

PRESIDENTS REPORT - Prem Dhir



I am happy to report to you on the efforts of the Board of Community Links over the past year.

Immediately after the 2004 AGM we identified several goals for ourselves over this past year. Firstly, we wanted to get our house in order but ensure that the necessary framework was in place to guarantee excellent accountability for Community Links. To that end we have worked throughout the year ensuring that comprehensive policies are in place for financial management, personnel issues and for the conduct of the board itself.

Secondly we undertook to develop a new look for the organization which would help to increase our profile and underscore our professionalism, but would also fit with our history and our values. I am pleased that we can profile our new look here at this meetings.

Thirdly, we wished to reconnect and connect with you the members. I mentioned in my opening remarks that our Provincial Coordinator visited all our districts and our board members in those districts worked with her to organize and conduct members meetings.

We took your suggestions, ideas and comments very seriously and used them to inform the work on our fourth goal which was to plan the work of Community Links. Sandra and I took your message with us when we saw Hon. Angus MacIssac, Minister of Health and Hon. Rodney MacDonald, Minister of Health Promotion in

December of last year. We are most grateful to them for their continued support of Community Links.

As President, I wish to thank you very much for your input. I am touched by your deep sense of responsibility to the local community. I believe both individuals and community are strengthened when people work together for a common goal. You have today joined us not just as members but also as partners and friends. You have provided us the foundation of ideas and now we are all building a really viable and practical organization to suit your needs. You have all done us proud.

We are always open to your suggestions. You don't even have to wait for the AGM or the Provincial Coordinator to be in your community. You can always send us a letter or an email at anytime. We are also committed to more work by our board members at a district level over the coming year.

I wish to acknowledge the hard work and contributions of my fellow Community Links board members, Anne Corbin, the Community Links Office Administrator, and of Sandra Murphy, the Provincial Coordinator

PROVINCIAL
COORDINATOR'S REPORT
Sandra Murphy



This is my second annual meeting as Coordinator of Community Links, and I am delighted to be here with you and to report on a very busy and I think fruitful year for the organization. I am particularly happy that many of you are no longer strangers to me as you were when we met last year.

Members' Meetings:

Our President, Prem Dhir, has already mentioned the members meetings we conducted around the province. These were very important to me in my efforts to get to understand Community Links, to get to know our members better, to learn what you were thinking and what your priorities are. During the spring and fall of 2004 I visited and held meetings in each district. As a member you will have already received a summary report of the findings of these meetings. This feedback has been crucial as the Board and I moved forward with this year's activities, as we reviewed our existing Strategic Goals, and developed plans for the coming year. My report to you this year is framed within the context of what you said to us at those meetings.

Communications:

You told us overwhelmingly that communications is important to you, particularly around sharing information on resources and services available. We have continued to provide you with a regular newsletter but have changed the look and have moved to highlighting particular issues in each one. We have been working on

bringing our web site up to date, (much credit to the efforts of Anne Corbin) and are currently working to enhance its look and utility and hope to launch the new look before the summer. Soon we hope to pilot an e-bulletin which will give you a regular heads up on information that could be of importance to you. To help with all of this we have developed a new word mark/logo which we are introducing to you at this meeting.

Facilitation of Networking among Members and Partners:

You told us this was a key area for Community Links involvement, especially in bringing community, and communities, together around issues and policy. We have been working on this in a variety of ways over the past year. The projects in which we have been involved have been a vehicle for this to happen. These include Preventing Falls Together, Seniors Influencing Policy on Transportation, and the Nova Scotia Network of the Canada Volunteerism Initiative. By working in partnership with other groups that are engaged on policy issues, we have been able to expand our efforts in this area without duplicating what is already happening. The groups we have worked with include the Atlantic Seniors' Health Promotion Network; the Health Promotion Clearinghouse; Rural Communities Influencing Policy; the Office of Health Promotion; the Nova Scotia Community Based Transportation Association, and others.

Training/Workshops/Education:

Training is an area where we would have liked to have done more. Much of what has happened in this area has happened through our projects, or through our loosely affiliated RVP Coalitions. (See separate reports). This meeting, however, is a training effort as well as an AGM. You told us at the members meetings that you wanted support for work that members are doing around partnerships. Therefore, the theme of our meeting and the educational component for tomorrow is *Effective Rural and Senior Partnerships*. In the coming year I hope that we can combine some training with ongoing members' meetings around the province.

Advocacy/Policy Analysis:

You have asked that Community Links be an advocate for rural seniors and for volunteerism. To that end I have been involved with the Advocacy Committee for the NS Network of CVI which is working to encourage support for volunteerism at three levels of Government. I was part of a panel which presented to the Nova Scotia Union of Municipalities, worked on emerging partnerships around developing a voice for the voluntary sector in HRM, and on influencing the new Community Development Policy. As Prem indicated we presented some of your views to Ministers' Rodney MacDonald and Angus McIsaac. We were also able to incorporate your views into the written brief, which I presented to a public meeting of *Task Force on Aging* around the development of a provincial *Strategy for Positive Aging for Nova Scotia*, and at a further focus group on the Supportive Communities goal to which I was invited. In addition members of Community Links were included, at our suggestion, in the focus group on Transportation.

One of the things we do not want to do is to duplicate efforts that are all ready underway. Instead we have tried to align ourselves with existing efforts. (EG. The efforts of the Nova Scotia Community Based Transportation Association and the League for Equal Opportunities which led to an increase in the level of funding to community based transportation efforts in the last budget.)

Issues:

You identified five main issues which you felt were priorities to be addressed. *Health Care Access and Concerns*, not surprisingly, was number one. In particular caregivers issues and concerns around drug relate issues were primary. In these areas, where there are already key players, our best way forward would seem to be around information provision and aligning our efforts with other key players. Some of this we have begun, but the board needs to think through how we will proceed. *Transportation* was also a huge issue for members. You will hear a report on our Seniors Influencing Policy on Transportation Project. In addition I joined the board of the Nova Scotia Community Based Transportation Association this year to be able to be further involved. *Housing Issues* are also of great concern. My involvement with ASHPN has linked us to the More Than Shelter Initiative and also to the major new project on Housing that is happening through

Mount Saint Vincent University and a broad based partnership across Atlantic Canada. *Fitness* for seniors was also seen as an issue. Any efforts here are primarily through the coalition building we have been doing through Preventing Falls Together as increasing fitness levels is seen as a key component of reducing falls.

Volunteerism/organizational concerns.

Many of you are concerned about the aging of the populations as it relates to the sustainability of key community organizations. As you are aware a key component of the mission of Community Links is around volunteer action. We are addressing this issue in several ways. Over the past several years our work with the Rural Volunteer Project has been aimed at building volunteer and voluntary organization capacity in rural Nova Scotia.. (See our separate report). For the past two years we have also served as co-host, with Recreation Nova Scotia, for the *Nova Scotia Network of the Canada Volunteerism Initiative*. This national effort supports networks in every province and territory across Canada. The Nova Scotia Network involves approximately 440 organizations in efforts “to enhance relationships that promote the profile of volunteerism and support volunteer empowerment. Just recently we received funding for a proposal submitted in Partnership with The Nova Scotia Centre on Aging and Mount Saint Vincent University for a research project called

The Role of Senior Volunteers in Sustaining Rural Communities. This project will research the impact of senior volunteers on their communities as well as the impact of volunteering on the health those seniors involved.

Summary:

In closing I wish to acknowledge the support of our funders the Office of Health Promotion, the Public Health Agency of Canada and Volunteer Canada.

I wish to thank the members of the Board of Directors of Community Links who have been a strong support and an inspiration to me in my work. I also wish to thank Anne Corbin whose efforts for Community Links have been outstanding; Carol MacAllister for the terrific job she is doing with Preventing Falls Together and Jean Robinson Dexter who is involved with SIP-T and PFT and continues to do excellent work for us. I wish also to acknowledge the many volunteers who serve on Steering Committees and RVP and PFT Coalitions around the province.

This has been a busy year. We have connected with members and have listened to what you have told us but I still feel we have much more to do to build and maintain the “links” that bind us. I hope to be on the road again over the coming months meeting with Community Links coalitions and members. We also plan to hire a Field Worker in Eastern Nova Scotia to work partly on Preventing Falls Together and partly on the issue of building senior volunteer capacity in that area. The board too has committed to keeping in closer touch with members in their districts. This is because as Prem would say we want to keep the family ties strong.

I am looking forward to another year of challenges and connections through Community Links.

Respectfully submitted

Sandra Murphy
Provincial Coordinator



Preventing Falls Together

Annual Report to Community Links Board May 13, 2005

Project to Program

The Preventing Falls Together Project evolved into the Preventing Falls Together Program with an assured funding of \$100,000 per year for three years, and a part-time (60%) coordinator was hired in late September to provide support to existing coalitions and to establish new coalitions throughout Nova Scotia. The coordinator, Carol McAllister is supervised by Sandra Murphy.

A Provincial Intersectoral Falls Prevention Committee (PIFP) has replaced the Steering Committee, and the sectors represented on the committee have been broadened. The Preventing Falls Together Management Committee, with Julian Young, from the Office of Health Promotion as chair, continues to provide direction to the Preventing Falls Together program.

Achievements and Milestones May 2004 - May 2005

- Due to increased interest and activity with PFT, a part time field worker will be hired to assist the coordinator by providing support to PFT coalitions in Eastern Nova Scotia.
- Two new coalitions have been established; five existing ones supported. Contact has been made with three other areas.
- Communication package was developed in conjunction with (OHP) Office of Health Promotion consisting of laminated posters, media lists, sample newspaper notices, and interview guidelines.
- Falls Awareness Public Service Announcements, created by OHP, aired on radio stations in areas where there were coalitions in late March and early April.
- Program presentations were made by Coordinator to: Continuing Care Assistant instructors, Capital District Grand Rounds physicians, Provincial Intersectoral Committee, Community Health Board Council of Chairs.
- Abstract submitted to National Injury Prevention Conference to be held in Halifax November 2005.
- Conference “Satellite session” pre conference day for professional development for regional coalition members has been approved. Committee to be set up.
- Attendance or participant at: Annapolis Valley Health report to community on “Reducing Injuries to our Community”, “Lively Living for Seniors” (Lunenburg), “Celebrating 50 Plus” (Middleton).
- Terms of Reference template and guidelines for logistical funding for regional coalitions have been established.
- Jean Robinson Dexter has been contracted to deliver PFT Tool Kit Workshops.
- Lunenburg Queens Falls Prevention has formally registered under Joint Stock Company, and is the first coalition to qualify for logistical funding.
- A “Quarterly Update” newsletter for coalitions has been established.
- Meeting notes will soon be shared among coalitions via a password protected vehicle on the Community Links Website.

Regional Coalition Status as of April 30, 2005

Coalition	Status	Comments
Colchester East Hants	Active	Monthly meetings, annual planning, some logistics, terms of reference
Windsor West Hants	Active	Regular meetings, full logistics
Halifax Regional Municipality (Dec 04)	Active	Regular meetings, planning, no logistics, terms of reference
Pictou County (Dec 04)	Active	Regular meetings, full logistics,
Lunenburg Queens Falls Prevention Society	Active	Independent, receiving logistic funding, annual planning, committed.
Cape Breton Industrial	Active	One project this year, low attendance, own logistics
Cape Breton Rural	Active	Variety of activities, low attendance, own logistics
Annapolis County	Semi-active	“Celebrating 50 plus” only project this year. Hope to meet with group soon.
Cumberland County	Dormant	Contact made and expect meeting soon to re-activate this group.
Kings County	Dormant	No activity this year. Contact made – expect initial meeting soon.
Guysborough/Antigonish/Strait	Pending	Met presentation to CHB Council of Chairs, Guysborough meeting soon
Digby County	None	Call rec'd; information sent
Yarmouth County	None	Call rec'd; Information sent

Respectfully submitted,

Carol McAllister, Coordinator
 “Preventing Falls Together”

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Increasing Rural Seniors Skills for Influencing Policy – Transportation

In September 2004, Community Links received Public Health Agency of Canada Population Health Fund funding to carry forward the work begun with *the Increasing Rural Seniors Skills for Influencing Policy* work to address the issue of community-based transportation.

The project is fortunate to have a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from:

- Service Nova Scotia & Municipal Relations
- NS Senior Citizens Secretariat
- NS Advisory Council on the Status of Women
- Centre on Aging
- Veterans Affairs Canada – Halifax District Office
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- NS Community Based Transportation Association

Three geographic areas of Nova Scotia, Southwest Nova Scotia, East Hants and Richmond County, were identified as areas at varying levels of engagement in community based transportation. Groups in those areas were invited to participate in the project and identify and work on some aspect of public policy related to community-based transportation. This participation included identifying a number of seniors to participate in a day and half workshop on influencing policy, held in November 2004; staying connected with and sharing activities and progress with the Project Coordinator; and participating in a follow-up workshop six to seven months after the initial workshop, to be held in June 2005. A document outlining learnings and successes will be developed as a follow-up to the June workshop.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Robinson-Dexter
Coordinator

Report on the Rural Volunteer Project

The Rural Volunteer Project (RVP), although not staffed since March 31st, 2004 is still considered an integral part of the work of Community Links. The Provincial Coordinator visited all the existing coalitions, establish their status, ascertain whether they would continue, and what ongoing support they would like from Community Links. The Steering Committee for RVP continued to meet and committed itself to ongoing involvement and support. This group included members from Recreation Nova Scotia, Canadian Cancer Society, Victorian Order of Nurses, Health Promotion Clearinghouse, Heart and Stroke Foundation, Coastal Communities Network.

Five Coalitions have been active over the past year and continue to be active. Among the activities in which they have engaged are:

- § Annapolis/Digby - Volunteer Training Day - April 2
- § Colchester/East Hants - Volunteer Fair with Nova Scotia Community College - Oct 2004
- § Cumberland - Volunteer Training Workshop - Nov 2004
 - Launch of *Resources to Assist Volunteers* - March 2005
- § Lunenburg/Queens - Volunteer Extravaganza - March 2005
- § Tri County Coalition - Volunteer Showcase - April 2005

In addition groups in Antigonish and Guysborough were supported by RVP to hold training events in April and May 2004. A provincial meeting scheduled for the RVP Coalitions to coincide with a CVI Forum in March has been postponed to September along with the Forum. This meeting will help establish what should be the future face of this project.

Community Links Board of Directors 2004-2005

Prem Dhir	President	DHA# 4 Colchester-East Hants
Carol Welch	Vice President	DHA# 2 Shelburne/Yarmouth/Digby
Barbara LeBlanc	Secretary- Treasurer	DHA# 8 North Inverness/Victoria/Cape Breton
Barbara Carthew		DHA# 1 Lunenburg/Queens
Carol Ward		DHA# 3 Annapolis/Kings
Dora Fuller		DHA# 5 Cumberland
Mary B. Hureau		DHA# 7 Antigonish/Guysborough/ South Richmond/Inverness
Doris Evans		DHA# 9 Halifax Regional Municipality/West Hants

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