalet in Clarendville. Members of WCAE gathered in Mount Pearl for a birthday bash to observe *20 Years of Coming Together for Wellness*. Each Coalition celebrated the network and the contribution its members make every day to the health and wellbeing of their communities. The events kicked off with time to reflect on the beginnings and vision of the Wellness Coalitions. Dr. Catherine Donovan (Past Chair, Provincial Wellness Advisory Council) spoke to WCAE and Natalie Moody (Director Public Health- NL Health Services, Eastern Rural/Urban) addressed ERWC. Both speakers highlighted the uniqueness of each coalition, their growth from a pilot project, and the importance of celebrating small successes.

The WCAE gathering continued with a presentation from Fred Whitmarsh of NL Public Libraries that talked about the role of libraries in community well-being. Participants also had a chance to connect and have fun with party games provided by the city of St. John's. ERWC heard from the Burin Peninsula Brighter Futures (Family Resource Centre) about their programs and how beneficial it has been to be an ERWC member. The day ended with a "wellness through the years" video which captured many of the amazing activities and partnerships over the last 20 years!

Our annual regional events have also become an important way to hear from members who have been supported by our grant programs. This year we showcased:

- Flatrock 50 Plus Fun Club (WCAE) presented their dance classes,
- [Strong Harbour Strings](#) (WCAE) presented on their overall program – music education for young people residing in underserved neighborhoods,
- Holy Cross School (ERWC) highlighted their intergenerational work with a local senior's group, and
- Trinity East/Port Rexton Church Lads Brigade (CLB) (ERWC) talked about their community partnerships and activities including the restoration of the Town's community garden.

Overall, these events provide many opportunities for networking, learning and sharing as communicated by our members.

"...loved the opportunity to network, and your interactive activities really allowed for this, in meaningful ways..."

"...the importance of making connections with new partners..."

-Feedback from Participants



Photo Credits: Avalon East & Eastern Wellness Coalitions



The Health Information ("Hi") website is now available across Newfoundland and Labrador! Looking for health and wellness info for you, your family, and your community? Explore Hi today: hi.easternhealth.ca

Did you Know?

Our Coalitions collectively supported 169 projects during the 2023-24 year!

Food & Friendship

Western Wellness Coalition

The need for food and friendship is universal. With support from many partners and funding from a Western Wellness Coalition Community Grant, the Gros Morne Community Church endeavored to host a Community Café to bring food and fellowship to Rocky Harbour and Norris Point residents.

Over a six month period, project partners hosted nine cafés. Warm and healthy meals and conversation were the norm while serving an average of 30 individuals per café, many of whom were children, families and single senior households. The events were well received by the community. Many arrived early and stayed late - one of the best compliments the volunteers could receive. Organizers for the café feel strongly that a similar project could be delivered in other communities in the province by just exploring partnerships and focusing on the strengths of individual communities.

Because healthy food and friendship is a shared need, the goal of the Gros Morne Community Church have plans to continue what they've started, incorporate what they have learned, and resume their Community Cafés in the Fall of 2024.



Article & Photos Credit:
Pastor Ryan Ball, GMCC



Eat Great and Participate has been promoting healthy eating to children and youth, and working to increase access to healthy food and beverage choices in recreation, sport and community settings across Newfoundland and Labrador.

To learn more visit: www.recreationnl.com

Positive Learning Environments & Mental Health Week

Labrador Regional Wellness Coalition

The Labrador Wellness Coalition happily partners with individuals and groups throughout the region to promote health and well-being. More recently, a partnership with the Menihek High School Social Justice Committee and other community members from Labrador West resulted in 560 participants contributing to a full week of mental health promotion activities!

The week provided networking opportunities for students, parents, and the neighboring primary school with a focus on positive attitudes and activities. The activities unfolded during National Mental Health Week and since then, has become a yearly event that staff and students anticipate. There are plans to expand and include more partners in the future!

The events included crafts, games, healthy snacks, luncheons and gratitude letters written by parents. The initiative enhanced positive relationships among students, and provided them the opportunity to learn more about healthy eating and physical activity which also play a huge role in mental health. The students and community are looking forward to the next event!

Renewed and Recharged

The Humble Beginnings of a Shoebox

Central Wellness Coalition



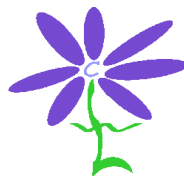
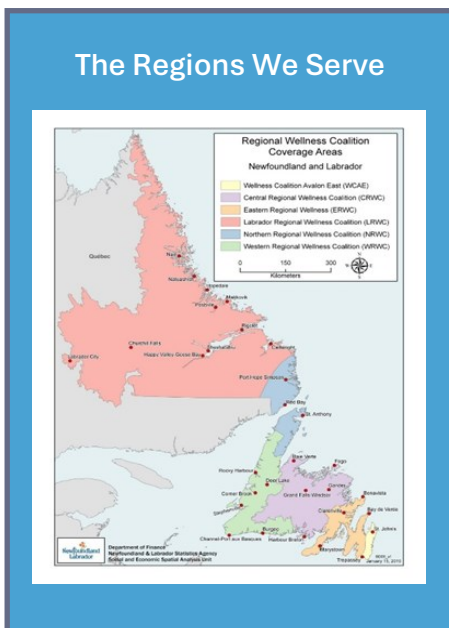
Photo Credits:
Denise Feltham,
Alexander Bay 50+ Club

The Alexander Bay 50+ Association in the Glovertown area received a grant from the Central Wellness Coalition in the Fall of 2023 for a project called “Renewed and Recharged.” It originated with a simple shoe box and an idea to add items that had meaning or objects that sparked personal happiness - a mental health first aid box. The 50+ Association President shared the contents of this shoe box and described how each item was special, but also explained how it was helpful when she experienced a bad day.

To her surprise, members came to the next meeting with their own shoe boxes in tow! Many memories were shared - a first date with a spouse, a lock of a child’s hair and a picture of a sunset taken years before. Shortly thereafter, the group evolved to become the MEappy Group - a name that appealed to the importance of self-care and spreading happiness. Conversations around the table continued and led to mental and social health. So, members of the group shared their hobbies or past times that provided them support during loneliness or sadness. Offers to share skills, resulted in the 50+ group learning how to mold clay to make pottery and to sourcing materials to make homemade greeting cards. What started as an idea to create a mental health first aid box turned into a “surprising and beautiful experience.” The MEappy group meets regularly to socialize, renew and recharge!

JOIN US! GET TO KNOW A COALITION NEAR YOU!

To get started, simply right click on a logo and open the link!



Labrador Regional
Wellness Coalition



Eastern Regional Wellness Coalition

