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## **Member Society of the John Howard Society of Canada**

### **Board of Directors**

President	Carolyn O'Malley
Vice President	Mike Dull
Past President	Janice Fiander
Secretary/Treasurer	Jane MacMaster
Directors	Janis Aitken
	Marcus James
	Louise Gray
	Alisha Brown-Fagan
	Charnell Brooks
	Alexander McKillop
Executive Director	Leisha Seymour

### **Programs and Service Areas**

Housing Support Programs	Restorative Justice Programs
Community Assessments	Community Maintenance Program
Community Workplace Program	Record Suspension Program
Employment Programs	In-Reach Services & Supports
Life Skills Workshops	Transitional Support
Community Education Programs	Volunteer & Student Placement Programs

## Offices and Service Locations

### Provincial Office

1-541 Sackville Drive  
Lower Sackville, NS B4C 2S1  
(902) 429-6429  
E/Director: Leisha Seymour

### Central Office

Unit A, 1019 Prince Street,  
Truro, NS B2N 1H7  
(902) 843-4969  
Director: Christina King

### Building Better Employment

Unit 2, 223 Wyse Rd.  
Dartmouth, NS B3A 1N1  
(902) 429-6429  
Program Lead: Alex Isenor

### JHSNS Pictou Community Hub

199 Elliott St.  
Pictou, NS B0K 1H0  
(902) 485-2125  
Resident Manager: Russell Borden

### Nova RampUp Program

199 Elliott St.  
Pictou, NS B0K 1H0  
(902) 691-2250  
Project Manager: Alex LeBlanc

### Halifax Office

1-541 Sackville Drive  
Lower Sackville, NS B4C 2S1  
(902) 429-6429  
Director: Adrienne MacDonald

### North Eastern Office

526C East River Road  
New Glasgow, NS B2H 3R6  
(902) 396-1999  
Director: Susan Hughes

### JHSNS Edge Program

532 B East River Rd.  
New Glasgow, NS B2H 3R6  
(902) 396-1999  
Program Lead: Alex Isenor

### Bail Program – Cape Breton

66 Wentworth St.  
Sydney, NS  
(902) 217-0063  
Bail Program Lead: Jenna Tucker

### Project Pivot

Homeward Suites, Room 610  
1960 Brunswick St, HFX, NS  
(902) 210-2157  
Housing Team Lead: James Cameron

# CORE VALUES

OUR CORE VALUES DEFINE OUR APPROACH TO OUR WORK.  
WE HOLD OURSELVES ACCOUNTABLE TO THEM IN EVERYTHING WE DO.



## Relationships

WE BUILD AND FOSTER RELATIONSHIPS WITH INDIVIDUALS, COMMUNITIES, AND SYSTEMS TO SPARK INNOVATION AND SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE CHANGE.



## Innovation

THROUGH CRITICAL REFLECTION, WE ARE RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS, COMMUNITIES AND SYSTEMS WE SERVE, STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE DELIVERY.



## Diversity and Inclusion

RECOGNIZING THAT DIVERSITY MAKES US STRONGER, WE SEEK OUT INCLUSION OF VOICES THAT REFLECT THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE TO LEARN FROM EACH OTHER.



## Advocacy

WE CHALLENGE INJUSTICES AND HARMS THAT IMPACT THOSE WE SERVE THROUGH INTERVENTIONS AT THE INDIVIDUAL, COMMUNITY AND SYSTEM LEVELS.



## Respect

WE BUILD A CULTURE OF RESPECT BY SUPPORTING EACH OTHER AND THE PEOPLE WE SERVE THROUGH COMMUNICATION GROUNDED IN COMPASSION AND CURIOSITY FOR DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES.



## Integrity

WE ACT ETHICALLY WITH OPENNESS, HONESTY AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO BUILD TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE INDIVIDUALS, COMMUNITIES AND SYSTEMS WE SERVE.

The John Howard Society of Nova Scotia is a provincial organization composed of and governed by people whose goal is to understand and respond to problems of crime and the criminal justice system.

**Mission:** Effective, just and humane responses to the causes and consequences of crime.

**Methods:** In furtherance of its Mission, the Society:

- Works with people who have come into conflict with the law;
- Reviews, evaluates, and advocates for changes in the criminal justice process;
- Engages in public education on matters relating to criminal law and its application, and promotes crime prevention through community activities.

## President's Report

2021 – 2022 proved to be a year of growth and potential for the John Howard Society of Nova Scotia. During the past year, some of the amazing work that the team has been working on includes: a large housing project in Pictou was developed and opened; a Bail Program was initiated; the team has been building better employment (bbe) and edge - which is an Afrocentric program, all of which have shown positive growth within the organization. The large projects have had the team working in partnership with Government Departments in a strategic way. 2022-2023 should provide for further growth in programs and supports within the community.

As my first year as President draws to a close, I would like to first say thank you to the Board. Some members are remaining for the upcoming year, and some will be

leaving us. Thank you all for your work and dedication to the organization. I wish departing members good luck in wherever life takes them. For those remaining, we have a lot of work to do in the upcoming year and I know that we will strive for only the best results.

For the management and staff of John Howard, I would like to say thank you for all you do. Leisha and her team are dedicated professionals that truly care about the work they do and the community certainly benefits by having you in place.

Carolyn O'Malley

Carolyn O'Malley

President - JHSNS Board of Directors

## Executive Director’s Report

It has been another year of unprecedented growth at the John Howard Society. We are so pleased to be able to expand the scope and reach of our programs and services to better respond to the needs of our communities across the province. The team has been working tirelessly and with great enthusiasm throughout this growth. I can’t thank them enough, as they all continue to do more than could ever be expected.

I would like to thank our Board of Directors for their sound advice and support, in particular our Chair, Carolyn O’Malley, who has been an excellent guide and ally through the past year.

Finally, thank you to our partners and funders, too numerous to list, for their continued sponsorship and collaboration in moving towards a more just society.

As for the rest – I think I’ll let the regional reports speak for themselves. Way to go

everyone, thank you all for making this another banner year!



With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Leisha Seymour". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Leisha Seymour



## Provincial Office Report

Another incredible year for The John Howard Society of Nova Scotia, and I'm pleased to be playing a small part. We have been extending our reach and influence across the province as staff continue to work tirelessly to make a difference in the lives of criminalized persons and their families. My optimistic self sees our preoccupation with COVID-19, once dominating everything we said and did, fading away ever so slowly, but forever changing the world in which we live, work, and play.

We started the 2021/22 year, planning for the opening of The John Howard Community Hub in Pictou, NS. The province offered the old Pictou Detox site with a generous lease agreement. We hired eight staff, and started a training drive, taking advantage of the time before opening to deliver NVCI, Trauma Informed Practices, First-Aid and CPR, etc. As you would expect from an aging building, repairs were required, including interior plumbing, and then a large section of the sewer line needed to be replaced after the sewer backed up in the basement. Then came three ailing boilers that needed major repairs, one of which was pronounced dead on the scene and the other two needed critical care. After a visit from the Office of the Fire Marshall, significant upgrades were required of door closures and locking mechanisms.

Thankfully Correctional Services stepped in to help, deploying maintenance staff from the Nova Scotia Youth Centre and Cape Breton Correctional Facility to install specialized equipment. Our Correctional Services partners connected us to Government Surplus, allowing us to pick up much needed office furniture and supplies.

Our friends at the Nova Scotia Community College generously donated a stove, classroom and bedroom furniture from their surplus inventory, saving us literally thousands of dollars.

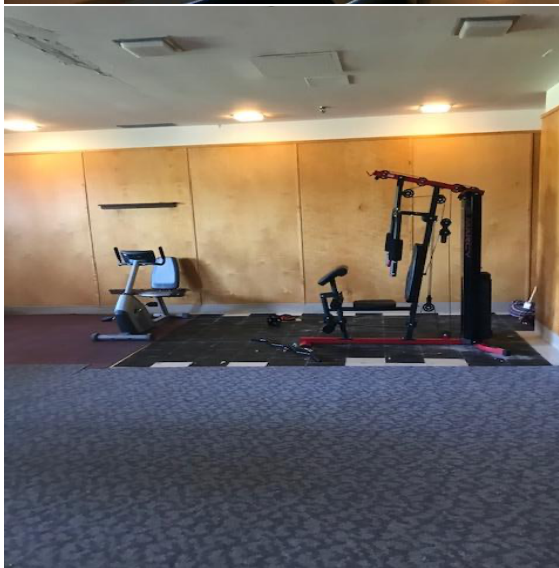


“One step at a time” became our Mantra as we looked at the endless list of tasks that needed to be accomplished before we were able to occupy the building. Procuring bedroom, office and kitchen furniture and equipment, renovating and upgrading aging building systems and infrastructure, painting, cleaning, writing policies, as well as training and orienting staff. Covid-19 of course slowed us down, needing to take extra precautions and safeguards such as ensuring staff and clients were fully vaccinated. We were finally able to bring our first resident in the building on January 17 of this year. Our client numbers have been climbing every week and we expect to be close to capacity by the end of July.

We have stumbled and fallen more than once, but we are persistent, and as every day passes we are reaching new goals, learning from the previous day, and getting stronger both individually and collectively. We are thankful to Susan Hughes who has been there from the beginning and has been a stable influence and sounding board for staff and residents. We lost a number of staff to



other career opportunities, however, we were able to recruit a very talented and capable new Housing Team Lead, Russell Borden, who has converted considerable energy and passion into opportunity and a new promise for the future. Halifax Regional Office also jumped in to help assigning seasoned staff from Project Pivot and Tamarack House. James Cameron has been working hard to strengthen operational procedures and protocols while



Julie Berkers, with her clinical social work lens, began rebuilding the Hub’s case management activities and developing a robust program schedule. I understand our Resident Support Workers, including Kristen Spencer, Jay Borden, Lisa Hawkes, Geoff Bevan, Tom Fraser, and Matt Greencorn are energized by the frenzy of activity and extra hands working at the Hub, and are excited to see things coming together.

The Halifax and Cape Breton Bail Programs are underway with less uptake than expected. Although I recognize we are in the early days of a new program, we may need to be more aggressive reaching out to the legal community and educating the courts and community partners about our programs and services. There will be more to talk about in days to follow. The Halifax Bail program has 6 clients with the Cape Breton program currently operating with only one. There are many similarities between the two programs including common standards and core expectations of clients, virtual and in-person reporting, targeted intervention, and a graduated approach toward supervision and support. Jenna Tucker, the Team Lead for the bail programs has been doing a great job

fine tuning the program model and educating our community partners.

The differences are many as well, starting with geography. The Halifax program is restricted to Halifax Regional Municipality. It is a hybrid model involving a partnership between Correctional Services and JHSNS. Both agencies work together to support complex cases while JHS's Bail Navigator assumes overall responsibility for case management. A defining feature of the Halifax Bail Program is Electronic Supervision (ES). Correctional Services provides the assessment and supervises clients after selecting one of four ES solutions. I am sad to say that Matt Burt, as many of you know, who was instrumental in getting the Halifax Bail Program up and running, has moved on to another career opportunity with Halifax Regional Municipality. He will be missed dearly by both clients and staff.

The Cape Breton Bail Program is a Community Based Model that encompasses all of Cape Breton. It is a Tripartite Agreement between John Howard Society, Elizabeth Fry Society of Cape Breton and Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network. The 3 agencies work together to support complex cases. Unlike the Halifax Bail Program, Correctional Services is not involved in the Risk/Needs Assessment or Case Management process and it does not include Electronic Supervision.

Read Johnson is leading the charge for us in Sydney and we are pleased to have such a knowledgeable and capable person looking after Northern Nova Scotia with two very accomplished community partners.

I want to take a moment to thank Correctional Services, they are not just a

funding partner, but our community partner. We have spent countless hours working with Erik Nielson, Mindy Morgan, Chris Hessian and many others, and their commitment to supporting criminalized persons in the community is truly commendable; and would have been unthinkable just 10 years ago. They recognize the value of community based programs and see this partnership as an investment in public safety and an investment in the lives of persons who might otherwise be left fend for themselves, to the detriment of the community, and most likely destined to return to jail.

Nowhere has Covid-19 caused more delays than with our Stop Gap Program, now called Nova Ramp Up. The project is funded and governed by the Departments of Community, Culture, Tourism and Heritage and the Department of Justice, Accessibility Directorate. We also have a strong partner with Dalhousie University's, PEACH (Planning for Equity, Accessibility and Community Health) responsible for project evaluation. The goal of the project is to increase access for people with mobility devices and raise awareness in the community by offering free customized temporary access ramps for single-step store fronts in and around the New Glasgow/Pictou area. The ramps would be constructed and painted by provincially incarcerated inmates, providing much needed employment skills, and encouraging greater empathy and awareness regarding accessibility issues within their community.



The program has been in the works for more than 2 years. Public Health trying their best to prevent the spread of this deadly virus, was unable to give us the green light to start the program. We purchased supplies and equipment, and even negotiated a change of venue from Cape Breton to Northeast Nova Scotia Correctional facility. We hired Alex LeBlanc as Project Manager, who has taken

charge with incredible passion and enthusiasm. We also hired Ken Brown as the Nova Ramp Up Ambassador who has recently reached out to local businesses and started to take orders. You might be surprised to learn what historic ship took advantage of Alex's ramp construction skills to improve accessibility for tourists in this quaint Nova Scotia town. We are optimistic this new venture is only the beginning and will allow JHSNS to move into other areas of social justice, equity, and inclusion.

A very special thank you to our Executive Director, Leisha Seymour who inspires and supports our efforts while insisting we find balance in our work / professional lives, and so many people who work behind the scenes like Sabrina O'Neal, Arlene Seto, and Braden Silliker.

I've said it before and I'll say it again, we have very talented, capable and caring staff who are the backbone of JHSNS, and for persons without a home, without a job, dealing with addictions, and mental health challenges, they are the last hope and at times, and the only people working on their behalf to keep them from returning to Jail.

[Sean Kelly](#)

[Sean Kelly](#)

[Provincial Office](#)  
[\(AKA - Chief Cook and Bottle Washer\)](#)

## **Northeast Regional Office Report**

### **John Howard work in the Community:**

The quote from Helen Keller, “*Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much*”, speaks to the team work and growth of The John Howard Society’s work in the Northeast Region during this past year.

More than ever, this past year has proven what we can accomplish as a Provincial Team. As a team you showed up when you were needed and I am grateful, you brought your skills, talents and willingness to help in any way that you could. We could not have accomplished so much alone, whether your piece was accounting, administration, training, supportive conversations, every single relationship is what it took to enable John Howard’s growth in the Northeast Region, you are a part of the web of connections necessary for such huge undertakings and I am in awe of the team’s talents and passion to support the whole team.

It would be impossible to capture every piece of the work that was done and the impacts this past year’s efforts have accomplished, the ripple effects will flow out and continue to have positive impacts on people’s lives in the present and in the years to come. Your work this year will also foster further work in the province.

Together we established a Housing Project, the John Howard Society Hub in Pictou, which provides folks connected to the Justice system with not only a place to live but also support services to wrap around them, encouraging personal growth which at times may seem like small steps but every step forward is a step in the right direction. We established a fantastic Afrocentric

Employment Program, Edge, which supports folks in a holistic way to gain meaningful employment and a brighter future for them and their families. Through the support of United Way Funding, staff and student efforts, we were able to assist hundreds of vulnerable people in our community and those returning to the community. Through the United way grants we provided assistance with food, clothing, employment certifications, life skills programing and support with record suspension applications.

### **Restorative Justice:**

In the field of Restorative Justice, we supported many folks in our communities, Pictou, Antigonish & Guysborough through restorative processes, assisting victims, offenders and communities to have a voice, to be supported and find their way using a process that encourages honesty, accountability, connectivity, support and repairing of relationships for all involved.

In the field of Restorative work, there is always a need to grow as practitioners, we are always seeking to learn and expand our knowledge. Recently the Department of Justice provided the Restorative Justice Agencies both Treaty Education and Renewing the NSRJP: Principled Casework training.

NSRJP: Renewal & Vision includes:

- Vision of Justice – Just Relations – doing right by each other
- NSRJP as a principle-based program
- Access to Justice - fair and equitable access to NSRJP Province-wide
- Justice Transformation

With the renewal and principal based practice, we will deepen our work

encouraging real transformation in the Justice system.

We have held restorative conversations with the men living at the Hub in Pictou and we have looked at restorative responses to various situations. Restorative practices at the Hub will provide opportunities for connection and a process that promotes learning and understanding.

### **Our Team:**

In my report I spoke about how our provincial team came together, each and every employee, our leadership team and board members have contributed to our success, you cared for our community like it was your very own, you are amazing!

To my local staff, Tanya, Alesha, Alicia, Ashley, Nelson, I count myself the lucky one to get to work with you every day, your compassion for people and your support of each other is inspiring.

We would also like to congratulate Tanya and Alesha on their recent graduation this year from NSCC. Alesha graduated from the Social Services Program and Tanya graduated from the Office Administration Program.



To the JHS Hub team, you are a part of our extended JHS North East family, I count

myself fortunate to get to spend time with you.

To Gwen MacLean, our volunteer who continues to contribute to our work through supporting a garden program at the JHS Hub in Pictou, we are thankful for your dedication and compassion to support vulnerable community members.

Respectfully,

Susan Hughes

JHSNS - Northeast Regional Director

## **Central Regional Office Report**

*A New Direction - Transitioning to the New Normal*

### **Reflecting**

As mentioned in last year's report, we talked about working through a global pandemic. As a result, changes were made to how we support clients and ensure continued services remotely and in person. Once we were set up on various platforms and devices, we adjusted to a new way of meeting with our clients and making the best of this evolving situation.

### **Transitioning back**

We eased back to our new normal using a blended work environment. We have become more comfortable utilizing the tools and technology obtained through several grants and continued online virtual learning.

Although a virtual experience has proven effective in some instances, we were glad to see restrictions lifted and meet face to face.

We have learned from the pandemic that virtual collaboration isn't a trend – it's here to stay and moving in a different direction. Our focus now is working on better practices as we move into our new normal of working in a blended environment.

## Grants

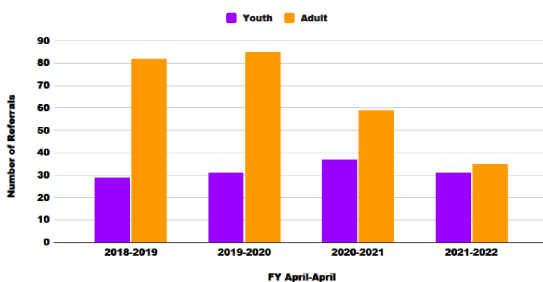
We received a Wellness Fund Grant, and with those funds, we purchased 10 seats for the Traffic control course, able to provide up to \$100.00 for steel-toed boots. This allowed us to support clients by enhancing our Employment Search Program.

## Caseload and Workload Management

CRO is responsible for delivering the RJ program for the Colchester and East Hants area. Our caseload has been relatively consistent over the past four years, but we see very complex workloads in our area and across the province.

Most referrals were made by the Crown, followed by the Police, Courts and Corrections. Property and violent offences were the top two offences referred for both youth and adults. So our numbers may be down, but we are working with more complex cases than we have seen in the past, requiring much more time and resources.

**RJ Referral Trend**  
The John Howard Society - Central Region



## Community Highlights and Activities

-Truro and area are buzzing again and using a blended model to stay involved.

- Several committees have chosen to use a blended approach to convene meetings.

-We have had several discussions with Safety First and are thinking creatively about how we can partner.

-We had two Student placements, Aaron Kenny and Maddi Van Veen from NSCC Truro

-We have partnered with the Sexual Assault Centre and Dismiss Society and are offering some professional development training sometime soon

-Several presentations on restorative processes, two were done virtually and one in person.

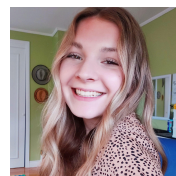
-The Regional lead team met with several police departments for a refresher on referring to the program.

-We have reconnected with Nova Institution for Women and hope to convene restorative discussions in the fall.

## Meet Our Staff



**Marie Holeiter** is our Administrative Casework Assistant and has been with us for three years. She is currently on Maternity leave for 12 months and plans to return to her position in August 2022.

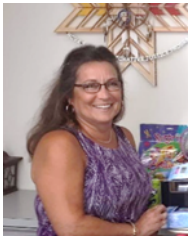


**Maddi Van Veen** is the newest member of the CRO team. She began her journey with JHS as a student at NSCC, Criminal Justice;

Maddi was hired as the Administrative Casework Assistant for a 12-month maternity term position.



**Wanda Grant** is the Restorative Justice caseworker. She has been with JHS for 11 years. Wanda is responsible for case management, program support, and facilitating RJ circles and general office support.



**Christina King** is the regional director for CRO. She has 31 years of experience working in community justice. She is responsible for daily operations, program supervision, and casework management.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge our staff, volunteers and Board of Directors and thank our community partners who continue to entrust us with delivering services and support to our mutual clients.

Respectfully,

**Chris King**

Christina King, Regional Director

## Halifax Regional Office Report

FY2022 was dynamic and full of surprises, keeping us in a constant state of change or transition. Change creates new opportunities. It can also be really challenging! The Covid-19 pandemic continued to throw curve balls that complicated service delivery while, at the same time, we came into opportunities for continued expansion. This meant our team and roster of programs/services was growing in what felt like a pretty unstable environment at times. We grew so quickly that our administrative and human resource systems became inadequate to support our teams and their work. We were experiencing growing pains. To address these issues we needed to make some internal improvements that could better support our people and the work they were doing in our communities.

This year the Halifax Region formalized a leadership group of Team Leads who would come to work closely with the Regional Director to oversee our activities, support our personnel, and develop teams that could really specialize in key service areas for JHS. And, this group would better prepare us for continued growth and expansion. While the leadership group was initially mobilized to stabilize HRM operations, they have since taken on a broader scope to oversee new programs and services delivered in other regions as well.

Demand for our services has remained high and for much of the year we continued to benefit from emergency Covid funds so that we could remain responsive. We still hold our longstanding service agreements with the Provincial and Federal Justice Departments and have entered into a new sustained agreement with Dept. of

Community Services. We continue to offer our own programs and services, including some newly developed and launched this year. HRO appreciates receiving feedback from clients and community partners, as it informs our work and helps us to be responsive to community needs, interests and challenges.

### **Employability Team: Employment-Related Supports**

This year we started two new employment programs - Building Better Employment and EDGE. Both started in March 2021 and the initial months of the fiscal year were focused on planning, development and implementation - including hiring new staff and building and strengthening community relationships.

#### Building Better Employment (BBE) - Funded by the Department of Labour, Skills, and Immigration.

BBE is developed and delivered in partnership with NOISE Information & Transition Agency, to run March 2021 to September 2022. BBE is designed to support criminalized and at-risk persons 19+ with training for and connection to in-demand jobs in Nova Scotia, with a particular focus on engaging individuals from BIPOC communities. The project focuses on development of new build construction skills. BBE is delivered at an accessible program office in Dartmouth North, where we have a classroom, kitchenette and workshop area to support program activities. Group programming and Boost (1:1) support is offered.

From July 2021 to March 2022, two ten-week program cycles were delivered to 18 participants, 12 of whom secured

employment. All participants recognized significant growth in employability skills, and holistic growth as a person. Almost 70 clients were supported through Boost, at least 18 of whom secured employment (note that Boost is a more client-driven, less intensive support model and many clients simply need “boots and a hard hat” to be able to start work). BBE has included funding to support record suspension applications for participants - this is the first time that JHSNS has been able to pay for a client’s application expenses! This is a watershed moment for our employment supports and a sign of positive change in funders’ aptitudes to support record suspensions. We are very proud of the support offered through BBE.

The team would like to recognize Darrel Viner for his contributions to BBE - Darrel brought extensive construction knowledge and an aptitude for teaching to the program, as well as an infectious energy for staff and clients alike.

#### EDGE Program - funded by the Department of Community Services.

JHSNS was selected to be the EDGE pilot service provider in New Glasgow, one of six sites in the province. EDGE is a youth-based Africentric employment program for youth aged 18-26 who need assistance finding employment. The group program cycle is 8-weeks in length, covering employment support, life skills workshops, community navigation and offering mental health support. A major success of the program was the Umoja (Unity) days, where participants and staff shared a meal and engaged in activities outside the typical learning curriculum - such as volunteering, hiking, or increasing their cultural awareness



of Black and Indigenous communities in Nova Scotia.

EDGE ran three group cohorts between August 2021 and March 2022. There were 24 referrals and 18 ended up participating in the program, seven of whom secured employment. EDGE staff consistently observed the confidence of youth grow during their program engagement - leading to self-sufficiency and independence.

EDGE was initially rolled out by DCS with strict referral parameters (designated referral sources and candidates must be ESIA clients assessed by DCS as “employment ready.” Referral numbers were low in the early months and did not well engage the African Nova Scotian community. By the end of the year the referral model was loosened and this has led to an increase in referral numbers in general and referrals of Black and Indigenous youth. EDGE has been extended for another pilot year until March, 2023 and we are optimistic that it will become an integral part of New Glasgow’s community over the long term.

JHSNS would like to recognize Russell Borden, Alicia Paris, and Ashley Kean’s contribution to the EDGE program in its pilot year - its successes would not have been possible without your hard work!

#### Record Suspension Application Support

RSAS supports people to assess their eligibility and navigate the record suspension application system, as per Parole Board of Canada guidelines. We received referrals from Dept. of Community Services (sponsored cases) or community and self-referrals (non-sponsored). At the beginning of the year HRO had over 50 pending referrals or active cases. A significant

backlog had developed, largely due to the pandemic but also resource challenges. By the end of FY22, we had worked through the waitlist and assigned all active cases to a RSAS caseworker.

In January the Government of Canada made a surprising decision to decrease the record suspension application fee from \$657 to \$50. This brought the average total cost for a record suspension from \$1000 to \$300. There has been a steady flow of referrals since, many from local police services, community agencies or self-referrals, which has solidified our position as the “Record Suspension Experts” in HRM. Additionally, community agencies such as the YMCA have invited us to various networking events and job fairs to promote our services to community members and increase awareness and understanding of the record suspension process.

This year we received 8 new DCS referrals, a continuing decrease from previous years. We hope to address this trend in FY23 by hosting lunch-and-learns with DCS caseworkers. We received 53 community referrals, a significant increase compared to other years. We anticipate this trend to continue as more community members learn about the decreased cost of a record suspension.

In FY22, HRO submitted 12 successful record suspension applications, approximately 30% of all applications submitted from Nova Scotia. We submitted seven applications sponsored through BBE. In the past 7 years we have worked with 445 clients and submitted more than 76 successful applications (note that we anticipate the actual success rate to be higher

but clients don't always follow-up to share their outcome).

### US Waiver Application Support

HRO offers support with the application process for US Waiver of Inadmissibility, documentation required for travel to the US with a criminal record. We have seen a decline in requests for this support, likely related to restrictions on non-essential travel and the temporary closure of the Canada/US border. No applications were submitted this year.

### **Programs Team: Community Programs**

Over the past year, the HRO Programs Team has seen a few staffing changes. In 2021, we welcomed Julia McCallum after having completed her Social Work student placement with us from January-May. Deanna Palmer has worked with us part time through the year. In September, Michaela Smith started her student placement with us. In November we welcomed Joshua Spencer after he completed his student placement from September-October. Lastly, Gillian Morrissey assumed the position of Programs Team Lead in September after Daniela Mayo pursued graduate studies in the fall. A thank you to everyone on this team for their hard work and commitment to keeping our programming accessible to community members!

We were fortunate that the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia renewed their support of our community life skills programs, helping us to continue offering programs free of charge. We were also able to train core Programs Team staff through Anderson & Anderson Anger Management Facilitator Training in December.

Additionally, we were supported by the Halifax West and Southeastern Community Health Boards for our "Breaking Bread" initiative. This allowed us to respond to food insecurity by providing coffee, snacks, and non-perishable food items at program. Our partnership with the Halifax Domestic Violence Court Program has continued, whereby our programming is considered for DVCP participant support plans by DVCP Coordinator and Crown attorney. This year saw an increase in referrals.

### Anger Management & Emotional Intelligence Program (AM&EI)

Ongoing high demand for this court-recognized program led us to refer non-mandated clients to other community agencies (where appropriate) in order to reduce our wait list to a manageable number. Through the year we delivered 10 group cycles of AM&EI, five virtually and five in person at the BBE Office. 24 participants were referred from the Halifax DVCP. We also delivered three AM&EI workshops in Musquodoboit Harbour to 21 youth through a partnership with YESS.

### Healthy Relations Program

We delivered four HR program cycles this year, two in person and two virtually. This supported 23 clients, including 3 DVCP referrals.

### Caring Dads Program - funded by Status of Women

Caring Dads is a program for fathers who have exposed their children to violence. With Standing Together funding, we delivered two full cycles of the Caring Dads Program in FY2022 in collaboration with New Start Counselling. This supported 15 participants, 10 of whom successfully

completed their 17 week program cycle. We were also able to train two more facilitators, bringing us to three at HRO. We built stronger relationships with Child Protection, the Domestic Violence Court Program and various legal teams. JHS receives considerable praise for this program from both referral sources and clients. Participant feedback has noted the positive improvements to familial relationships after having completed the program.

#### Community Maintenance Program (CMP)

HRO continues to deliver the Community Maintenance Program – Multi Target on behalf of CSC, a common program requirement for federal parolees. Daniela Mayo was the dedicated facilitator for most of the year, taken over by Gillian in the fall. Program was either delivered in a Halifax Public Library venue or via telephone, depending on COVID-19 restrictions.

#### **Correctional Programming**

Unfortunately, program delivery within Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility has remained on hold since March 2020 due to the pandemic, under direction by Public Health. That said, we have remained active with advocacy support and bridging supports provided through other services.

#### **Transition Team: (Re)Integration Supports**

Our Transition Team works through the social determinants of health to identify a client's needs, interests and goals and then develop a support plan that can begin to address barriers and move forward. FY2022 was the third year of two multi-year projects focused on supporting marginalized

community members with (re)integration, the Transition Support Program and the Community Navigation Project. We were fortunate to additionally receive Covid-19 Relief Funds from United Way Halifax. Demand for support provided through this team remained particularly high as a result of the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Staff work closely and collaboratively to share expertise and resources, which increases the overall impacts for our communities. This year the team has reached over 300 community members.

HRO continues to do our best to support people and communities outside of HRM via phone and email communications. These efforts generally remain unfunded and so are under-resourced. Individuals from the Valley, South Shore and Cape Breton areas regularly connect for support and we frequently receive calls from correctional facilities/institutions in other jurisdictions seeking help with release preparations, advocacy, accessing the grievance process, among other issues.

#### Transition Support Program (TSP) - funded by United Way Halifax

TSP supports men to successfully transition from correctional facilities to their home communities in HRM. The program makes particular efforts to engage and support men of African descent. Matthew Burt was our Transition Support Worker into December of 2021, when Tevin Franks assumed the role and Matt took on a new project. Covid-19 continues to impact the delivery model for this program, as ideally we begin working with a person pre-release but we have had limited access to working with men during their incarceration. Support

must be provided over the phone or video calls with help from facility staff.

We estimate that more than 260 individuals have been meaningfully supported through TSP this year. A thanks to Matthew Burt and Tevin Franks for their unwavering commitment to supporting marginalized community members. Both have worked hard to strengthen connections with culturally specific supports offered in HRM, especially for people of African descent. Also a genuine thank you to the United Way of Halifax for their continued support!

Community Navigation (CN) - funded by Green Shield Canada through Community Foundation of Nova Scotia

Community Navigation supports marginalized community members and their families to navigate the local network of resources relevant to their needs, with a particular emphasis on mental health. This was CN's third year, supported through two different GSC/CFNS grants to stretch the program to April 2022. CN was integrated into all of HRO's programs and services. As such, it is difficult to identify how many unique individuals were supported. We estimate the number to be well over 130, with the majority of people being supported through case management.

Visible homelessness was a significant issue in HRM this year, with Covid-19 causing a dramatic increase in unhoused individuals. Our Transition Team leaned in to collaborate with HRM and other community agencies to support Meagher Park (also referred to as People's Park), an encampment established following a protest to remove temporary shelter. We worked closely and quickly with partnering organizations to safely move unhoused

community members into hotels and shelters. We also helped folks acquire 'keys to access,' such as clothing, identification, and connection to other community organizations.

Community Assessments - Correctional Services Canada contract

This year we completed 119 reports out of a maximum capacity of 241. This is an increase of 64 reports from last year. Over the course of the year 6 staff carried the reporting caseload.

HRM & Cape Breton Bail Verification & Supervision (BV&S) - Dept. of Justice contracts

JHS has been supported by the Dept. of Justice to run two bail projects within Nova Scotia. The program in Cape Breton is a community based model delivered in partnership with Elizabeth Fry Society and Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network. The HRM program is a partnership model with Community Corrections. Both programs remained in development phase in FY22 with the official launch being in March. The project employs Matthew Burt in HRM and Read Johnston in Cape Breton as Bail Navigators; an additional part time staff will be hired for HRM.

**Housing Team: Project Pivot & Tamarack House**

This year Dept. of Community Services funded us to operate two temporary transitional housing programs, with the goal of decarcerating men from facilities through subsequent waves of Covid-19 and then transitioning them into next phase housing in community. We were also granted sustained operational funding by DCS for a permanent transitional housing program for

men exiting correctional facilities. It has been a very exciting and dynamic year as we settle into being a housing support agency.

### Project Pivot (PP & PP 2.0)

PP was a shift from last year's JEC Program. It was only to support those who identify as male, primarily operated within one hotel and was under JHS's sole management. The initial PP ran from May 2021 to January 31, 2022 and received 33 clients, of which 16 were transitioned into longer term accommodations. This continued to demonstrate the incredible hard, collaborative work being done by the team and participants.

PP 2.0 began January 14, 2022 and was still in operation at the end of the fiscal year. By that date it had received 40 new participants, of which 6 were transitioned into longer term accommodations. The project was extended to June 30th and the PP team continues to work with participants to find appropriate next phase housing or shelter.

PP team members have strived to provide stabilizing support to all participants who have come to the program, and many remain in the wider community. This is a credit to the team and clients to overcome the many daily challenges faced in navigating systems of support that can feel elusive.

### Tamarack House (TH)

TH is our new, permanent transitional housing program. With a 'soft launch' over December 2021 and January 2022, it is in its infancy and has yet to be fully mobilized. That said, we have been supporting four clients who were with us in PP 1.0 or 2.0 and are now living independently. It remains a challenge to secure apartments in the current housing market. However, as the

remaining clients from PP2.0 successfully secure leases and move into independent housing, we will be able to continue supporting their successes through TH.

## **Networking & Community Engagement**

### Collaborative Networks

HRO has continued to engage with local community groups and networks, such as Metro Interagency Committee on Family Violence & Restorative Conversations, the North End Community Circle and Black Males Criminal Justice Table. We also participate in two working groups of community and government agencies supporting people exiting corrections (Coordinated Effort and Collaborative Community Reintegration Team - Release from Corrections).

### Community Engagement

JHS staff and students ran our second Holiday Help initiative. We collected donations from community members and agencies and had funding support through Green Shield Canada & Community Foundation of NS. A notable thank you to Santa Under the Bridge for their contributions! We supported 44 individuals, couples and families with holiday stockings, self-care items, food and winter apparel. We provided 20 holiday care packages to CNSCF for men released during the holiday season. We also adopted six families through Black Power Hour, providing children and youth gifts from their wish lists. Thank you to our allies, friends, and family for their contributions!



We would also like to acknowledge the continued support from partners who help us by supplying food, clothing and household items for clients. They include Brunswick Street Mission, Souls Harbour and Value Village.

### **Community Workplace Program (CWP)**

On behalf of NS Dept. of Justice, HRO oversees court-mandated community service hours for adults in HRM. HRO had 87 new referrals this year ( up from 62 new referrals last year). Many nonprofits and community groups continue to express an inability to support community service hours due to Covid-19 restrictions. Our personnel work extensively to find placement opportunities for participants but it has been challenging. Staff have adapted by trying to find creative opportunities for participants to complete their hours, such as by home projects

making furniture, knits or crafted items for subsequent donation.

### **Capacity Building & Administration**

Strategies have been developed and implemented to increase capacity and efficiencies within our growing organization. One key action has been the development of a new position, Capacity Development & Administrative Lead. The role has responsibilities to the Provincial Office and Halifax Regional Office to strengthen and oversee administrative processes and systems. For example, the position is responsible for our orientation and onboarding of new personnel, and has already made improvements so that the process is more standardized, inclusive and informative. Another responsibility is maintaining core training within our staff teams.

#### *Professional Development: Training & Learning Opportunities*

The early waves of the pandemic made it difficult to keep up with core staff training. This year a professional development strategy was implemented to facilitate new training or recertifications for our growing Halifax Region team. Particular efforts were made for the following: Standard First Aid (Safety First), Verbal Intervention training and Non-violent crisis intervention (NVC; JHS trainer), ASIST (thanks to Stepping Stone), Naloxone & Harm Reduction (Direction 180), Becoming Trauma Informed (BTI; JHS trainers), and WHMIS (CCOHS).

Team members have participated in a number of other training opportunities offered through the year. Some highlights include: Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Session (Coverdale); the National Problem-Solving Courts Virtual Conference (Dartmouth Wellness Court); Capacity Building Workshop (NS Community Alliance); Provincial & Federal Advocacy Training (Elizabeth Fry Society); Shop Talk Series - African Nova Scotians, Disability, and Services (Teamwork Cooperative, YMCA, and Association of Black Social Workers); Unconscious Bias (Ann Divine); Bystander Intervention: Navigating Microaggressions in the Workplace (Impact Organizations of NS); Core Correctional Practices (Dept. of Corrections).

#### Student Placement & Volunteer Program

With pandemic restrictions and our limited office capacity, the Volunteer Program was largely on hold. However, as needs increased we recruited one new volunteer, Louise, to help with our clothing, food and household item banks.

We (re)engaged with various academic institutions for student placements and hosted a total of 12 student placements: Ashlee, Brooke and Michaela from Dalhousie University's Bachelor of Social Work Program; Joshua and George from Maritime Business College's Counseling & Human Services Program; Owen a Dalhousie University Political Science student; Nathaniel from Nova Scotia Community College's Social Services Program; and Julia P., Nneka, James, Linda, and Brownyn from the Eastern College's Criminology Program.

HRO relies on the support of volunteers and student placements for all aspects of our work. Our staff would like to thank our volunteer and student placements for their

hard work and dedication in 2021-22! You helped us through a dynamic year and we are incredibly grateful.

### **Our Halifax Region Team**

#### Staff

Our team has grown significantly this year as a result of our expanded services. We have had to 'remodel' to better support our human resources and activities, including the establishment of a regional leadership team. This is a brief account of our incredibly dedicated and hard working team in the Halifax Region as of the end of the year.

*Adrienne MacDonald* - Halifax Regional Director;

*Jenna Tucker* - Transition Team Lead,  
*Matthew Burt* - Bail Navigator, *Tevin Franks* - Transition Support Worker.

*Gillian Morrissey* - Programs Team Lead,  
Community Programs Facilitators: *Julia McCallum*, *Joshua Spencer*, *Deanna Palmer*.

*Alex Isenor* - Employability Team Lead,  
*Faidat Olatunbosun* - BBE Program Facilitator, *Darrel Viner* - BBE Construction Safety & Skills Instructor.

*Sabrina O'Neil* - Capacity Development & Team Lead, *Cole Dreger* - Administrative Support Worker.

*James Cameron* - Interim Housing Team Lead, *Julie Berkers* - Tamarack House Community Navigator, Project Pivot Support Workers: *Tyler Skinner*, *Jessica McCann*, *Nneka Watson*, *Be Arseneault*, *Chance Simmonds*, *Lindsay Misiner*, *Keana Guianan-Snell*, *Linda Wesley*, *Nathaniel Beals*.

And, thank you to Arlene Seto (Bookkeeper) and Braden Silliker (IT & Tech Support) for their help!

We have had some staff leave during the year. A special thanks and best wishes to *Daniela Mayo* (Programs Team Lead) after five years of service. A nod and thank you to those who were on our initial Project Pivot team - Hillary, Adrian, Ibrahim, Faith, Skylar. And, thank you to our energetic summer students Wilhemina and Victoria.

*This report was collaboratively written by the*

**Halifax Regional Office Leadership Team**

I'll make a few final comments. First, on behalf of HRO, thank you to Leisha and Sean for their constant willingness to help. I'd like to thank my counterparts in the Central and North Eastern Region, Chris and Susan, for our supportive working relationships. And, I would like to acknowledge my neverending appreciation to the responsive, effective and caring team of the Halifax Region. We have such an incredible, bright and resilient team and I take great pride in working with you!

**Adrienne MacDonald**

Director, Halifax Regional Office



*“He dived into the depth of dungeons, plunged into the infection of hospitals, surveyed the mansions of sorrow and pain, took the gauge and dimensions of misery, depression and contempt, remembered the forgotten, attended the neglected and visited the forsaken...”*

*- Edmund Burke, speaking of John Howard in 1781*

