

# WELL-BEING IN FOCUS

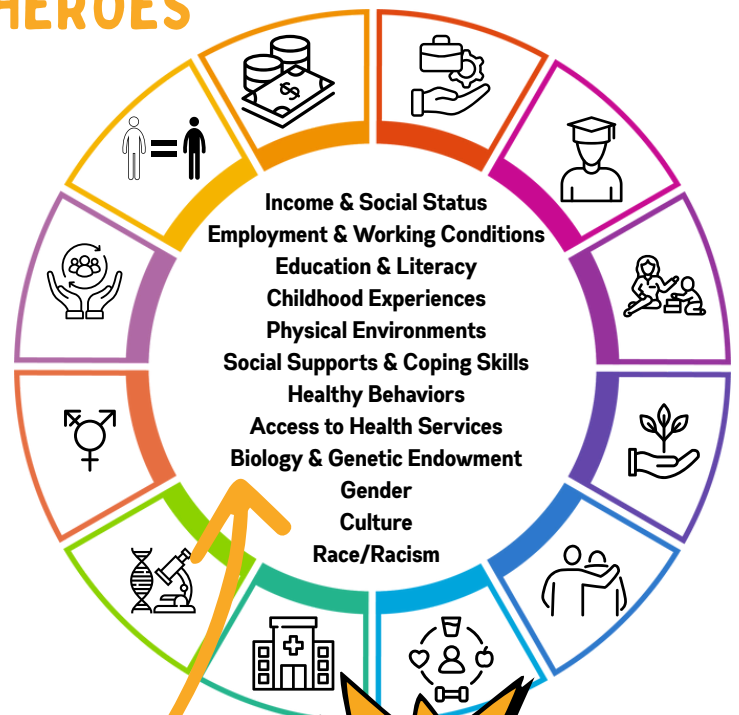
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## OUR PARTNERS ... OUR SUPERHEROES

Fair. Just. When we consider what equity means, these are the words that most often come to mind. But what does equity mean in the context of health? When it comes to health, not everyone starts from the same place. Finding solutions, providing support and tailoring resources for those who experience the biggest barriers to health is a shared responsibility. When we work together so everyone has the same opportunities to reach their highest level of health, we are also working towards a healthier Newfoundland and Labrador.

Important considerations that can impact health outcomes are known as the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH). As we journey towards better health, our six Wellness Coalitions are working with people and communities to build partnerships to improve equity one project at a time.

During Well-being Week, September 21-27, 2025, join us as we celebrate our partners and share inspiring stories about community heroes working to prevent health inequity - proof, that not all superheroes wear capes!



**IN THIS ISSUE!**

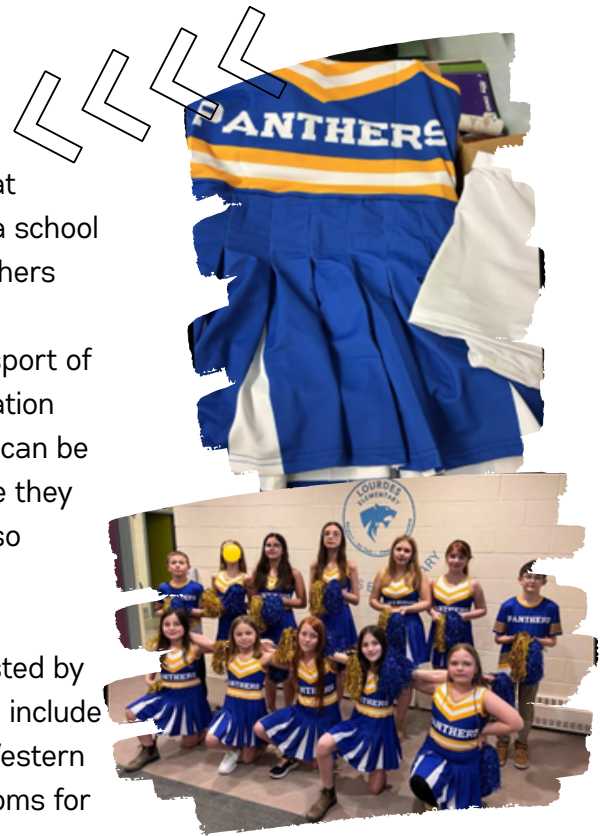
**CREATING CHEER  
SENIORS & SOCIAL HEALTH  
NOURISH TO FLOURISH  
CREATING INCLUSIVE EVENTS  
PROMOTING GREEN  
ACTIVE LIVING  
PHYSICAL LITERACY  
MOUNTAIN BIKING PROGRAM  
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WELL-BEING AND MEMORY KITS**



## WESTERN COALITION - COMMUNITY OF LOURDES BRINGING CHEER TO A RURAL SCHOOL

Twenty-two students in Grades 4-8 formed a new cheerleading team at Lourdes Elementary on the Port au Port Peninsula! The idea to create a school cheer team was student driven, and with the support of dedicated teachers and volunteers, they are introducing cheer to this rural area. The team registered with Cheer NL, a non-profit organization that promotes the sport of cheerleading within Newfoundland and Labrador. Commitment, cooperation and practice are necessary for a successful initiative, and the students can be seen practicing before school, at lunchtime and afternoons. Not only are they learning physical skills, confidence and self-esteem building - they're also developing social and interpersonal skills with team members.

Recently, the team traveled to Corner Brook to attend a cheer clinic hosted by Cheer NL, fostering a lifelong enjoyment of the sport. Their future plans include an end-of-the-year show in spring of 2026. With the support of the Western Wellness Coalition, the students were able to purchase uniforms and poms for the team members - making them truly feel and look like a cheer team!



## NORTHERN COALITION- SOUTHEAST LABRADOR SENIORS & SOCIAL HEALTH

Everyone has a valuable contribution to make to address social isolation among seniors. According to Health Canada, social isolation is a low quantity and quality of contact with others, and it can lead to poor health, loneliness, emotional distress and other negative effects. "About 30% of Canadian seniors are at risk of becoming socially isolated." This may be due to many factors. Some can be physical such as illness, or life-changing such as the loss of a spouse or a friend. It could also be environmental. For example, a senior may lack transportation. Any of these can cause a senior to feel socially isolated.

With social health in mind, and a small investment, the Northern Wellness Coalition partnered with six 50+ Clubs and town councils on the Southeast Coast of Labrador to increase social activity among this age demographic. Participants in the project called Labrador East 50+ Club Wellness Initiatives invited friends and carpooled to do indoor walking, chair yoga, healthy cooking demonstrations, games and crafting. The 50+ clubs in the communities of L'Anse au Clair, Forteau, Lanse au Loup, Mary's Harbour, Red Bay and St. Lewis hope that the activities will further engage and inspire more individuals to get active. More importantly, they've demonstrated that small established groups in the community can impact social health.

# 50+ CLUBS





## EASTERN WELLNESS COALITION NOURISH TO FLOURISH

Food and nutrition play an important role in mental health. The Eastern Regional Wellness Coalition (ERWC) in partnership with NL Health Services (NLHS) - Health Promotion and Food First NL, recognized Nutrition Month in March by hosting a virtual session for members. The theme “Nourish to Flourish” was chosen to spotlight the connection between food and overall wellbeing.

Lesley Burgess, NLHS Regional Nutritionist, shared her role and spoke about why healthy eating matters and why it's important to communities. Information was provided on Canada's Food Guide and other resources. Leah Vatcher, Regional Animator with Food First NL, also shared her role with the organization and regional network. Specifically, the trending of community gardens and the benefits of planting, harvesting and the skills necessary to make the most out of a garden were highlighted. Both presentations provided participants with valuable information and resource links. It was a great opportunity to showcase that food and nutrition have an integral role in mental health, emotional resilience, and fostering social and cultural connections.



## AVALON WELLNESS COALITION CREATING INCLUSIVE EVENTS



At the heart of the Avalon East Wellness Coalition (WCAE), is a commitment to learn together and support one another in building healthier, more inclusive communities. Each year, the coalition brings members together for a workshop focused on a topic that reflects the interests and needs of those working to promote wellness across the region. These sessions become more than just learning opportunities. They're a chance to share knowledge, strengthen skills, and build capacity among community groups and individuals to share a common goal to work to address the Social Determinants of Health.

In November 2024, the WCAE hosted a workshop titled, “Creating Healthy and Inclusive Events”. The coalition shared practical tips on how to make programs and community events more inclusive. Presenters included members from the City of St. John's Inclusion Team and a Dietitian with Eat Great and Participate. Inclusive events consider the diverse needs of all participants (age, ability, culture, religion, gender identity, and language). Nine key considerations for planning your next event are: know your audience, ensure accessibility, provide quiet spaces, use inclusive language and formats, support gender diversity, make events family-friendly, offer inclusive food options, promote sustainability, and lastly, establish a code of conduct.

The workshop was a great example of how sharing knowledge can help build the skills and capacity of community groups and individuals working to address the social determinants of health. By learning together, we strengthen our communities and create spaces where everyone feels welcomed and supported. For more information on how to make your next event healthier and more inclusive visit:

<https://researchimpact.ca/resources/accessible-inclusive-event-planning-for-knowledge-mobilization/>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-analysis-plus/resources/inclusive-event-planning.html>

## LABRADOR WELLNESS COALITION - CARTWRIGHT PROMOTING GREEN

Helping communities become more food secure is an activity that the Labrador Wellness Coalition has supported in recent years. This year, it partnered with the community of Cartwright. The Sandwich Bay 50+ Club utilized greenhouse space to grow a variety of fruits and vegetables for distribution within their town.

Club members and volunteers are growing leafy vegetables, tomatoes, strawberries, peppers and herbs as a part of their Seniors Patch Project. In just a few short weeks, the group has had great success, reporting that their gardens were flourishing. The yummy items that they have been growing will be eaten by the community. The Labrador Coalition is excited to see what their Fall harvest produces!



## NORTHERN WELLNESS COALITION - SOUTHEAST LABRADOR FOSTERING A LOVE OF ACTIVE LIVING



Are organized sports for youth becoming too exclusive? We know physical literacy and fostering a love of being active is important in the development of children and youth. Yet, with rising costs and potential injuries associated with organized sports, it begs the question: should we be doing more to promote non-competitive and non-organized sports and activities? After all, they are more accessible and participation is more affordable for families.

Many people are fond of organized sports - just ask any hockey fan at the start of the playoffs. However, there is room to get equally excited about sports that aren't competitive. They focus on the rewards of participation versus winning or losing. They can also build confidence, social skills and improve physical abilities at an individual pace.

This past March, schools on the Southeast Coast of Labrador partnered with the Northern Wellness Coalition to introduce non-competitive games with emphasis on friendship and socializing. The event gathered 75 junior students who joined in snowshoeing, traditional games and a mini "Labrathon." It was a sporting opportunity for youth that was inclusive, affordable and enjoyed by all. Stay tuned for similar events in your community!



## EASTERN WELLNESS COALITION

### PHYSICAL LITERACY-JOURNEY THROUGH THE AGES

The Eastern Regional Wellness Coalition (ERWC) hosted its annual Networking Day in the beautiful Elizabeth Swan Park, in Clarendville on June fifth! The event, "Physical Literacy-Journey Through the Ages" welcomed forty-one individuals, representing a diverse number of groups from all over the region. Participants gathered for a day of sharing, learning and networking.

Pam Mills, Recreation NL and Stephanie Field, Memorial University's School of Kinetics, opened with a presentation highlighting "Community Based Physical Literacy". They set the tone for the day by sharing why physical literacy is important and the applications based on age (or the journey) during small group discussions. One of our ERWC members, Lynn Diamond, Earhart's 50 Plus Group in Harbour Grace, made introductions and stated how they promote wellness among their members and the community. Alicia MacDonald of the Port Rexton Physical Literacy 4 Life (PL4L) virtually presented their project, including their two-year participation success with the federal PL4L initiative.

All presentations were engaging and diverse, proving useful to help encourage others to consider their own communities with a physical literacy lens. Throughout the day, individuals also had the opportunity to get outside and participate in a variety of movement stations. In addition, there were activities to facilitate connections and important shares of the amazing wellness work being done in our communities!



## CENTRAL WELLNESS COALITION

### ADVENTURE MOUNTAIN BIKING

The Adventure Biking Project works with ages 5-17, to help kids learn to ride mountain bikes and to help the next generation of youth riders to become more comfortable with the transition to a mountain bike at a younger age.

We purchased ten push bikes to be used in the community for our younger riders. This fostered confidence and balance among our new riders. The Central Wellness Coalition provided funds to assist in the purchase of the bikes we needed for our groups. Happy and safe cycling!

(Contributed by Andrew Poole, Glovertown)

## WESTERN WELLNESS COALITION

### SPINNING YARNS-REVIVING TRADITION AND BUILDING COMMUNITY

Knitting was a cornerstone of rural life and was once deeply tied to both survival and cultural identity. Newfoundland's cold, and sometimes harsh winters demanded warm clothing, but at one time, knitting provided essential garments like sweaters, mittens, socks, and scarves. It was often a communal activity that brought people together. That sense of fellowship and support was a tradition, passed down from one generation to another. Thereby, preserving a rich cultural heritage. The Spinning Yarns Program seeks to honor these traditions while creating meaningful opportunities for social health among seniors. With the support of the Western Wellness Coalition, the program was hosted by Our Lady of Mercy Museum Committee. It provided seniors in the Port au Port area with an opportunity to share, teach and learn skills in knitting, crocheting, and other fiber arts while socializing. Not only did the program foster creative expression but it also addressed isolation among seniors simply by helping them to stay active and connected.

The sessions engaged participants through crafting and special workshops including two classes that focused on crocheting rugs from yarn and denim. In future, there are plans to continue the initiative during the winter months and to explore other activities. Integrating tradition with the needs of present-day seniors, Spinning Yarns hopes to enhance the well-being of its participants and also sustain skills that have helped shape Newfoundland and Labrador's cultural identity.



## AVALON WELLNESS COALITION

### HEALTH HAPPENS HERE

What do libraries and health have in common and how can libraries play a role in healthy living? Libraries across Newfoundland and Labrador support well-being by offering free access to information, programs, and spaces that help people learn, connect, and thrive. Since 2023, Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services (NLHS) and Newfoundland and Labrador Public Libraries (NLPL) have been working together to address health inequities in our communities. Libraries and health professionals recognized the impacts of the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH). The SDOH are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. There are also social factors that can influence these conditions. Together, NLHS and our libraries are working to bridge gaps in health information and to expand access to trustworthy health and wellness resources.



In 2024, 92 public libraries joined their local Wellness Coalition. To strengthen this membership, new methods to deliver credible health information were explored and included the WellNow Speaker Series - virtual sessions that are open to the public. Public libraries aren't limited to just providing information sessions. They also promote equity, diversity and inclusion through programming and resource lending. Library services are shaped by people like you, the community! Contact your local branch to suggest a program or new resource here:

<https://nlpl.ca/locations-hours/>

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE LIBRARY PARTNERSHIPS!





## LABRADOR WELLNESS COALITION

### WELLBEING KITS FOR SCHOOLS

Remember board games? Face to face activities delivering hours of fun? They arrived on the scene well before video games and virtual realities changed the landscape of social health. There's a relationship between well-being and social health. Overall well-being encompasses quite a few characteristics that contribute to our happiness and health, one of which is the social connection we have with each other.

During the Week of Wellbeing, the Labrador Coalition Wellness is assembling Well-being Kits for schools in its region with the intent to promote physical, mental and social well-being. The kits include a variety of games and activities to encourage students to unplug from technology for a little while and simply engage with one another. The hope is that students will not only improve their mental health but enhance their social and cognitive skills as well.

The kits were made available to each of the schools during the Week of Well-Being and will remain with the schools for future use! The coalition looks forward to hearing feedback from teachers and students. Happy Well-being Week!



## Well-Being Week

starting today to improve tomorrow



## CENTRAL WELLNESS COALITION

### MEMORY KITS OFFER HELP IN A TIDY PACKAGE

Many people visit Gander Public Library seeking ways to support family members with Alzheimer's and Dementia especially when their loved one is experiencing a decline in memory or cognitive skills. The library co-workers decided to assemble a resource for families in the form of memory care kits. The Central Wellness Coalition provided funding for five kits that are now available for checkout at the Gander Public Library. The kit contents were carefully selected (based on research and other information) and filled with thoughtful and meaningful activities designed to engage the hands and minds of individuals, family members and caregivers. With the knowledge that the kits are well-received and being used among the community is a source of pride for the Gander library.

(Contributed by Michelle Stuckless, Library Technician III)



## HOW FAST CAN YOU FIND THE 16 HIDDEN WORDS?

# WELLBEING WORD SEARCH



Can you find all the words related to the week of wellbeing?

c	o	m	m	u	n	i	t	i	e	s	e	n	w	e
y	p	f	c	b	k	n	p	g	d	j	h	t	e	m
r	k	r	s	e	n	d	a	l	u	n	e	s	l	p
s	m	a	v	r	n	i	u	z	c	k	a	u	l	o
o	k	m	a	m	e	v	o	y	a	v	l	p	b	w
c	h	e	m	o	m	i	i	v	t	t	t	p	e	e
i	l	w	o	t	n	d	t	r	i	r	h	o	i	r
a	l	o	a	w	o	u	w	l	o	a	q	r	n	m
l	e	r	x	g	o	a	l	s	n	n	v	t	g	e
e	u	k	s	t	i	l	e	c	n	e	m	j	h	n
r	f	i	m	p	r	s	v	e	m	e	n	e	p	t
r	f	i	m	p	r	o	v	e	m	e	n	t	n	q
e	n	g	a	g	e	f	r	j	p	s	w	f	a	t
t	i	u	s	s	e	p	t	e	m	b	e	r	c	d
o	i	e	q	x	f	a	m	i	l	i	e	s	a	c



communities	framework	learn
education	goals	September
engage	health	social
environment	individuals	support
empowerment	improvement	wellbeing
families		

Hi has information to support healthy communities, like healthy eating toolkits, physical activity toolkits, and other practical resources to promote wellness where you live, work, and play. Plus, Hi features an AI chatbot to help you quickly find the information you need, anytime.

[hi.easternhealth.ca](https://hi.easternhealth.ca)

Hi

## RECIPE CORNER

CRAVING A HEALTHY AUTUMN SOUP?  
THIS RECIPE WILL DEFINATELY BE A  
FAMILY FAVOURITE!



## BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP

### INGREDIENTS

- Two medium-sized butternut squash, peeled and seeded
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 6 cups chicken stock
- Nutmeg, parsley or roasted pumpkin seeds
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tsp. olive oil

### DIRECTIONS

Cut squash into one-inch chunks. Put in a bowl and add olive oil and salt/pepper, then toss. Place the squash on a baking sheet and roast at 400 degrees for 20 minutes. Dice the onion, add to a pot with the butter and cook onion until translucent, then add garlic - be careful - garlic can be bitter if overcooked!

Place the roasted squash, onion and garlic in a blender and puree, then return to the pot. Add the chicken stock and let simmer, stirring often. Garnish with fresh parsley, nutmeg or roasted pumpkin seeds. Serve and enjoy!

