

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

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# INTRODUCTION

# **History**

PeopleWorx Society was founded in 1986 as a non-profit, registered charity. From the very beginning, our mission has been to help people overcome obstacles to employment. In other words, we work one-on-one with people to help them solve personal, financial, educational, and social challenges that are between them and the life they want. We employ close to forty staff members, all of whom are committed to building a strong and vibrant community one person at a time. People from various backgrounds access our programs and services at our three locations in Coldbrook, Middleton, and Annapolis Royal.

# **Our Purpose**

Enhancing lives, supporting the economy and changing communities by maximizing personal and employment success.

We believe that every individual and every community has the ability to be successful

Coldbrook Office	CONTACT INFORMATION Middleton Office	Annapolis Royal Office
Opportunity Centre 11 Opportunity Lane Coldbrook, NS B4R 0A5 Telephone: 902-679-7460	298 Marshall Street PO Box 760 Middleton, NS B0S 1P0 Telephone: 902-825-3118	PeopleWorx @ the Hub 253 George Street PO Box 298 Annapolis Royal, NS Telephone: 902-532-0605
Website: www.peopleworx.ca	Toll Free Number: 1-866-609-9675	Business Hours:  Mon-Fri 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM  Atlantic Standard Time

# **BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2022-2023**

Mandeep Panesar
Chair/
President

Rhonda Fraser
2nd Vice
President







Mark Mander Secretary/ Treasurer



Peter Spidle Director



Phillip Bailey Director



Kevin Cleary Director



Muhammed Abudulai Director



Susan Campbell-Baltzer Director



Christine Bigelow-Popowich Director



# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

The last couple of years dealing with Covid-19 has presented many unforeseen challenges for our organization, our Executive Director, Kim Aker and our staff and clients. It is very satisfying to see the staff and clients back in our facilities working safely and happily.



I would like to express my deep gratitude to Kim and the PeopleWorx staff for all their hard work, patience, perseverance and understanding in keeping everybody safe. I think, we have emerged from this adversity stronger and more determined.

Kim Aker, our Executive Director, managed the operations in a skilled manner and kept the Board informed of achievements and challenges. Her ability to adapt and respond to the everchanging circumstances has kept the organization strong and well placed to move forward in a positive way.

I would also like to thank the dedicated Board of Directors who adjusted to hybrid and Zoom meetings and continued to take care of PeopleWorx business without missing a beat.

The Board continued its commitment to Board diversity in recruiting and welcomed two new board members, Susan Campbell-Baltzer and Christine Bigelow-Popowich.

We have begun our review and update of the Strategic Directions Plan and completed a comprehensive ED Performance Appraisal review.

The Board supported the annual Pay it Forward initiative, the annual Staff and Board luncheon and the holiday bonuses to staff.

The Board also contributed to salary enhancements to show their appreciation for staff retention and provided additional funds where some funding contracts provided cost of living increases while others offered none, to ensure equity for staff.

We are sorry to say goodbye to two of our long serving Board members, Rhonda Fraser and Phillip Bailey. Due to family and time commitments they have decided to step aside from their

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Board duties. They have been actively involved for the past many years and their knowledge and experience will be missed. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank both Rhonda and Phillip for their service and wish them all the best in the future. We hope they will continue as members of PeopleWorx Society and stay in touch.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Kim Aker, our Executive Director, and the senior members of the management team, Vickie Petrie, senior Manager and Manager of the Work Activity Centre, Julie Bibby-MacNabb, Nova Scotia Works Centre Manager, Peter Campbell, Chief Financial Officer and Jacquie Dale, Executive Assistant, for their hard work and commitment to PeopleWorx. Your caring attitude is what makes a positive difference in our clients' lives.

I would also like to thank all staff and Board members for your dedication and commitment to PeopleWorx and helping to make our community a better place to live and work.

All the best in 2023-2024!

Mandeep Panesar
President, PeopleWorx Society
June 2023

# **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE**

Many Hands Make Light Work





2022-2023 was not light work but meaningful work and made lighter for me and each of us by our colleagues. The evolution of teams, program specific, cross program, project based and interest based, planned and incidental, strengthened us all and resulted in another year where we celebrated the successes of our participants, clients, students and staff! Like our family, friends, neighbours and residents of our province and country we stutter stepped our way forward with the next transition phase resulting from the pandemic.

Our funders with Labour, Skills & immigration (LSI), Workplace Initiatives, Employment Nova Scotia and the Department of Community Services continued to demonstrate confidence in PeopleWorx to deliver important and necessary programs to the residents of Kings and Annapolis Counties. LSI-NSW and EECD contracted with PeopleWorx for a School Liaison position to provide career path exploration and labour market information and job search introduction to three high schools in the Annapolis Valley Regional Centres for Education.

The continuing development of a fully accessible and inclusive Nova Scotia Works Services system while addressing the shifting labour market needs in response to the return to in person onsite job opportunities demanded dedicated and creative attention by all members of our Nova Scotia Works Team. The NSW contract was extended by one year with a renewal concept process anticipated in late 2023. The Work Activity Centre focused on the implementation of the mandated reconfigured assessment component, the

adapted annual calendar and community outreach also within the context of the evolving labour market. The adaptation of the CCA Curriculum to the new edition of the primary text was implemented and the continuing challenges for those working in Health Care and Long Term Care presented placement challenges for the team and students alike which they all handled with flexibility to ensure success. It was with great pride and joy to present the students with their diplomas and then to receive the news that all this year's graduates achieved their CCA certification on their first attempt with the exam and they all secured employment. It was also gratifying to be recognized by the NS Rainbow Action Group for the inclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ training for our CCAs and to participate in a panel at their AGM to discuss the long-term care and health system to better meet their needs.

This year's accomplishments and success presented in this Annual Report would not have been possible without the commitment of each of the teams, the management team, and the Board of Directors.

I want to acknowledge and thank the Board of Directors for their continuing commitment to providing guidance and good governance to ensure quality service and wellness for the staff members, the clients, participants, students and me.

The operations team contribute in a very meaningful way by keeping us safe in our environment, connected with our technology, an essential feature to service delivery, and ensuring timely and appropriate compensation to participants, students and staff.

The leadership team was instrumental in keeping us moving forward within an everchanging environment. Vickie, Peter, Julie, and Jacquie I am very grateful for your dedication, vision and most of all humour during times of stress!

There were opportunities for professional development and staff took every advantage to raise their knowledge regarding Diversity, Inclusion, Quality Case Management, digital services and labour market initiatives.

I am also very grateful for the commitment of all at PeopleWorx toward diversity and inclusion which have been the foundation of my career and I was very honoured to receive the 2022 Claredon Robicheau Lifetime Achievement Award which recognizes a commitment and passion to improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities. There have been many hands helping me along the way and I share this recognition with them.



Again, this past year has brought celebrations, challenges, joy, sorrow and opportunities to many of us. Throughout, the compassion and caring of the members of PeopleWorx, staff, participants, managers, volunteers, Board members and friends of the organization, has been remarkable.

Gratitude is a daily part of my life and this year I am grateful for all those many hands that have contributed to PeopleWorx!

Kim L. Aker, Executive Director



# **PAY-IT-FORWARD**

## **Holiday Season**

The commitment to a long-standing tradition and the contributions of staff and the Board, which doubled their contribution this year, and the support of local businesses to waive limits allowed us to provide 75 hampers of food and extras to participants and clients over the holidays.



This year the PeopleWorx Staff participated

once again in our Pay It Forward campaign providing Gifts to the following groups:

Four youth who are an under represented group in support of the Salvation Army Christmas Angel campaign. We have supported this program for the last several years. Women at Chrysalis House received cuddly pajamas as well as a generous gift card to buy extra treats to make the holidays a little more cheery.



Both the Middleton and the Annapolis Royal teams once again selected clients from their respective locations who were in particular need and provided gift cards to help these individuals through the holiday season.

Last, but not least, for the seventh year we donated Teddy Bears and chocolates to Local Emergency Support workers/ First Responders. The Chocolates were a small treat for the workers during the holidays and the Teddy Bears are comfort Bears for children that might have been affected by an emergency during the Holiday season



### Year Round



The generous support received as a Charity of Choice of the Mud Creek Rotary Club with two donations of \$1136.35 and \$1352.38 helps to provide a breakfast program as well as being

able to meet unfunded needs of clients and participants.

We would like to thank the winners of the Toonie

Mud Creek
Rotary
Club of Wolfville

We are proud
recipients of financial support from
The Rotary Club of Wolfville Mud Creek.
We thank those in our community
who support the Toonie Toss.

Toss who chose PeopleWorx as their Charity of Choice.

The Coldbrook Lion's Club provided a generous donation of \$1000 to assist PeopleWorx in its endeavours to address food insecurity by its participants and clients.

We wish the members of these community service clubs could see the impact on individuals - it is truly meaningful and significant.

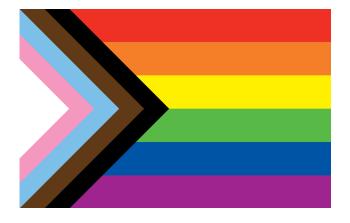






We would like to acknowledge that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) people first signed with the British Crown in 1725.







# **OPERATIONS**

PeopleWorx employs on average 30 -35 individuals and manages an annual operational budget of \$2.6 million. The organization consists of multiple programs running simultaneously in various locations across the Valley region. Programs are supported by the management team and administratively by the finance team. Every team member brings a wide range of skills, abilities and experiences that contribute to the overall success of the organization. Our custodian has been a key player in keeping us all safe as we navigate the pandemic, thank you Eric.

Our social enterprise activities continued to be somewhat curtailed this year as a result of COVID-19 but some continued and our participants continue to benefit from the experiences gained through our baby barn projects and catering. Our shop program continues to provide simple products to local businesses like Andritz giving broader experience for some of our participants.

Our facility in Coldbrook continues to be sought by outside organizations as an ideal location for meetings and workshops. We have been able to offer that service on a limited basis during this period.

# **Management Team**

Vickie Petrie, Work Activity Centre Manager
Julie Bibby-MacNabb, Nova Scotia Works Centre Manager
Peter Campbell, Chief Financial Officer
Kim L. Aker, Executive Director

Jacquie Dale, Executive Assistant to ED

### **Finance**

Regina Gould, Finance Clerk

# **Support Services**

Mike Rueff, Information Technology Specialist Eric Brown, Custodian

# **HIGHLIGHTS OF 2022-2023**

# Some of our Community Outreach & Collaboration with Community Organizations

## **Berwick Library Outreach**

We continue to provide regular drop-in services every other Wednesday at the Berwick Library, We collaborate with Library Staff on Referrals for Newcomers and offered Workshops as requested. This outreach provides access to individual case management services, increasing our maximum reach and access goals by offering flexible service options in our rural communities.



# Fall Forward Annapolis Valley Job Fair

On October 28<sup>th,</sup> three organizations - PeopleWorx, Community Inc. and VANSDA collaborated on hosting a job fair in the New Minas area. At least 23 jobs were filled due to connections made at the fair - Fifteen of the 35 employers have responded to our follow-up email inquiring about hires due to the job fair. To date, of those who responded to our follow-up, we found out that 23 people had been hired. In a few cases, though no hires had taken place, the employers still work with the resumes and job seekers they met at the job fair.

# 14 Wing Greenwood and Greenwood Military Family Resource Centre

We continue to strengthen our relationship with the military community in Greenwood. We participated in the Second Career Assistance Network (SCAN) Seminar for the fourth year in the fall of 2022, which was a hybrid session (virtual and in person) and again in the spring of 2023. SCAN seminars provide critical information to assist and guide military members through the transition to civilian life. At this event, we share information about PeopleWorx Programs and Services, including Nova Scotia Works Centres with transitioning military members and a vast network of community-based organizations and families.

We continue to support the Military Family Resource Centre's Coordinator of Employment and Education Services by providing labour market information and accepting ongoing referrals for military spouses, family members and youth seeking employment or information to pursue skills training programs such as Job Creation Partnership, Self Employment Benefits, and Skills Development. We participated in various outreach events in the community throughout the year, including attending the Annual Christmas Breakfast for Community Partners. Plans are underway to host a community job fair in collaboration with the GMFRC and 14 Wing Community which will bring together the military and surrounding



civilian communities for a co-hosted job /career fair event. Our returning Information and Resource Specialist Summer Intern will implement the learnings from our previous year's youth employment survey to facilitate a targeted youth employment workshop in the Summer of 2023!

# APTEC, Kings Family Resource Centre and Family Matters- Annapolis County Family Resource Centre

PeopleWorx collaborated with Kings Family Resource Centre and Family Matters to present information on In-Home Childcare Self-Employment Opportunities to our community. This opportunity fills a gap in licensed childcare needs in the Annapolis Valley while providing employment opportunities. Information sessions will be offered regularly to interested

individuals. We also discussed with various community organizations, including APTEC, on meeting the needs of Indigenous clients and community members. We are working on providing regular drop-in services to the clients utilizing the Annapolis County Family Resource Centre in Lawrencetown, including additional support to incorporate culturally responsive services for Indigenous clients.



# MacDonald Museum, Greenwood Mall Pop-Ups

Nova Scotia Works Interns and PeopleWorx staff participated in several pop-up information booths during the fiscal year. We partnered with MacDonald Museum, which allowed for in-kind space at their weekly farmers market and had the opportunity to attend several weeks to increase our presence in the community. We also set up information booths in the Greenwood Mall to attract potential clients to our programs and services.





# Community Roots Program (VCLA, DCS, NS Works PeopleWorx, NSCC, Farm Café)

PeopleWorx offered training and support throughout the 15-week program, as well as career practitioners to work with participants who completed intakes. We provided an orientation to Nova Scotia Works Services and Centre Located in Middleton, Facilitated MANDT Training for program participants to increase workplace communication and de-escalation skills, and offered Resume and Cover Letter Workshops and Job Search Support through our Job Scan imitative.

### Partners included

Su Donovaro (Program coordinator, Personal development Lead, VCLA), Penny Clarke (Academic Lead, VCLA), Peter Gillis (Executive Director, VCLA), Julie Bibby-MacNabb (Manager NS Works), Wanda Batson (DCS Supervisor, Middleton Office), Kelli Fisher (ESS Caseworker), Lisa Lowthers (Farm to Feast Café - Board Chair); Sarah MacDonald (Farm to Feast Café, Coordinator). NSCC Education Staff and Head Administration, NS Works Middleton Staff.



Mental Health Training for Agricultural Communities

Partners Included: PeopleWorx, Farm Café and Kings

Federation of Agriculture

PeopleWorx secured funding to offer mental health training for the Annapolis Valley Agricultural communities. The Community Fund for Mental Health Education was presented by Farm Credit Canada and Do More Ag in collaboration with Farm Café and the Kings County Federation of Agriculture.



# Our PeopleWorx Social Media

PeopleWorx, Annapolis Valley Work Centre, CCA Private Career and Nova Scotia Works

### Social Media

Nova Scotia Works-PeopleWorx has an established Facebook Page where we communicate local job opportunities, community events, workshops etc. to our employment-seeking followers. We have now Almost 6000+ FaceBook followers, which is a significant following for our geographic region. We will continue to expand our reach to Nova Scotians in the coming year, looking at creative approaches to support our network. We will work towards increasing our presence on other social media platforms, in the year to come.

### **Association Industry Sector Councils**

WorkForward, the 2nd annual AISC/NSW conference, was a two-day opportunity for NSW centres to network and make new connections with the many industry sector councils across Nova Scotia. This year brought together 200+ individuals focused on workforce development and 20+ speakers to network, learn and collaborate.



### Focus on Youth Services

# PeopleWorx Youth Employment Survey - March 2022

As part of our preparation for submitting our intern's work plan, we created and released a survey targeting youth in our region to inform the overall strategic direction of the intern's role in our centres over the summer of 2022.

We know that engaging youth in conversations and decision-making has many documented benefits to organizations and the youth—the survey aimed to better understand the "current state" of this demographic from a first-voice perspective. The intention was to use the information collected to create welcoming, youth-friendly services based on the identified needs.



After the first day of releasing the survey, we received 56 responses from youth in our region. We soon realized the information would support our service delivery models in all areas, including staff development and strategies to help our job-seeking and employer clients. Early into the survey release, Joel Murphy from the Centre for Employment Innovation connected with PeopleWorx to support our initiative, and the pilot project emerged.

# PeopleWorx & Centre for Employment Innovation - Collaborative Applied Research Demonstration Pilot - Summer 2022

The idea for a collaborative pilot project emerged through discussions between the Centre for Employment Innovation (CEI) and PeopleWorx. The summer project team comprised PeopleWorx interns, staff, and relevant CEI staff. Julie BibbyMacNabb, Kim Aker, Jess Popp, and Joel Murphy supported and managed this project.

# The purposes of this project were:

- 1) Analysis of PeopleWorx community (youth) engagement survey to inform relevant and responsive service delivery and interventions for youth job seekers and employers.
- 2) Development of useful, applicable, and research-based outputs to support the services offered by PeopleWorx and the CEI through the empowerment of summer interns.
- 3) Develop research (data analysis; evidence-informed decision-making) capacity of PeopleWorx intern and staff.
- 4) Enhance partnership between PeopleWorx and the CEI.
- 5) Pilot an innovative project partnership between PeopleWorx and CEI.

The benefits of this project were developed as part of the planning process and were used as a guide to help develop and refine project activities and identify potential impact outcomes.

# Benefits to PeopleWorx

- Meaningful and thorough engagement with community engagement survey data
- Exposure to specialized research staff
- Learn from/with young people about their views on employment services
- The development of innovative, researched-based project(s) to support PeopleWorx services
- Increased connection to CEI
- Clear, direct, applicable learnings from summer project to inform organizational practice and services

### **Benefits to Summer Interns**

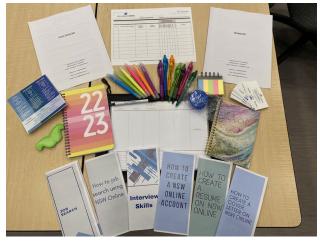
- Research skill development writing, data analysis, etc.
- Leadership development skills collaborative design, decision-making, facilitation, etc.
- Increased awareness of trends and emerging needs in career development
- Professional skill development project management, etc.
- Exposure to different organizations and their staff

### Benefits to CEI

- Increased connection to PeopleWorx
- Opportunity to meaningfully engage with relevant research data
- Support the research capacity of a Nova Scotia Work (NSW) Centre
- Pilot an innovative approach to supporting collaborative and applicable youth-focused research

 Opportunity to learn alongside NSW Centre staff and strengthen our own practices to support the NSW system best.

# Youth Employment Workshop- Collaborative Applied Research Demonstration Output - Summer 2022



In summer 2022, PeopleWorx and the Centre for Employment Innovation partnered to learn how to develop research informed practices through intentionally engaging with data collected by our Youth Employment Survey. One output was the development of a full day workshop for youth in the Annapolis Valley. The workshop was designed by our two summer interns, young adults themselves, with the support from various

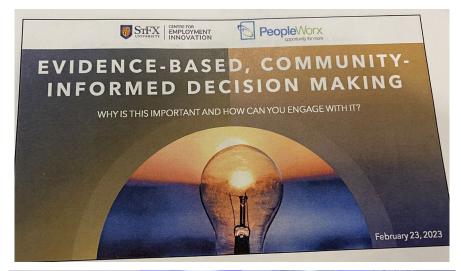
PeopleWorx staff. An important element of their design process was to incorporate insights from the survey, as well from their own lived experience. We hosted two full day workshops in both our Coldbrook and Middleton locations and we had great participation in both sessions. Feedback from the youth participants was collected to appraise the success of our workshop and solicit additional input for future workshops/sessions.





NSCDA Conference Session- Evidence-based, community-Informed Decision Making: WHY is this important, and HOW can you engage with it? - Collaborative Applied Research Demonstration Output- February 2023

Session Description: In this interactive workshop, we will explore the value of career development professionals incorporating evidence-based and community-led information into the creation, review, or enhancement of their services. This workshop will offer space for discussion, sharing of current best practices for applying data and community insights, practical tools, and insights into developing and gathering community insights and offer examples and first-hand stories of how evidence-based, community-informed information can benefit you and your organization.





Co-Facilitators, from left to right: Jess Popp, Joel Murphy, Julie Bibby-MacNabb, Kim Aker, Deborah Kendall, Ronda Spears

## Youth in the Skilled Trades Interview- Output

Our youth survey results from 2022 indicated that only some youths in the Annapolis Valley were considering Skilled Trades as an occupation of choice. We wanted to highlight Ben Abel, son of our Annapolis Royal Career Practitioner and his success as the Gold Medalist for Skills Canada 2022 in Heavy Vehicle Technology. Our interns interviewed Benjamin and presented this information to our youth audience and through our general social media platforms.



# Youth Event - Collaboration with the Native Council of NS - APTEC, the NS Construction Sector Council, and AVRCE

The Mobile Construction Experience came to PeopleWorx Coldbrook site for five days in September and several hundred Grade 7 & 8 students from the Annapolis Valley Regional Centres for Education attended to learn about careers in the construction industry and to experience hands on and virtual activities.

Unfortunately, inclement weather with lightning cancelled the day dedicated to youth and adult clients of APTEC and PeopleWorx to ensure safety.

Featured occupations include (\*Subject to availability of trades professionals within the community)

- Boilermaker
- Bricklayer
- Carpenter/Millwright
- Construction Management
- Electrician
- Non-Destructive Tester
- Operating Engineer

- Finishing Trades
- Insulator
- Ironworker
- Labourer
- Management
- Pipe Trades
- Sheet Metal Worker





# PEOPLEWORX IN ACTION



PeopleWorx programs are designed to respond to identified employment related needs

throughout the Annapolis Valley. PeopleWorx programs in 2022–2023 included:

- Nova Scotia Works Centres
- Annapolis Valley Work Centre
- Continuing Care Assistant Program



### **Nova Scotia Works Centres**

### **Nova Scotia Works Services**

PeopleWorx Nova Scotia Works Centre's assists unemployed and underemployed residents in

Kings and Annapolis Counties to meet their full employment potential, helps employers find the employees they need to prosper and helps communities develop well-balanced local labour markets. Various services to individuals are offered, including one-on-one résumé and cover letter development, interview preparation, workshops, career decision-making, career/employment counselling, employment maintenance, job coaching and employment-related certification



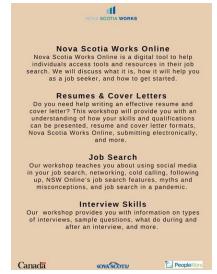
courses such as CPR / First Aid, Food Handlers, and Traffic Control Training.

From April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023, the Nova Scotia Works Centre provided services to a total of 449 new clients and offered continued support to an additional 336 individuals who started receiving services in the previous year. Across the 3 locations (Coldbrook, Middleton and Annapolis Royal), with our assistance, we were able to assist 177 individuals in becoming employed.

Through one-on-one support, **Career Practitioners** assisted clients in accessing various funding programs to support skill and business development. Over the past year, the CP's case-managed over 969 new interventions, including 47 individuals who were approved for or completed skills development, 42 individuals who were approved for or completed START

(wage subsidy program), 5 individuals who were approved for or completed JCP (Job Creation Partnership) and 97 individuals who were in the process of or started a business through the self-employment benefit program!

Career Practitioners continued to support clients in receiving funding for employment-related equipment, clothing (work boots, work clothes, coveralls and scrubs) and training certification courses for which the client had no other funding source and leverage the assistance of our **Information Resource Specialists** to conduct workshops, assist with resume and cover letters, interview preparation and much more.



The Employment Support Practitioner (ESP) continues to provide support to clients with barriers to employment, such as physical and mental health disabilities, childcare and transportation issues, discrimination, work history inconsistencies and other life challenges. The Career Practitioners identifies clients who would benefit from the additional support an ESP can provide.

ESP interventions include pre-employment and employment maintenance, such as Employability Skills training, career-related problem-solving, intensive job search coaching/support, job coaching, and working with clients and employers to identify and implement workplace accommodations and supports.

In addition to supporting clients and employers, our ESP provided group workshops, participated in outreach activities and collaborated with various community-based organizations to help the clients' multiple barriers to employment.

The School Liaison (SL) is a new role added during this reporting period under a collaborative initiative between NSW-LSI and EECD. The SL is part of a team of 19 Liaisons supporting high schools across the province. Our School Liaison provides various employment services for

West Kings District High School, Northeast Kings Education Centre and Middleton Regional High School.

School Liaisons provide students with access to and understanding of Labour Market Information, access to potential employment opportunities for youth, delivery of workshops and sessions (one on one or group) related to career planning and LMI (in-person and virtually) and delivers workshops and info sessions for schools, families, community groups, workplaces both in school and community settings.

The Employer Engagement Specialist (EES) worked with 108 employers in this period and assisted some of those employers in accessing the START program (wage subsidy program).

The EES supports employer needs assisting them directly or indirectly with referrals to appropriate community partners; industry/sector/business associations; funding or workplace training programs; job fairs and information sessions; organizations, and other government departments.

Some of our EES services include assisting employers with Job Descriptions and Job Postings, Attraction, Hiring and Retention issues, referrals to various funding programs, HR Challenges and Diversity and Inclusion Information and Resources. Additionally, our EES makes referrals to HR Toolkit, Workplace Education, Innovation and Productivity, Welcoming Workplace, Inspired to Hire and Industry Sector Councils.

# Nova Scotia Works Staff Professional Development Highlights 2022-2023

All staff remained committed to ongoing professional development, and the team collectively participated in many online/virtual learning/professional development events. Some of the training that staff participated in include LGBTQ2SIA+ Community Training during our Team PD Day in May, AISC Conference, NSCDA-Autism Nova Scotia Employment Supports and Autism Training, NSCDA Conference Southshore and Halifax, Talk Ask Listen- Mental Health for Agriculture Community, Leadership for Young Professionals, Four Seasons of Reconciliation Training, Case Supportive Employment Training.



## **Employment Supports and Autism Training**

PeopleWorx had six staff participate in a comprehensive training program that the NSCDA and Autism Nova Scotia hosted. The training consisted of 4 self- pace e-Learning Modules and two live Zoom calls. Topics included: Intro to Autism, Understanding Autistic Job Seekers-Primary Characteristics, Understanding Autistic Job Seekers- Secondary Characteristics and Mental Health and Autism. Staff enhanced their understanding of autism and ability to accommodate both in the agency and the workplace. Staff gained knowledge and greater confidence in providing individualized support for Autistic people and the neuro-diverse population looking to achieve meaningful, long-term employment.

# Staff Impact

Before this training, I knew little about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Working for an organization that helps individuals from all walks of life seeking meaningful and long-term employment, I believed it was essential to learn about Autism. This training gave me a better understanding, I didn't realize there were so many layers with ASD. The training built my confidence, and I gained tips/strategies that will help me provide better support/service to those living with ASD, creating a more inclusive workplace.

# - Ronda Spears

# Leadership for Young Professionals

This course was designed to support the leadership development of young professionals. Participants will be able to grow their understanding of what leadership means, explore their

strengths as leaders, learn new skills, and think about how they can apply their leadership in the workplace."

## Staff Impact

This online course gave me a deeper understanding of leadership, identified my strengths as a leader, and taught me new strategies for practicing leadership in the workplace. We explored topics such as creating safer and more welcoming workplaces, handling difficult discussions, prioritizing community care within work environments and facilitating group discussions/workshops.



Before I started this training course, I had a very restricted/narrow view of what it meant to be a leader. Going into this training on leadership, my understanding was based on the belief that leadership is associated with roles such as managers or CEOS/executive directors. My thinking shifted as I was introduced to new theories and leadership models. In addition to conversations related to assigned course readings, I learned real-time facilitation techniques. Not only was this a significant learning experience for me, but it was also encouraging and moving to have discussions with like-minded individuals who were on a similar path.

This training will be helpful in my role within my organization. Something I have done frequently in my position is facilitate various workshops. Coming away from this training with a new perspective on being a good leader, I can implement strategies and techniques I have learned into my facilitation style. I have been assisting with mentoring interns during the summer months for a few years. As mentorship is a form of leadership, I am a leader, which I haven't considered before. That said, I will take my learnings from this training and implement them into a simple form of leadership.

- Westin McMullin

### Four Seasons of Reconciliation Training

The 4 Seasons of Reconciliation is a multi-media teaching unit that promotes a renewed relationship between Indigenous Peoples and Canadians. This educational initiative,

developed for secondary, post-secondary and the workplace, incorporates teacher guides, slideshows, videos, films, and engaging online portals.

## **Staff Impact**



This was a great course because it gave me more background on what happened to my people and how I can help them when working with First Nation clients. I have always heard the stories from my elders and family but never knew how they affected my community.

This training gave me a great background to help clients when they come to me struggling from our community's past. I learned the history and heard many stories from elders in this training that will stick with me for life, but it has also helped me

to learn from this training on how to move forward and how to help others do the same.

I am very thankful for the opportunity to have taken this course and think it is an excellent way for anyone to learn the true history of my people; I think this should be a course that is given in schools for kids to learn the true history of our people and to help the indigenous that are struggling with issues from this affecting their families.

This has helped me learn more ways to help my indigenous clients struggling with family and community and to show them how to move on by remembering but not forgetting and using that strength to be a better person.

-Theresa Carter

# Nova Scotia Works – PeopleWorx Staff

# Information & Resource Specialists

Sandra Martin (Coldbrook)
Ronda Spears (Coldbrook)
Westin McMullin (Middleton)
Wendell MacKinnon (Coldbrook)
Sue Cranton (Annapolis Royal)

# Summer Interns (IRS)

Olivia Colwell Emilie Townsend Marissa Feener

School Liaison (Northeast Kings, West Kings, Middleton Regional High Schools) September 2022 onward

Melanie McCulloch

### **Career Practitioners**

Helen Carter (Coldbrook)
Tanya McCullough (Coldbrook)
Theresa Carter (Middleton)
Tanya-Thérése Bérard (Middleton)
Helen Abel (Annapolis Royal)

# **Employment Maintenance Worker/Job Coach**

Tara Webb (All locations)

# **Employment Engagement Specialist**

Deb Kendall (All locations)

Nova Scotia Works Centre Manager (all Locations)

Julie Bibby-MacNabb

# **Executive Director (All Locations)**

Kim Aker

# **Annapolis Valley Work Centre**



January 2022 brought about many changes with the program design of Annapolis Valley Work Centre. We are now working in year 2 of this change and becoming more comfortable with it. It was the province's desire to have the 6 Work Centres more aligned with each other. As a result, the AVWC program now begins with a 4-week assessment (with 10 intakes per year; rather than 5), and for those choosing and recommended by the assessment an in-house program and a community work option. Some completing assessment move on to other options in the community. As always, people can exit the program at any time to secure work. We now work more closely with NS Works Centres as each person entering our program is also case managed by a Career Practitioner and this has greatly enhanced the collaboration and coordination of quality client service with the larger PeopleWorx team.

Graduations continue to happen less frequently and still with only our own population in attendance as we continue to ensure COVID safe gatherings. Although still not able to invite family and friends, each graduate is given a digital copy of the ceremony to share with their loved ones. Perhaps in the next year we may be able to have each graduate invite one or two people and begin to enlarge our circle.

Within the AVWC program, participants continue to concentrate on one of four disciplines: Introduction to Construction, Basic Office Skills, Customer Service and Food Service. Each participant also benefits from Essential Skills for the workplace, Job Development and Personal Development classes.

We collectively continue to advocate for our clients, and this amazing team continues to work with community businesses who contribute to positive outcomes with free private counselling, free haircuts, and reduced cost dental services for the participants we serve.

We have experienced a number of changes in our team in the past year. Janet Ross joined as Customer Service Facilitator in May of 2022, Kaylee Dunn took on the position of PD Facilitator and Coach in August 2022, Shawn Connolly was hired in October 2022 and began full time in January 2023 as Shop Facilitator, Melissa Reeves began her role as Job Development Facilitator in September 2022, and David Brewster and then Jessica Jarvis have filled the role of PD Facilitator and Coach since Charissa left on maternity leave in October 2022. Marcel Capp retired in September after 24 years with AVWC with appreciation from his long-term colleagues and without a lot of fanfare just as he requested. Jasmine Gertridge, Michelle Johnson and Kyle Walsh were wished well as they pursued either personal or professional opportunities. In October of 2022 Charissa became a mom to a beautiful baby boy named Willem. Mom and baby are doing great and we look forward to Charissa re-joining our team this Fall.

Despite all of these staff changes; we achieved the following milestones this year:

- 62 new people entered our program during this fiscal year.
- 48 completed the assessment and participated in their case management review
- 43 participated in the vocational specific training
- 26 participants completed full program and graduated.
- 21 of the 26 Graduates increased their Essential Skills learning by at least 1 grade level while in the program according to the Canadian Adult Achievement Test.
- 28 participants had paid employment when they left our program or shortly thereafter.

Past participants or graduates who are not employed or under-employed are encouraged to maintain contact with the Job Developer who will support them by offering weekly job search/maintenance classes. During these sessions, participants are encouraged to update

their resumes, perform active job searches or get the needed additional Individualized help to maintain their current employment. They are also introduced to the full suite of services offered through NS Works. This concentrated time helps people to maintain the momentum they experienced while attending the AVWC program.

The six Work Activity Programs' managers and Executive Directors and DCS staff met in late November as a Community of Practice to share program profiles, common elements of program curriculum, and best practices as well as opportunities for collaboration. Challenges being encountered were also discussed, including low referral rates from DCS and strategies to improve referrals, recruitment and also strategies to enhance our work with employers to address labour market needs.

# **AVWC Success Stories**

## Victoria - Persistence Pays Off

Victoria was no stranger to the staff at AVWC when she once again came to our program wanting to develop her skills and determine a path for her future employment. This was Victoria's 4<sup>th</sup> attempt at completing the program and staff were doubtful that she could succeed. In the previous times she was here it was at the strong encouragement of the staff at her group home or the staff at Department of Community Services. Victoria could be described as a rebellious teenager at that time who wanted independence but did not have the patience to work through the process of becoming an adult. She was different this time and appeared to be more goal focused but certainly time would tell.

She made good gains in the areas of vocabulary, reading and math, with significant grade level improvements, much to the surprise of staff in her essential skills classes. Victoria was focused on building a good life for her family and was open and cooperative to trying new opportunities that came her way.

Victoria chose to take food services to improve her cooking skills so she could provide nutritious meals for her family. Each day with a little help and support from us, she gained confidence, was soon baking up a storm and helping with the noon meal. Victoria had no real employment goals yet but knew she had a way of making others feel included, from her family to her friends. She has a calming presence on all. There is also an inner warrior in Victoria who has faced every challenge, no matter how hard, and this time was not giving up. She stated to staff many

times "I'm different than the times before because now I really want this. I want it for me and no one else." Victoria shared openly and worked hard to accept constructive criticism and overcome daily challenges. Our job developer, after witnessing Victoria overcome many challenges both in her personal life and her professional life and knowing her genuine desire to help others, asked Victoria if she would be interested in a job placement at a local senior's home. Victoria had always secretly wanted to work in a "Group home" setting but she thought she would enjoy working with youth rather than seniors.

Because Victoria was up for the challenge, a job placement was arranged in a local senior's home that had a children's unit. During her time there, she discovered her passion for caring for others, especially the children. Once this placement was completed and Victoria had been given a good reference she applied and was hired by DTM as a security sitter. This position was to ensure the safety of people requiring all aspects of special care. With those core values as strong as they were,

Victoria was now on her way to accomplishing many of her goals, and we couldn't be happier to have been along for the ride and assist her on accomplishments. We were able to share many wins and some important lessons with Victoria, and it is with pride that we are able to celebrate Victoria completing our program after 3 unsuccessful attempts and now happily employed at a job she loves.

### **Denise - Confidence and Skills**

Denise came to us with a goal of improving her computer skills thereby increasing her employability skillset. She has a great academic foundation and used class time to work on strengthening her computer capabilities and exploring career and educational options that would be best suited for her. We quickly learned to not be fooled by her quiet personality, as she has a great sense of humour that we got to see as she became more comfortable with us. Denise possesses more strength and courage than most people we know. She is always willing to try new things with a small nudge of encouragement or minimal support. Denise has a good deal of life experience, including running her own business.

Life threw her a curve ball and Denise found herself having to change her career. Initially it was hard, but Denise worked steadily in the Basic Office Skills program and built on her confidence to use computers and MS Office Word. Denise got over her hesitancy with computers and applied and was accepted to participate in the NPower Canada program. This program is about learning to work remotely for some large Canadian companies in computer

support systems and IT work. Denise engaged in her program here and participated well in classroom discussions. Denise likes to be busy and would always ask for "what's next" once her work was completed. When she completed all tasks for the day, she would busy herself with keyboarding or SkillsPass online learning. Denise was respectful and friendly to her peers and staff.

Dedicated beyond measure, Denise came in each day with a vision of what she wanted to achieve. She faced challenges head on and never took "No," for an answer when plunging toward her goals. Denise is a great example of how persistence creates results. She is kind and humble towards those around her. Denise wore her heart on her sleeve from day one. We witnessed her confidence grow as she sought and found new skills. She is a hard worker and part of her "work" in our program was learning not to be so hard on herself. Denise has a huge heart for people and just as she fills up our cups with care and compassion, we did our best to fill up hers. We can now say with confidence that Denise believes in herself; especially in the face of a new challenge. Denise is completing two programs on December 20<sup>th</sup>; ours and NPower Canada. Her dream job would be working from her home and she is well on her way to achieving that goal. With Denise's newfound skills and her personality, she will go far in life.

# **AVWC - PeopleWorx Staff**

Introducing AVWC's amazing staff team as of March 31st 2023

## PD Coach

Kaylee Dunn Charissa Sanche (maternity to October 2023) Jessica Jarvis (term)

JD Coach

Melissa Reeves

**Essential Skills Facilitator** 

Pam Spinney

Introduction to Construction Facilitator

**Shawn Connolly** 

Food Service Facilitator

**Greg Saunders** 

**Basic Office Skills Facilitator** 

Gina Ripley

**Customer Service Facilitator** 

Janet Ross

½ time Administrative Assistant

Sandra Martin

Manager

Vickie Petrie

**Executive Director** 

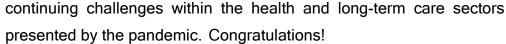
Kim Aker

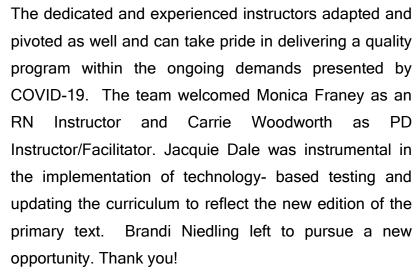
# **Continuing Care Assistant Program**

Operating as a private career college, the Continuing Care Assistant (CCA) program educates and trains targeted students with the necessary tools and skills to deliver appropriate, timely and respectful client-focused care.



Through support from the *One Journey Initiative*, this program offered from June 2022 to February 2023 with 8 students graduating. These graduates adapted and overcame the







# **CCA Staff:**

Robin Eaton, RN Supervisor/Instructor

Monica Franey, RN Instructor

Stephanie Harvey, LEAP Instructor

Brandi Niedling, Personal Development Counsellor (resigned in Summer 2022)

Carrie Woodworth, Personal Development Counsellor (started in Summer 2022)

# **CCA Program Student Profile**

Congratulations to the Graduating Class of 2022-2023!

Leanna Bigelow
Malissa (Missy) Bradford
Amanda Davidson
Christine Josey
Joanne Matthews
Adelaide (Addy) Riswold
Donna Thomas
Michelle Tremblay





# **SOCIAL ENTERPRISE**

PeopleWorx has engaged in a variety of Social Enterprise ventures over the years that have naturally evolved from the programs and services that it provides to individuals and the community. PeopleWorx has always viewed Social Enterprise as another way to achieve its mandate by offering additional programs and services that may not be partially or fully funded by government. Social enterprise could also provide additional employment opportunities for clients and could significantly add to the economic base in various communities

Cordell Wright, Social Enterprise Production Assistant (Apr to Aug)
Charlie Dempsey, Social Enterprise Production Assistant

Over the 2022-2023 fiscal year, PeopleWorx engaged in a number of micro Social Enterprise ventures although they were somewhat curtailed by the pandemic:

- Workplace training for local employers
- In-house delivery of certificate programs, such as: Nova Scotia Best, 1st
   Aid/CPR, Personality Dimensions, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System, Mandt, etc.
- In-house catering (no external due to pandemic)
- Production of shipping materials for Andritz (formerly Xerium)
- Production of baby barns for the local Housing Authority
- Facility rentals (only with resident partners)









# **EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PARTNERS**

PeopleWorx partners with local employers throughout the Annapolis Valley to provide clients with realistic and relevant vocational training. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our training partners for their support. The following companies were job placement hosts and/or employers of participants at AVWC and provided valuable opportunities for individuals to build work skills and experience. (March 31, 2022 - April 1, 2023).

Jessica Jarvis, Melissa Reeves, Kyle Walsh, Job Developers

Headliners

Brown's Convenience Store

Liberty Lodge

Giant Tiger (Greenwood)

Canadian Tire (not sure which location)

Lightfoot and Wolfville Vineyards

Pharmasave (Berwick)

The Big Scoop

Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park Camp Resort

Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education

Sodexo Canada (Michelin)

LRB Fabricators

ServiceMaster Restore

Sobeys (New Minas)

The Flower Cart (Michelin)

**Evergreen Home for Special Care** 

Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre

# **EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT PARTNERS**

PeopleWorx engages with local businesses to provide opportunity seekers with a path to the hidden job market. The business supports are primarily focused on the recruitment, selection and retention of staff; however, the Employer Engagement Specialist also acts by connecting local businesses with all appropriate programs, agencies and supports. During the 2021/22 fiscal year, the Employer Engagement Specialist worked with the local businesses listed below.

Deborah Kendall, Employer Engagement Specialist

Fancy's Quality Millyard

Webster Farm Ltd

Innovative Facility Care

Mud Creek Medical

Gary Parker Excavating Ltd

The Bus Boys/Perry Rand Transportation

**Group Limited** 

**Blooming Garden Florist** 

CKF Inc.

Diner's Delight Family Restaurant

Paragon Golf Course

S & J's Diner

Sherman Hines Proquide Publishing

Northumberland Electric Inc. Lightfoot & Wolfville Winery

**GEMTEC** 

TJ's Convenience

Keith D'Eon Construction

Copperstone Financial

Van Meekeren's Farms Shilawi Management Ltd

Lawrencetown Organic Veggies

Tibbetts Electrical Contracting Inc

Kings Riverside Court

Manpower

BioVectra

**Evergreen Home For Special Care** 

Dairy Queen (Greenwood)

**BMC Seafoods Limited** 

Performance Welding

Parish of Wilmot

Chris (Curtis) Simpson Trucking

Oxen International Ltd

Protec Pest Control

Sobeys (NewMinas)

**Demaine Excavating** 

MBF Chartered Professional Accountants

Butt's Auto

Superstore/Starbucks New Minas

McLean's Service Centre

Mill-Ford Contracting

Strongest Families Institute

Blue Ocean

Specialized Support Services of Nova Scotia

Life Works

Elevate Beauty Institute of Cosmetology

Miracca Spa

LJR Imprintables

Annapolis Valley at Home Senior Care

Mountains and Meadows Care Group

Willow Box Manufacturing

Count Your Blessings Day Care

Community Lumber

Dexter Construction/Municipal Group of

Companies

Kings Janitorial

F.A.T. Handyman Aimer Roofing Ltd

Café Restaurant Composé
Arnel Levy & Sons Farms Ltd
Valley Paving & Excavation
Tupperville School Museum
Sights to Sea Landscaping
Atlantic Poultry Incorporated

VON

Just Us! Coffee

Swiss Chalet/Harveys Acadian Seaplants

Equilibrium Engineering Inc.

Acadia University

Harvest Wealth Management

Eden Valley Poultry

Ron West and Associates Consulting inc

JJ Undercoating and Auto Repair

Cat's Meow Auto Styling

Atlantic Road Construction & Paving Limited

Capitol Pub Need #0597

**Dora Construction** 

Susan Buchanan Consulting Inc/Hooves

**Helping Hearts** 

Ryson Interior Construction Ltd Fiesta Siesta Mexican Restaurant Dickie-Baxter Taproom & Bistro

MMD Distributors Ltd

Acadia Roofing

Commissionaire's

Michelin

Valley Stove & Cycle

East Coast Local

Valley Ford
Carlisle House

Easson's Transport Group

King Point to Point Transportation

Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre

B&H Custom Imprintable

Maxwell's Quality Footwear

Kings Arms Commons in Wolfville

Carl's Independent Grocer

Law Office of Patricia Reardon

McDonald's - Jus-Mar Investments Ltd-

Regional

S Squared Renovations

Burton's Tree Ltd

Fibrenew Southwest Nova Scotia

Northern Reflections

Maid Pro

Farm to Feast Café Fancy Jewellers Ltd.

MaxSys Staffing & Consulting

Janes Quality Contracting

OH Armstrong Ltd

# **COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

PeopleWorx values collaboration with individuals, businesses, and community organizations in order to help make programming and services available and accessible for the community. Together we can make a real difference in the lives of individuals and the wellbeing of the community. Thank you for your partnership and continued support and we look forward to renewing and revitalizing our events, activities, projects and collaborations!

Aboriginal Peoples Training and Employment

Council

Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education

**Annapolis Ventures** 

Association of Industry Sector Councils

Braveheart

Canadian Red Cross Coldbrook Lion's Club Commercial Safety College

Community Business Development Corporation

Hants-Kings Community INC.

Continuing Care Assistant District Level

Committee

Community Health Boards-Eastern Kings,

Central Kings, Western Kings,

Kingston/Greenwood, Annapolis Royal Community Volunteer Income Tax Program

Department of Community Services
Department of Justice—Probation Services
Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration

Department of Advanced Education
Department of National Defence

Department of Seniors and Longterm Care

**Evergreen Home for Special Care** 

Flower Cart Industries

FutureWorx Grandview Manor

Greenwood Military Family Resource Centre

G&P Safety Training HANS - CCAPAC

Heart of the Valley

Horizons Achievement Centre

Immigration Settlement and Integration Services

Immigration Support Group Wolfville - Mud Creek Rotary Municipality of the County of Kings Native Council of Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia Career Development Association

Nova Scotia Community College

Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Committee Nova Scotia Works, Kentville and Windsor

**NS Human Rights Commission** 

Open Arms

Options Work Activity Program-Metroworks

ROMAN 3

Salvation Army Middleton

Shannex

Sheila Bower-Jacquard & Associates

Solutions Learning Centre

South Shore Work Activity Program

Statistics Canada

The Women's Place Resource Centre

Town of Annapolis Royal

Town of Kentville

Valley African Nova Scotian Development

Association

Valley Community Learning Association

Valley REN

Valley Restorative Justice Village of New Minas

VON

Windsor Elms Village

# **NOTES**