



EDUCATIONAL  
PROGRAM  
INNOVATIONS  
CHARITY SOCIETY

# ANNUAL REPORT



2020

## **EPIC - CONTACT INFORMATION**

*Please feel free to contact us with any questions or requests you may have.*

### **Educational Program Innovations Charity (EPIC) Society**

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Website: **<http://epiccharity.com>**

Mailing address: **PO Box 1897  
North Sydney, Nova Scotia  
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Phone: **902-794-7225**

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### **Youth Peer & Outreach and Parents PEACE**

Email: **youthpeerprogram@live.com**

Location: **Youth Peer Centre  
Sydney Adult High School, downstairs**

Mailing address: **290 Whitney Avenue  
Sydney, Nova Scotia  
B1P 5A6 Canada**

Phone: **902-539-8228**

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### **EPIC Youth Peer Video**

YouTube Search: **Youth Peer Program - EPIC**

### **CRA Charities Listing**

Google Search: **CRA Charities Listings  
Registration #89214 9964  
Educational Program Innovations Charity Society**



# CHARITY OVERVIEW

2020

## MISSION

The mission of **Educational Program Innovations Charity Society** is to advance marginalized learners through innovation, empathy, volunteerism, diversity and partnership.

## FOCUS

The charity's focus is on children and youth at risk, especially those from marginalized cultures, who are self-motivated but require enhanced accommodation and support to ensure attainable social adaptation and educational advancement.

## ACTIVITIES

The charity's activities include:

- educational projects filling voids in services for disadvantaged and high-risk learners
- tutoring, mentoring, and creative arts services
- high school grad humanity/scholarship awards; post-secondary grad volunteerism awards
- secondary and post-secondary field-of-study work internships
- educational initiatives serving marginalized youth and their caregivers
- development of strategies/materials promoting social adaptation and cultural affirmation
- networking with other charities to promote parallel initiatives in other Canadian sites

## HISTORY

EPIC was founded in Nova Scotia in 1996 by Barry Waldman. At that time, he was Director of Unama'ki Training & Education Centre (TEC) in Eskasoni First Nation, an alternative high school and adult education facility which he had nurtured from a 1-year pilot project to a mainstay of the community. Through daily contact with marginalized learners, Barry came to understand the nature of their challenges and the potential loss of life-transforming opportunities if sufficient program funding could not be accessed. He envisioned a community-based charitable organization, fully supported for its innovative approaches, rapid and flexible in its responses to identified needs, effective in recruiting and engaging young volunteers, and transformative in delivering programs for the advancement of high risk participants who were otherwise likely to fall through the cracks of agency services. His solution was to form **Educational Program Innovations Charity Society** and to oversee its youth-centred charitable activities as a volunteer so that there would be virtually no administrative costs. He continues to volunteer as EPIC's Executive Director and Board Finance Director. EPIC has been fortunate to recruit and retain outstanding and dedicated Board members who are distinguished in their fields and volunteer substantial talents and resources to ensure the fulfillment of EPIC's mission. For 17 years concluding in 2014, the Donner Canadian Foundation provided national non-profit awards for Excellence in the Delivery of Social Services. In the final 9 years, EPIC applied and was evaluated rigorously through a 2-stage Fraser Institute protocol. In that period, EPIC received more cash award recognition from the Donner Foundation than any of the other 2,000 competing Canadian charitable programs. EPIC received the Donner Foundation Award 6 times as the highest achieving non-profit in the Services for Children category. In both 2010 and 2013, EPIC received the highest Donner Foundation Award across all social service categories, and in 2012 received the Canada-wide Peter Drucker Award for the most consistent record of excellence and innovation in the management and delivery of non-profit program services.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EPIC's Policies and Procedures state: *"The Board shall be made up of collaborative, dedicated, and open-minded individuals with a commitment to achieving the broadest community benefit, and who each effectively represent the needs of marginalized learners from a unique perspective."* EPIC's volunteer Board operates by consensus, and great effort is made to ensure 100% attendance at Board meetings. Board members also fulfill the five Executive positions. Board members are encouraged to serve the charity on an ongoing basis, so two-year terms are renewed automatically unless a Board member requests departure.

### CHAIR / PLANNING DIRECTOR

**Janet Robinson**



Janet is a self-employed workplace facilitator who works on contract to help struggling women find jobs. She was formerly a Counsellor for the Ann Terry Society and served on the Board of New Dawn Enterprises. She currently works part-time for the Old Sydney Society. She has a wealth of community-based career and volunteer experience including valued assistance with the Celtic Colours International Festival. She has served on the EPIC Board since 2005.

### VICE-CHAIR / VALUES & ETHICS DIRECTOR

**Dana Feltmate**



Dana is the Minister of the United Protestant Church in Sydney River, a church which has grown rapidly in congregation and community service under his leadership. Dana and his wife Delores have been instrumental in enhancing provincial services to children in care. They have also been foster parents to 11 children including a daughter they adopted. He has worked tirelessly for the United Church Children and Youth in Crisis working group and the Cape Breton Child Welfare Board. He joined the EPIC Board in 2016.

### VICE-CHAIR / PROGRAMS DIRECTOR

**Barb Donovan**



Barb has been an integral part of EPIC for 22 years. She was pivotal in the development of the Youth Peer Program as Director for 13 years, Breakthrough Facilitator & Back-up for 6 years, and has served on EPIC's Board as Programs Director since 2016. She is considered by EPIC and most others she has worked with to be extraordinarily gifted in fostering healthy relationships with marginalized youth and continues in her retirement to help former Youth Peer participants overcome social challenges.

### TREASURER / FINANCE DIRECTOR

**Barry Waldman**



Barry is EPIC's founder, Executive Director, and supervisor of its programs. He considers himself retired, but oversees EPIC's operations and finances as a volunteer, a role he has sustained since 1996. He was formerly a carpenter, teacher, educational administrator and consultant, who spent most of his career serving the Eskasoni School Board. In 2008 he received the Cape Breton United Way Harvey Webber Volunteerism Award and in 2013 received Cape Breton's Tom Miller Human Rights Award for services to the disadvantaged. He joined the Board in 2007.

### SECRETARY / COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

**Nancy S. M. Waldman**



Nancy is a writer, artist, and retired psychiatric nurse who holds a Master's Degree in Nursing. She has served as a Board member of the Cape Breton Mental Health Association and is one of three founders and editors for Third Person Press which nurtures and promotes emerging Cape Breton speculative fiction writers. She started volunteering with EPIC in 2000 and has sustained the role of EPIC webmaster ever since. She joined the Board in 2007.



# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

2020

## Youth Peer

Youth Peer is a free, 2½ hour after-school program for youth ages 8-18 in Cape Breton Regional Municipality referred by EPIC's 34 community agency partners to address social and academic challenges. Each day, up to 15 youth at risk are matched 1-to-1 with their own volunteer tutor-mentor who was recruited from university, college, or high school to help the youth overcome educational challenges and personal obstacles and engage in positive social activities like art, music, workshops, and educational games. The relationship that develops between high-risk youth and tutor-mentors is magical. Participants advance rapidly in social skills and academic achievements. Troubled youth begin to feel and behave like regular kids in the structured, yet fun, environment. Youth, volunteers, and staff interact like a wonderful family, which results in reduced risks to self, family, and community; enhancement of school attachment and achievement; and increased self-esteem and positive behaviours. For the 2020-2021 school-year Youth Peer will start as a hybrid program, 1 day/week each for elementary, middle school, and high school students, and 2 days/week online. As pandemic health issues increase or diminish, Youth Peer will adapt accordingly to optimize social and academic benefits for youth participants while sustaining a healthy environment for all.

## Youth Peer Outreach

Youth Peer Outreach evolved from community requests and the opportunity to collaborate with Schools Plus staff in partnership with Cape Breton Victoria Regional Centre for Education. The 2019-2020 school-year was the third full year of weekly 2-hour Youth Peer Outreach services in Glace Bay, New Waterford, and Northside. Tutor-mentor matching for high risk youth ages 10-16 is projected to continue in the 2020-2021 school-year on Mondays at JB Croak Elementary in Glace Bay, on Tuesdays at Breton Education Centre in New Waterford, and on Thursdays online with Northside youth. The hybrid onsite/online program will enable Outreach staff to move rapidly in either direction onsite or online to ensure physical health in pandemic times while optimizing social and academic advancement.

## - Breakthrough

The Breakthrough Program concluded in 2019 after 8 years of operation. The program involved weekly 2-hour discussions with former high risk Youth Peer participants up to age 30, who drew upon personal challenges to help other youth avoid the pitfalls they had experienced. Breakthrough succeeded in promoting resiliency and social adaptiveness in marginalized youth and empowered them to give back to the community. The program was discontinued when most original members passed age 30 and outgrew young participants. Online contact continues, but the onsite program is finished and not expected to return.

## **Parents PEACE** (*Practicing Esteem-building Acceptance Communication & Evaluation*)

Parents PEACE is a free, ongoing parenting workshop, open to any caregivers with school-aged children. Throughout the school year, parents meet Monday nights from 6:30 - 8:30 at the Youth Peer Centre, downstairs in the Sydney Adult High School. The program's goal is to help parents better understand their interactions with their children and learn how to put this knowledge to work for them, by providing parents with practical tools and a safe place to discuss critical issues. Participants are welcome to come at any time without a start or stop date. The Facilitator seeks input from parents on topics of interest and arranges for knowledgeable speakers from community social agencies to present ideas for discussion. The sessions focus on practical strategies for coping with real parenting problems.

## PROGRAM NEED

2020

For many years, social agency staff in CBRM (**Cape Breton Regional Municipality**) have conveyed frustration with the severity of youth cases they handle and isolation dealing with compound social dysfunction factors. The youth immersed in social conflict have tended to be Mental Health, Addiction, and Child Welfare clients who have been suspended from school and are deficient in social skills, impulse control, and self-esteem. The areas served by EPIC experience all the conditions that place communities at high-risk of these kinds of social maladaptations: comparatively low education levels, high unemployment, and a high percentage living in poverty (*Nova Scotia Government*). The percentage of CBRM adults who have completed a university degree or diploma is 34% lower than the national average (*Community Foundation of Nova Scotia*). The average unemployment rate in CBRM over the past 20 years – 15%, is more than double the national average – 7% over the same period (*Statistics Canada*). A pan-Canadian comparison of CBRM with similarly-sized cities in 6 other provinces (Kelowna, BC; Red Deer, AB; Regina, SK; Thunder Bay, ON; Saint John, NB; and St. John's, NF) revealed that average family income in CBRM is 28% lower (*Environics Analytics*). Including communities like Eskasoni with a child poverty rate of 73%, the average child poverty rate across CBRM is 29%, which is 71% higher than the national average of 19% (*Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives*). Unfortunately, despite encouraging signs related to international university students, the overall demographics in CBRM are not improving. The bleak employment outlook has driven the population of CBRM spiralling downward for decades with an average annual population decline of 1% (*Statistics Canada*).

The youth referred by social agency partners to EPIC's core program – Youth Peer & Outreach – are prioritized for being at high risk of social conflict and academic challenges. As a result, the average poverty rate in this after-school program for 8-18 year-olds is 89%. If EPIC did not provide free transportation, the majority of participants would be unable to attend. The free snacks provided are often the closest thing to a nutritional meal that day. EPIC's goal in the delivery of Youth Peer & Outreach is to provide acceptance, support, encouragement, and a transformative safe haven environment for youth who might otherwise be headed for a lifetime of dysfunction.

## RESOURCE ALLOCATION

2020

The table below provides a breakdown of costs allocated by program category for EPIC's most recent fiscal year, from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. Additional revenue and expense details are provided in EPIC's financial statements which were conducted by MNP Accounting and are available on EPIC's website... <http://epiccharity.com>

EXPENSES BY PROGRAM	COST
Youth Peer & Outreach Program	142,704
* Administration	8,386
Parents PEACE Program	3,905
Scholarships and Awards	3,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$157,995</b>

*\* EPIC has recently expanded what it categorizes as Administration costs and is no longer splitting those expenses between Charitable and Administration costs as previously approved by Canada Revenue Agency. Going forward, EPIC will consider the following expenses entirely as Administration costs: external audit, liability insurance, donations to fundraisers for others, directors' travel, bank charges, and dues and fees. All other costs involved in overseeing program activities, housing the programs and charity, and managing operational finances will continue to be provided as in-kind services as itemized below. Fundraising will be carried out almost exclusively through proposal writing as part of supervision and provided as an in-kind service by the volunteer Executive Director.*

## IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS \*

2020

CATEGORY	CONTRIBUTOR	CALCULATIONS	COST
Supervision	Executive Director School Outreach Facilitators Board Members Partner Agency Members	25 hrs/wk x 44 wks x \$45/hr 3 x 3 hrs/wk x 40 wks x \$35/hr 2 hrs/wk x 40 wks x \$45/hr 2 hrs/wk x 40 wks x \$40/hr	49,500 12,600 3,600 3,200
Youth Services	Tutor-Mentor Volunteers	1600 youth matches x 2 hrs x \$15/hr	48,000
Program Facilities	Sydney - Adult High Glace Bay - Oceanview Mid New Waterford - Breton Mid Northside - Memorial High	2 class & 2 office x 10 mos x \$500/mo 1 classroom x 10 mos x \$500/mo 1 classroom x 10 mos x \$500/mo 1 classroom x 10 mos x \$500/mo	20,000 5,000 5,000 5,000
Financial Services	Executive Director	4 hrs/wk x 44 wks x \$45/hr	7,920
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$159,820</b>

*\* All calculations are based on wage rates and market value costs that would apply if these services were not provided as in-kind contributions. The comparable totals for charity expenses and in-kind contributions are consistent with the long-established trend in the Youth Peer & Outreach Program that the number of paid staff hours closely matches with the number of volunteer hours.*

# PROGRAM OUTPUTS

2020

Youth Peer & Outreach Program	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Management Team Partner Agencies #	34	34	32
Schools & Other Referral Sources #	28	30	25
Youth Participant Referrals #	134	136	97
Active Youth Participants #	100	94	82
Tutor-Mentor Volunteers Trained #	128	106	86
Active Tutor-Mentor Volunteers #	101	91	82
Average Improvement in Protective Factors %	22%	27%	21%

Site	Output Indicators	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Sydney	Active Youth Participant #	71	68	59
	Active Tutor-Mentor Volunteers #	71	62	55
	Protective Factor Improvement %	21%	28%	20%
Glace Bay	Active Youth Participant #	9	11	10
	Active Tutor-Mentor Volunteers #	11	12	11
	Protective Factor Improvement %	27%	22%	20%
New Waterford	Active Youth Participant #	9	8	6
	Active Tutor-Mentor Volunteers #	12	8	7
	Protective Factor Improvement %	29%	25%	27%
Northside	Active Youth Participant #	11	7	7
	Active Tutor-Mentor Volunteers #	13	9	9
	Protective Factor Improvement %	19%	22%	29%

Protective factor improvement is captured using evaluation tool SEGWAY (Social Emotional Growth & Wellness Assessment of Youth). For each youth participant, staff review observed social behaviours related to 20 evidence-based risk indicators to determine positive, neutral, or negative changes over the school-year.

Site	Output Intensity	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Sydney	Tutor-Mentor Youth Matches #	1174	1302	1093
Glace Bay	Tutor-Mentor Youth Matches #	156	163	160
New Waterford	Tutor-Mentor Youth Matches #	172	98	92
Northside	Tutor-Mentor Youth Matches #	188	105	141
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1690</b>	<b>1668</b>	<b>1486</b>

Marginalization Demographics	Youth Peer & Outreach	CBRM *
Child Poverty (school-aged children)	89%	29%
Indigenous (on-reserve and off-reserve)	12%	4%
Visible Minority (African / Asian / Middle Eastern descent)	2%	3%
Transgender (non-birth gender identity)	4%	0.4%

\* Annual data for Youth Peer & Outreach Program, updated monthly, is compared to the most recent annual data from Statistics Canada for CBRM (Cape Breton Regional Municipality).



# PROGRAM OUTCOMES

2020

## **Youth Peer & Youth Peer Outreach**

In school-year 2019-2020, 134 high-risk Youth Peer and Outreach participants were referred by 10 partner agencies, and volunteer tutor-mentors were referred by 4 other partners. Guidance Counsellors referred 68% of Youth Peer-Sydney participants from 18 different schools in Cape Breton Victoria Regional Centre for Education. Schools Plus referred 90% of Outreach participants from 6 additional schools. Youth Peer in Sydney operated 5 days per week averaging 10 tutor-mentor matches per day. Outreach operated 1 day per week each in Glace Bay, New Waterford, and Northside, averaging 8 tutor-mentor matches per site. There were 128 tutor-mentors trained and 101 actively volunteered, 60% from 5 different high schools, 32% from Cape Breton University, and 8% from Nova Scotia Community College. The total number of tutor-mentor matches for the 2019-2020 school-year was a record-breaking 1,690, the highest in 21 years (Sydney-1,174, Glace Bay-156, New Waterford-172, Northside-188), reflecting 7,934 hours of positive youth academic and social activities. Expansion of Youth Peer over the past 3 years into 3 under-served communities has increased the total number of tutor-mentor sessions by over 50%. The proportion of youth participants assessed at high-risk continued to be ~90% in all 4 sites. Youth Peer & Outreach was highly successful in generating an environment in which youth volunteers were able to uplift marginalized youth to feel and behave like regular kids.

## **Program Changes**

The most significant program change in 2019-2020 was the necessity of shifting to online program delivery in mid-April 2020 using Zoom. The number of active participants was lower than during the regular school-year but attendance was outstanding, both in small group and 1-to-1 breakout room sessions. The revived social connection was so impactful that, at the request of youth and volunteers, the Youth Peer & Outreach Program was extended 2 weeks beyond the school-year. By June 19, 2020, over 400 tutor-mentor matches had taken place online and the program had surpassed previous tutor-mentor match records, despite a pandemic and school closure on March 23, 2020. This year, Youth Peer & Outreach validated the use of an evaluation tool called SEGWAY (**S**ocial **E**motional **G**rowth & **W**ellness **A**ssessment of **Y**outh) which assesses youth behavioural changes across 20 evidence-based risk indicators amenable to change. SEGWAY assessments were completed for a total of 100 marginalized youth, 71 in Sydney and 29 in the 3 Outreach sites. The results, reflecting documented changes over a 4-8 month period, confirmed what staff and volunteers had expressed anecdotally, that almost all participants are internalizing protective factors that counteract social conflict risks. The average assessed change in social conflict risk indicators was 21% for youth in Youth Peer in Sydney and 25% for Outreach – averaging a 22% improvement in pro-social behaviours across 4 Youth Peer sites. Overall, for each 2 hour session that youth attended, there was more than a 1% average improvement in the development of protective factors to counteract social risk factors in youth participants.

## **Parents PEACE**

An average of 6 parents participated in weekly Parents PEACE evening sessions, improving parenting skills and enhancing support for their children at risk. Eight of EPIC's community partner agencies provided expertise and engaged parents through presentations and interactive discussions on critical parenting issues like Legal Aid services, mental health, and youth sexual health. These activities resulted in increased understanding of parent-child interactions, improved communication, and follow-up family meetings.

## **OUTPUT GOALS**

2020

### **Short-term**

EPIC hopes to sustain 1500+ youth matches each school-year, irrespective of constraints on in-person activities as currently encountered with Covid school facility health protocols.

### **Mid-term**

Implementation of Youth Peer Outreach to 3 under-served communities for 3 school-years has enabled EPIC to provide services to most schools in CBRM. This has demanded strong partnerships in school-based sites and a relentless commitment to serving the most marginalized youth. As a mid-term goal, we endeavour to ensure that youth referred to Youth Peer are those at highest social conflict and academic risk, as we know that sustained engagement with youth volunteers is their best hope of transformative change.

### **Long-term**

EPIC seeks long-term to solidify resources ensuring that Youth Peer & Outreach is able to operate optimally in 4 sites. Central to the charity's Succession Plan is the need to increase donations and other non-government revenue sources, so that whenever the volunteer Executive Director is unable to continue, EPIC can afford to hire an effective replacement.

## **PROGRAM CHALLENGES**

2020

In 2020, EPIC faced several unique challenges in operating Youth Peer & Outreach:

\* The Outreach Program is funded primarily through Nova Scotia Education in partnership with Cape Breton Victoria Regional Centre for Education. Now that this short-term project has operated successfully for 3 years, it requires program administration consistent with the Youth Peer Program which entails fuller responsibility for daily operations. There is a delicate balance working with Schools Plus social workers within a school facility and having full accountability for the programs without having control of the sites. In response to this challenge, we have developed a collaborative partnership beneficial to all the youth, volunteers, parents, staff, and school personnel involved.

\* In March, 2020, when Nova Scotia schools closed down due to Covid-19 precautions, EPIC was able to shift Youth Peer & Outreach to online program delivery. The unknowns about the re-opening of schools in the fall required simultaneous planning of onsite and online delivery. Because it was difficult to assess how health protocols might constrain in-person operations and how they could change on short notice, it was challenging to arrange the appropriate staffing. In response to the challenge, EPIC prepared for a hybrid onsite-online delivery with the capacity to shift rapidly in either direction. We also devised back-up arrangements for hybrid delivery of Parents PEACE in case parents were not allowed back in school facilities. In response to this challenge, we rented community space for fall and spring with online program delivery using Zoom for the winter.

\* Youth Peer was offered online from April – June and most youth participated. A few had poor internet connections or had to borrow devices. When we planned the hybrid program for the fall, we arranged to provide in-person services to youth with uncertain connectivity.

\* In the summer, EPIC's 2 largest funders indicated that Covid-related revenue declines were likely to impact next year's funding for Youth Peer & Outreach. We have addressed their cautions by securing new funding sources to offset anticipated funding reductions.

## LESSONS LEARNED

2020

\* The need for new revenue sources to support Youth Peer & Outreach invariably results in receipt of one-time grants for novel activities. While these activities have consistently enhanced the services offered, they have had little impact on longer-term sustainability. One of the lessons from this revenue quest is that EPIC should pursue short-term projects only when they are perceived to generate program features which merit permanent adoption. This is likely to require additional funding to be sustainable. The Parents PEACE Program, art, and guitar instruction are examples of one-time projects which became imbedded in Youth Peer many years ago. Outreach has only been operating for 3 years, but has evolved into a permanent 3-site extension of the Youth Peer Program because it has demonstrated adoption-worthy merit in addressing the needs of under-served communities.

\* Constraints on program participation, whether because of increased costs transporting participants or health-protective in-person adaptations, can compromise program impact if they steadily dim the program's focus. We have learned that there are always countervailing actions that can be pursued to keep the charity's mission unwavering. In the midst of current Covid-related limitations, we anticipate unavoidable reductions in total tutor-mentor matches over the year. We are actively collaborating with partners to ensure that, once the crisis recedes, our numbers will rebound. Leadership also demands tireless innovation to revive program resiliency regardless of the challenges faced.

\* Nurturing program partnerships with like-minded community organizations, with interactions similar to those in a large family, incurs power dynamics and sibling rivalries as well as validation and mutual support. We have learned that an effective partnership is more than a delicate balancing act; it also has to reflect a laser-focus on the maximization of positive impact for all beneficiaries.

\* In the past few years, EPIC has developed several evaluation tools. SYRA (**S**creen for **Y**outh **R**isk **A**ttraction) enables EPIC to identify and prioritize the most marginalized youth for intake into Youth Peer & Outreach. We have learned that many of the identified risk indicators are not amenable to measurable change. For example, once a youth "*has witnessed victimization of other family members or has been placed in foster care,*" they cannot undo those experiences. Recognizing that staff can only assess the behaviours they observe and not the baggage associated with them, we developed SEGWAY (**S**ocial **E**motional **G**rowth & **W**ellness **A**ssessment of **Y**outh). Now, after 3 years of field-testing, we have learned that Youth Peer & Outreach results vary significantly on an individual basis, but fall within a narrow positive range on a group basis, regardless of the site or year. Our conclusion is that this reflects consistency in the staff hired and the youth volunteers trained. We are now able to project that Youth Peer participants, over the course of any school-year, will demonstrate a 20-30% improvement in socially adaptive behaviours. We have also learned that, beyond thoughtful leadership, the real magic of the program comes from relationships built in an environment in which youth keep volunteering to be nice to younger marginalized kids and the recipients look forward every week to feelings of support and acceptance.

# SCHOLARSHIPS VOLUNTEERISM AND HUMANITY AWARDS

2020

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Beyond its school-year community programs, EPIC actualizes its mission to advance marginalized learners by providing scholarships. The first scholarship was awarded in 1997 with multiple scholarships awarded since 2002.

The scholarships are provided under the following criteria:

*“Awarded by Educational Program Innovations Charity Society to further the education of a graduating student distinguished by high school staff for commitment to community or perseverance in overcoming obstacles to advancement”*

Each of the following students received EPIC’s \$500 Scholarship in 2020:

* Sonja Pardoe-Battiste	Eskasoni First Nation	Allison Bernard Memorial High
* Shayla Elizebeth Paul	Membertou First Nation	Sydney Academy
* Sunni Polegato	African-NS Community	Breton Education Centre

## VOLUNTEERISM AWARDS

In recognition of the volunteer contribution of post-secondary students in service placements in which they have assisted tremendously with Youth Peer and Youth Peer Outreach, EPIC initiated the EPIC Volunteerism Awards in 2012. Two awards have been issued annually to Cape Breton University and Nova Scotia Community College graduates ever since.

The volunteerism awards are provided under the following criteria:

*“Presented by Educational Program Innovations Charity Society to a graduating post-secondary student distinguished for outstanding volunteerism beyond course requirements”*

The following students received EPIC’s \$500 Volunteerism Award in 2020:

* Heidi White	Cape Breton University	Community Studies
* John MacEwan	Nova Scotia Community College	Social Services

## HUMANITY AWARD

Vincent Waterman served on EPIC’s Board for 20 years and was an extraordinary friend and exceptional giver to the community before he passed away in January, 2019. As an ongoing legacy suggested by his sister-in-law and former Nova Scotia Lieutenant Governor Mayann Francis, EPIC initiated the Vincent Waterman Humanity Award in collaboration with Cape Breton County high school guidance counsellors who nominate an award finalist from each of 5 high schools.

The humanity award is provided under the following criteria:

*“Awarded by Educational Program Innovations Charity Society to a graduating high school student for exemplifying Patriarch Vincent Waterman’s boundless community giving and treatment of others as winners of the human race”*

The following student received the \$500 Vincent Waterman EPIC Humanity Award in 2020:

* Vessa MacNeil	Breton Education Centre
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## **MANAGEMENT TEAM PARTNERS**

2020

EPIC oversees the finances and daily operations of the Youth Peer, Youth Peer Outreach, and Parents PEACE, in partnership with 34 community agencies who refer high-risk kids and/or caregivers to the programs, network to enhance the community's services, and offer advice to ensure the smooth dovetailing of EPIC's programs with other community supports. The Management Team meets quarterly, while staff and referring partner representatives are in regular contact, often on a daily basis.

The following 34 community partner agencies continue to serve on the Management Team:

- Island Community Justice
- Salvation Army
- Cape Breton Victoria Regional Centre for Education
- Nova Scotia Legal Aid
- Nova Scotia Community Services - Child Welfare
- Nova Scotia Health Authority Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Cape Breton University - Career Services
- Black Educators Association
- Membertou Education
- Nova Scotia Correctional Services
- Cape Breton Regional Police
- Transition House
- Whitney Pier Boys and Girls Club
- Native Council
- Centre Scolaire Etoile de l'Acadie
- Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia
- Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority
- Family Place Resource Centre
- Nova Scotia Community College - Marconi Campus
- YMCA of Cape Breton
- Association For Safer Cape Breton Communities
- Adult Literacy Association of Cape Breton County
- Schools Plus
- CaperBase Access 808
- Nova Scotia Public Health
- Ally Centre of Cape Breton
- Housing First
- Cape Breton Centre for Sexual Health
- Cornerstone Cape Breton
- Cape Breton Youth Project
- Undercurrent Youth Centre
- IWK Mental Health and Addictions
- Northside Employment & Resource Centre
- Five Eleven Youth and Family Center

# REVENUE SOURCES

2020

## Core Funding

Law Foundation of Nova Scotia



## Multiple Years

United Way Cape Breton



Nova Scotia Community Services



Nova Scotia Justice



Nova Scotia Education & Early Childhood Development



Nova Scotia Health

Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia



Intact Foundation



Bluenose Insurance



Sydney Credit Union



Individual Unsolicited Donors

## Canadian National Awards

William H Donner - highest award... 2010 and 2013

Donner Canadian Foundation - 6 years... 2007-2013

Peter F Drucker Foundation - 2012





## **YOUTH PEER STAFF**

### **DIRECTOR**

#### **Delores Feltmate**



Delores was an elementary/middle school teacher & guidance counsellor for many years, fostered 11 children including 1 she adopted, and is known as a leader in Nova Scotia child advocacy. She became Youth Peer Co-Director in 2014, but retired the following year with health challenges. We were thrilled when her prognosis improved and she returned full-time as Director in 2018. She generates a positive team-building atmosphere and demonstrates extraordinary compassion and finesse making marginalized youth feel accepted and supported.

### **VOLUNTEERS COORDINATOR**

#### **Michelle McGean**



Michelle became Volunteers Coordinator in 2019 having distinguished herself previously as a tutor-mentor volunteer. In the role of Volunteers Coordinator, she recruits and manages youth participant matching with tutor-mentor volunteers. Her NSCC Social Services graduation with honours augments her open-minded, caring, and gentle personality working with youth, volunteers, and staff to ensure smoothly functioning program activities and relationships. She brings to Youth Peer a natural calmness, maturity, and outstanding organizational skills.

### **EDUCATOR**

#### **Sarah Landry**



Sarah became Youth Peer Educator in 2018 after several years teaching in Cape Breton junior/senior high schools specializing in French. She is exceptionally thorough in providing resources to assist high-risk youth and their volunteers, while balancing Youth Peer with the needs of her young family and with new mothers to whom she offers childbirth and parenting classes. Her program insights, humour, and attunement to student needs make her greatly appreciated by youth, volunteers, and other staff.

### **OUTREACH COORDINATOR**

#### **Anna George**



Anna became Outreach Coordinator in 2019 after 2 years as an outstanding tutor-mentor volunteer. She is highly skilled in multi-tasking and coordinating programs in Glace Bay, New Waterford, and Northside. She sustains a positive outlook when crises are encountered and works seamlessly with Outreach Assistant Kaitlyn O'Neill to recruit volunteers, contact parents, organize activities, provide nutrition, create a healthy learning environment, and make youth and volunteers feel valued.

### **OUTREACH EDUCATOR**

#### **Anne Pentecost**



Anne became familiar to EPIC as a Math Coach Specialist for Cape Breton Victoria Regional Centre For Education. Staff were so pleased with her expert advice and supportive style that she was asked and agreed to become the Outreach Educator for 2019-2020. She now attends tutor sessions for Glace Bay, New Waterford, and Northside sites and develops personalized resources to fulfill youth needs. Her presence greatly enhances program focus and student advancement.

## **PROGRAM ASSISTANTS & OUTREACH ASSISTANTS**

Youth Peer and Outreach Program Assistant staff are all post-secondary students who first distinguished themselves as outstanding tutor-mentor volunteers. Four Program Assistants and one Outreach Assistant brought great enthusiasm and empathy to Youth Peer, endearing them to participants, volunteers, and staff, and ensuring wonderful experiences from arrival through tutoring, nutritional breaks, and mentoring. Our dynamic Program Assistants in 2019-2020 were: Destiny Green, Francis MacDonald, Jennifer Nicholson, and Vanessa Frison, while the Outreach Assistant for all 3 Outreach sites was Kaitlyn O'Neill.

### **ART INSTRUCTOR**

#### **Susanne Donovan**



Susanne has been the Art Instructor since art was introduced to the program in 2002. Susanne provides youth and their mentors with a wide range of fun, enriching and educational creative activities two afternoons a week. She holds a Fine Arts degree from Mt. Allison University in New Brunswick. Her imaginative projects engage even the kids who think they lack artistic talent and all participants feel encouraged and honoured.

### **MUSIC INSTRUCTOR**

#### **Emile Conn**



Emile has been teaching guitar, harmonica, and keyboard at Youth Peer since 2004. He provides private instruction to any interested student along with the tutor-mentor, two afternoons a week for Youth Peer. His quiet demeanor is calming to the participants and his strong musical skills draw in kids to explore their own musical talents. For several of the students, Emile's gentle instruction entices them to attend the program more consistently which enhances their advancement academically as well as socially.

## **PARENTS PEACE STAFF**

### **FACILITATOR**

#### **Ann McPhee**



Ann became Parents PEACE Facilitator in 2016. She began her career as a high school teacher, but served as Executive Director of the Ann Terry Society for over 25 years overseeing projects focused on women's employment. She is highly skilled in designing, developing, delivering, and tailoring programs for adult learners that address challenges faced by the caregivers of children at high risk. Her easy rapport with parents, wealth of experience, and extensive community connections contribute greatly to participant confidence and adaptiveness and to the enhancement of parent-child relationships.

## YOUTH PARTICIPANTS AND VOLUNTEERS

EPIC's programs engage high-risk marginalized youth ages 8-18 and caregivers of all ages who strive to improve relationships with their troubled children. All activities involve 1-to-1 matching or small group interactions. Aside from Youth Peer Outreach Programs for youth ages 10-16 in Glace Bay, New Waterford, and Northside, all activities take place at the Youth Peer Centre, downstairs from the Sydney Adult High School. It is a safe haven in which participants and volunteers feel mutually accepted, valued, and treated like family. Youth tutor-mentors have volunteered from Grade 9 through university, claiming that the program has been as fulfilling for them as it has been for the kids they've assisted. Staff, who have also served as volunteers, consider it a magical place to work because they consistently feel they are able to witness their own impact in helping struggling youth to improve their lives.



The following quotes reflect commonly expressed feelings about the Youth Peer Centre:

*"I never used to trust people because I was bullied a lot. When I lashed out at the ones who threatened me, that brought the authorities and Mental Health crashing down on me. Youth Peer helped me overcome what I thought was impossible. Without Youth Peer support, I would never have completed high school, gone on to secure a trade, and gotten better control of my life. I'm lucky I was part of it."*

~ former Youth Peer participant ~



*"Parents PEACE has been my lifeline - the place where I can go for help. Everything said is kept confidential so I can be very open and leave feeling better than when I came. My daughters have reading disabilities and severe anxieties. Youth Peer has been a godsend, helping them work independently with confidence."*

~ former Parents PEACE participant whose children attended Youth Peer ~





*“Youth Peer forever changed my life, as a volunteer then as a hired Program Assistant. My leadership was sharpened and I became more positive with an open, accepting mind. No job was ever more challenging yet so rewarding. Such wonderful people and such an amazing program.”*

~ young teacher and former Youth Peer tutor-mentor volunteer and Program Assistant ~

