

Chapter Three

Increase Knowledge and Create a Cultural Shift

Community members are more aware, have increased knowledge and there is deeper understanding about seniors mental health and addictions issues.



Conversations about mental health and addictions have shifted to become more open and compassionate. We begin to create a cultural shift and notable change in the community conversations.

Feeding the Soul Conference for Seniors Mental Health

Bringing together seniors in a day long learning event provided them with an opportunity to network with others, learn new things and have some fun, while at the same time highlighting the importance of *Feeding the Soul* at all levels. One of the outcomes for the overall project was to support seniors to develop a deeper understanding of the many issues that can impact one's mental health and lead to social isolation. By providing new ways to look at things differently and the connection between our mind, body and spirit, we created the space for seniors to talk about how stigma is still associated with admitting one struggles with their mental health or addictions. It also celebrated the resiliency and strength of older adults and the assets they have.

Check out the promotional video for the conference, [click here](#).



Mind over Matter,
Keynote Speaker,
Pam Mood, to watch, [click here](#).

Brain Health as we Age, presenter Jean MacQueen, to watch, [click here](#)

Things to consider if planning a full day conference or workshop.

- Often people attend a conference as a participant, but do not always realize the planning and organization that goes into making it happen. Plans for this conference got underway about six months prior to the date. (For a larger conference, the planning could start a year in advance.)

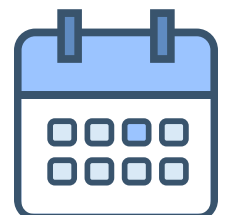


- Because this project was all about working collaboratively in the community, part of our approach was to recruit people to join a planning committee. Having a team of dedicated people to take on different responsibilities, ensured a collaborative approach and involved many partners, which was one of the key outcomes of the overall project. Members of our team included, the municipality, mental health and addictions, and seniors from local clubs.

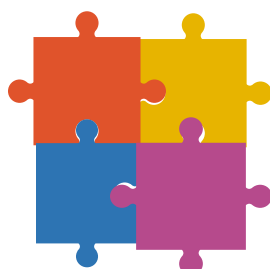
- The planning team was involved in choosing the theme, arranging and setting up the venue, developing the budget and outline for the event, arranging for speakers and presenters, and arranging the catering and technical requirements. They also helped with promotions and social media, arranging transportation if needed, getting sponsorship, grants and door prizes., arranging for volunteers for the day registration for the day and evaluation.

- Deciding on a theme was important to frame the day. We chose to stick with the overall theme of Mind, Body and Spirit, and since we wanted to offer this as a gift, at no cost to participants, with a lovely lunch provided, we chose Feeding the Soul and built all the promotional materials around that theme.

- The date you choose is very important to ensure maximum participation. You will want to consider if there is anything else going on in the community that will compete with the interests of the older adults. We decided to host ours during Mental Health Week, so we could also use this as an opportunity to create some interest in the issue overall through social media and other media approaches.



- There are many pieces to the puzzle for event planning that involve oversight and logistics. Some resources are available in the resource section.



- Registration is always a big part of the planning for an event, fortunately there are now several free websites that can make that easier.



- Keep in mind that when working with older adults, many not use the computer or have access to the internet so you will always want to ensure you also have a paper copy available to distribute to places you know that seniors frequent.

- Ensuring that all organizations and people have been thanked for their support, all items returned and the planning committee has a debrief meeting is an important step in event planning to wrap up final details.

- An evaluation of the event will provide you will valuable information to bring forward for future planning. Again, like registration, there are free websites to assist when sending out an evaluation post the event, but you will always want to ensure an option for a paper copy is available as well. One thing to keep in mind is the response is always higher when completed at the event and collected. A tip is to attach a prize for all evaluations handed in and give each person a ticket and have a random draw.



Conference Agenda

Welcome to
MIND-BODY-SPIRIT: FEEDING THE SOUL
 2018 RICHMOND COUNTY SENIORS CONFERENCE

Hostess: Celeste Gotell

Appetizers

9:00 - 9:20 OPENING REMARKS

- * Hon. Randy Delorey, NS Minister of Health and Wellness
- * Alana Paon, MLA for Cape Breton-Richmond
- * Warden Brian Marchand, Municipality of the County of Richmond
- * Dr. Dorothy Barnard, Chair for Dr. Kingston Memorial Community Health Centre

9:20 - 10:00 KEYNOTE SPEAKER

- * Pam Mood - Mind over Matter: Wishing it were that simple

10:00 - 10:15 BREAK

10:15 - 11:00 CONNECTING THE DOTS

- * Jean MacQueen - Brain health as we age

Main Courses

11:00 - 11:45 MORNING WORKSHOPS

- * Rm #1 - NOW WHAT? Coping with chronic illness (Jenna MacQueen, facilitator)
- * Rm #2 - A YOGA JOURNEY (Helen Slade, facilitator)
- * Rm #3 - ADJUSTING TO CHANGE (Michele MacPhee, facilitator)
- * Rm #4 - YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT (Shelley LeBlanc & Yvonne Boudreau, facilitators)
- * Rm #5 - ART OF FRIENDSHIP (Dawn Ostrem, facilitator)
- * Rm #6 - PAMPERING TIME (Volunteers)

12:00 - 1:00 LUNCH

- * Provided by Louies Cozy Corner

1:00 - 1:45 AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS

- * Rm #1 - NOW WHAT? Coping with chronic illness (Jenna MacQueen, facilitator)

- * Rm #2 - A YOGA JOURNEY (Helen Slade, facilitator)
- * Rm #3 - ADJUSTING TO CHANGE (Michele MacPhee, facilitator)
- * Rm #4 - YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT (Shelley LeBlanc & Yvonne Boudreau, facilitators)
- * Rm #5 - ART OF FRIENDSHIP (Dawn Ostrem, facilitator)
- * Rm #6 - PAMPERING TIME (Volunteers)
- * Gymnasium - WHAT IS PICKLEBALL? (Cynthia Fougere, facilitator)

1:45 - 2:30 REVOLVING CONVERSATION

- * Time to re-connect and talk about the day

2:30 - 2:45 BREAK

Desserts

2:45 - 3:05 SENIOR MOMENTS THEATRE

3:05 - 3:15 CLOSING

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| * Ultramar Port Hawkesbury | * Brent's Autobody |
| * Premium Seafoods | * China King Restaurant |
| * Dooley's Pharmacy | * Fleur de Lis Restaurant |
| * Martell's Pharmachoice | * County Kitchen Hearthstone Restaurant |
| * Jen's Massage | * Greenhouse Co-op Ltd. |
| * Seal Cove Restaurant | * La Golette a Pépé |
| * Green Light Restaurant | |
| * Cottage Bakery | |

Keynote Speaker Pam Mood

Pam Mood comes to us from the beautiful seaside town of Yarmouth. She is CEO of Pam Mood Consulting and speaks internationally on topics including leadership, wellness and more. Pam is the mother of three grown children, has a political science degree from Acadia University, is presently serving her second term as Mayor of Yarmouth and loves nothing more than a good conversation, a hearty laugh and an action plan come to life.

MC Celeste Gotell

Celeste Gotell is formerly from Arichat and currently lives in Antigonish. Her work areas include mental health, gambling addiction, Alzheimer's disease, family support and public health. Celeste was involved in developing the Seniors Take Action Coalition for Richmond County and the Strait area.

Facilitators Yvonne Boudreau & Shelley LeBlanc - You are What you Eat

Yvonne Boudreau is the municipal clerk for the Municipality of the County of Richmond. She is an avid health enthusiast with a passion for cooking and the connection between diet and mental health. Shelley LeBlanc is a dietitian in the Strait-Richmond area. She provides nutrition education based on community needs.

Facilitator Jean MacQueen - Connecting the Dots

Jean MacQueen has been a health promotion advisor for Mental Health and Addictions, Nova Scotia Health Authority, since 2011. Her previous work includes the AIDS Coalition of Cape Breton, Cape Breton Wellness Centre at CBU and Public Health Services. Jean and her family live in Dutch Brook, N.S.

Facilitator Jenna MacQueen - Now What? Coping with Chronic Illness

Jenna MacQueen is a health promotion specialist for Mental Health and Addictions, Nova Scotia Health Authority. She holds degrees in psychology and health promotion. Jean has worked previously as an educational coordinator with the N.S. Arthritis Society and currently lives with her family in Sydney, N.S.

Facilitator Michele MacPhee - Adjusting to Change

Michele MacPhee works as part of a collaborative team at the Dr. Kingston Memorial Community Health Centre as the Senior's Safety & Social Inclusion Coordinator. Michele shares her love of the natural world, yoga, beekeeping and puns with her family at their home in St. Peter's, N.S.

Facilitator Helen Slade - A Yoga Journey

Helen Slade grew up in England before moving to Canada. At the age of 53 she discovered yoga as a way to cultivate a sense of self-awareness and calm. Since becoming a yoga teacher she has inspired countless students and helped lead the Richmond County yoga movement. Helen lives in River Bourgeois.

Facilitator Dawn Ostrem - Art of Friendship

Dawn Ostrem is the project coordinator for the MIND-BODY-SPIRIT project. She has a background in journalism, adult education and community development. Dawn has a passion for using arts-based storytelling to inspire social action and document participatory research.

Facilitator Cynthia Fougere - What is Pickleball?

Cynthia Fougere is a long-time athlete and active living enthusiast from Sampsonville. She was an all-star softball player in Richmond County and has been organizing pickleball in St. Peter's for the last four years.



Mind, Body, and Spirit Telile Series

Telile is a community television station located in Richmond County, which has been part of the fabric of the community since 1994.

It is one of nine not-for-profit, community owned stations across Canada. We are very fortunate to have this asset in our community



and wanted to find a way to involve them in the project. Many seniors in Richmond County are loyal Telile viewers and we wanted to ensure that certain components of the Mind, Body and Spirit programming was accessible to people from their home. Recognizing that some seniors may find it challenging to participate in person in programs due to health reasons, or limited travel options in a very rural area, it was important that some programs were brought into their homes.

Visit their website: <https://www.telile.tv>



The entire series is available for viewing on You Tube Telile, see resource section section in Chapter Six.

Richmond County had a resource that was available, but, in other communities, similar programming can be done be recorded and aired on alternate sites like, Facebook or You Tube. In some communities, local high schools or community colleges have media programs that might be able to assist with a smaller scale version of a project.

COVID-19 has created many innovative approaches in communities by many organizations serving seniors to offer pre-recorded or live programming. Local radio stations might be approached to offer regular programming. Regular webcasts or Facebook live options can also be explored.

MIND-BODY-SPIRIT TELEVISION SERIES

Starts NOV 26 @ 730 pm

Telile
Community
Television



Week #1 (starts NOV 26th): MIND - The health effects of life-long learning
Week #2 (starts DEC 3rd): BODY - Emotional health and your body
Week #3 (starts DEC 10th): SPIRIT - The spiritual part of health

Weekly Format:

MONDAYS: Panel discussion

TUESDAYS: Instructional Programming

WEDNESDAYS: Documentary Storytelling

THURSDAYS: Instructional Programming

FRIDAYS: Various Programming

Tune in everyday at 730 pm

WEEK #1 – (MIND)

THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Research shows that adult learning has a positive effect on well-being. It improves our belief that we can succeed, boosting confidence. It also increases our ability to create support networks. There is a correlation between increased wages and employability for younger seniors and participation in learning leads to better mental health.

Week one featured stories about seniors' learning journeys and explore different kinds of learning that seniors can do from home or with friends.

WEEK #2 – (BODY) EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND YOUR BODY

Research shows that good physical health affects mental health and vice versa. Older adults experience unique physical, psychological and social changes that individually and together may challenge their mental health, sometimes resulting in mental illness. Physical changes and chronic health conditions can have substantial impact on the psychological and social well-being of older adults.

The mental health foundation of the UK says depression has been linked to:

- A 67% increase in risk of death from heart disease.
- And a 50% increase in risk of death from cancer.

To learn more about the relationship between both types of health week two featured stories from local seniors and introduce the unique physical activities in our community and learn more about mental health and connection to healthy food.

WEEK #3 – THE SPIRITUAL PART OF HEALTH

There are enormous psychological and physical benefits for seniors who practice spirituality in their lives. Research refers to spirituality as a meaning-making practice – which means it helps to give people a sense of purpose. It can include religion or other spiritual practices as well as a sense of purpose around family or work. While our sense of purpose is often very personal, it can often be seen among our chosen social groups.

Week three looked at health by hearing stories about social connections, personal reflections and that sense of purpose. It featured stories about finding social connections that align with what feeds our spiritual health.

Normalizing Conversation and Reducing Stigma

Using social media

How social media can help getting your message out....

One of the most important ways to change attitudes and reduce stigma is to normalize the conversations we have about issues of mental health, addiction and social isolation among seniors.

One of the main components of this project was to create opportunities to talk about these issues in a way that would help to change views, shift attitudes and build a community where it was safe to talk about these issues in a very public way.



We wanted to encourage all community members to recognize they have a role to play in supporting the seniors in our communities to ask for help when needed. We wanted to encourage people to get involved in ways that they could support seniors. We wanted to let seniors know it was okay to acknowledge that at times they may struggle with life events that can impact their overall mental health and wellness. We wanted to let them know that this was not a sign of weakness or there was no reason to feel shame.

In rural communities, where often there is a higher population of seniors, so we had to find creative ways to get the message out there. Social media became a big part of the approach we took to spread messages about many different components of the overall project. We used Facebook to promote the various programs, but also to share information and knowledge about mental health, addictions and social isolation.

The overall objective again was to normalize the conversations, to build increased knowledge and understanding about the many ways that seniors may be impacted and the many ways we can work together in a compassionate way to wrap our arms around older adults in our communities.



While there are a number of social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, we used Facebook as it the one most commonly used by older adults.

We relied on several FaceBook pages and groups that already were in existence to post information on a regular basis. Posts were shared from several other sources like articles featuring relevant information, tools and resources to credible sites like those listed in the resource section, all programs were promoted using these Facebook pages and groups.

Some of the important things to remember with using social media, is that you need to post regularly if you want to keep people interested and returning to your page. You need to remember that not everyone uses platforms like Facebook or even have computers, so you need to all consider other ways to get information out in circulation as well. Messages need to be short and impactful. You need to ensure links are accurate. You need to consider copyright issues.



Examples of posts from Facebook

 **Celeste Gotell** ▶ Seniors Take Action Coalition ⋮

May 5, 2018 · 🌐 · "Loneliness is the greatest poverty" — and can be more harmful for our health than a lifetime of smoking or obesity. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/sachinjain/2018/04/30/all-...>

Upstream's post
"Loneliness is the greatest poverty" — and can be more harmful for our health than a lifetime of smoking or obesity...



 **Dawn Ostrem** ▶ Seniors Take Action Coalition ⋮

Apr 26, 2018 · 🌐 · One of the workshops being offered at the MBS Seniors Conference in Louisdale on May 12: WHAT IS PICKLEBALL?: Spend some time in the gymnasium to learn abo...

youtube.com
Pickleball keeps seniors in shape



 Michele MP and 1 other 2 Comments

 **Celeste Gotell** shared a link. ⋮

👤 Admin · May 8, 2018 · 🌐

Mental Health Week is May 7-13, 2018

A perfect time to learn more about caring for your mental health and the connection between our physical and mental health. Hear from Pam Mood, our keynote speaker, participate in a couple of workshops, enjoy nice lunch and be in the company of others in your community.


Why don't you consider joining us on May 12 the Mind Body Spirit Senior's Conference in Louisdale. You need to register in advance.

Click here <https://formjotform.com/80984327192262> or call 902-587-2800 to register

FORM.JOTFORM.COM 

MIND-BODY-SPIRIT Conference Registration Form

Examples of posts from various community groups on Facebook


 **Dr. Kingston Memorial Community Health Centre**
720 like this · Social Service

Sep 10, 2018 · 🌐 · The Mind Body Spirit project set up programs to bring seniors out of isolation and included a volunteer visitor program, dinners, music and technology initiatives. – cbc.ca


cbc.ca
Program to ease loneliness for Richmond County seniors wraps up | CBC News



👍 3


 **Debbie Samson** ▶ Fleur de Lis Seniors

Apr 9, 2018 · 🌐 · ...a short planning meeting for "Around the Dinner Table" to take place at the parish hall, May 15. Anyone interested in being a host for a table of 8 are welcome to attend...even if you just want information, join us.

 **Richmond County, NS**
2K like this · Government Organization

Sep 12, 2018 · 🌐 · ...security workshop geared toward low-income seniors and those who want to make stronger social connections. It is also open to those who would like to continue...

Dawn Ostrem's post
Another MIND-BODY-SPIRIT workshop coming up this fall. This is a food preservation for food security workshop geared toward low-income seniors an...



1 Share

Engaging Your Local Media

Understanding how your local media works – and developing strong working relationships with them will go a long way in helping to promote your programs. To get the maximum impact for your efforts requires planning.

Thinking about the following questions will help you figure out the best media outlet to use to reach your target audience.

- Why you want to communicate?
- What is the message you want to communicate?
- Who you are trying to reach?



Please keep in mind that when communicating with seniors, many still like to read their daily or weekly newspapers, also many enjoy listening to the radio.

Working with the media requires an understanding of how the media works and how to write for them. For example, if sending out a public service announcement or press release that is connected to an event and has a date associated with it, timing can be crucial.

Certain media outlets have different deadlines, best to find out what they are. Also important to know if they have a certain format they like to receive public service announcements and media releases.

Many local newspaper and radio stations often have community calendars as well and information can be submitted online at no cost.

If sending out a press release, keep in mind that you will have little control over what is actually printed or aired, so it is important to always include the most important information. This is one of the reasons it is always great to follow up with your contacts to ensure they received it and engage them in discussion. The importance of these relationships will ensure better coverage.

If you want to engage people and generate some enthusiasm and interest in your project, local radio is often a great way of connecting with the local community. An interview can be more personal and allows you an opportunity to show enthusiasm and possibly even have people call in and answer questions if the show format allows for that. Additionally, CBC in some communities have local community contacts, and they can be a great support.

With our project, we were lucky to have community television station, so we partnered with them to develop a series, but if you have a great project that you think it would be a great local story, you can always reach out and pitch for a television segment.

Examples from the project

OCTOBER 4, 2017 THE REPORTER

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Improving the well-being of seniors

L'ARDOISE: The Mind-Body-Spirit (MBS) Project is starting to deliver programs in Strait-Richmond area communities during Mental Illness Awareness Week.

The MBS Project is delivering a Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) course at no fee to participants at the Dr. Kingston Memorial Community Health Centre in L'Ardoise on October 4-5.

"I am participating in this training because I think it's important to make use of the resources that are out there," said Tiffany Lies, a participant signed up for the upcoming course. "It's important for community volunteers to be aware of future programming resources in the Strait-Richmond area as they become available."

Another MHFA course will be open to community members on November 9-10 in St. Peter's.

"This is the first step in getting people in our area knowledgeable and comfortable with addressing mental health concerns," said MBS project coordinator Dawn Ostrem. "We are using community development principles, meaning we find participants who have an interest and support them to bridge that knowledge and passion for helping seniors in their own groups and communities."

The first phase of the MBS project involves developing community partners to help with the delivery of future programming related to mental health and addiction among seniors. As people get older, they are more susceptible to factors,

such as loneliness and decreased mobility, that may contribute to those issues. More than 1.6 million people over 60 years of age were living with a mental health problem or illness in Canada in 2016, according to the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

Most MBS programming will roll out this spring. Early programming, such as MHFA, will help prepare community members to take part in operating future programming. Another initiative in development is the Wellness Initiative for Senior Education, an evidence-based program that deals with substance abuse prevention and overall wellness.

A unique new program that directly affects target seniors right now - Connecting Seniors Through Technology - is taking place this fall. The initiative

enables seniors to be better connected with their family, friends and community through the use of technology. This program is being delivered by the Richmond County Literacy Network, a key partner in the MBS Project.

"Technology can play an important role in breaking social isolation," says Millie Hatt, RCLN's Network Coordinator.

"We are very excited to be offering a program that will benefit seniors in our communities and will involve working collaboratively with many community partners to recruit and support those seniors chosen to participate."

The MBS Project is a year-long initiative funded by the Municipality of the County of Richmond and the provincial Department of Health and Wellness.

Nova Scotia

Program to ease loneliness for Richmond County seniors wraps up



One man, 94, now uses FaceTime from his nursing home to keep in touch with his son who lives away

Yvonne LeBlanc-Smith - CBC News
Posted: Sep 04, 2018 5:13 PM AT | Last Updated: September 4, 2018



Nearly 30 per cent of Richmond County's residents are older than 65. (Martin Meissner/Associated Press)

A yearlong project to ease loneliness and depression for Nova Scotia seniors in Richmond County wraps up this fall.

Seniors' conference focusing on mental health coming to Richmond Co. Saturday

Port Hawkesbury, NS, Canada / 101.5 The Hawk
May 11, 2018 2:35 PM



A seniors' conference on mental health takes place in Richmond Co. Saturday.

Dawn Ostrem, Mind-Body-Spirit coordinator, says they're hosting Feeding the Soul to raise awareness of mental health week.

Ostrem told The Hawk Morning Show Feeding the Soul will focus on some important issues.

"Its main purpose is to address building social connections among seniors in our region," she said. "That is proven to be one of the best ways to address mental health and addiction issues."

Ostrem says mental health issues aren't necessarily something you can see, but they affect everyone.

"We all look at our physical health - Do you have a cold today? How are you doing?, but everybody's got mental health as well," she said. "You don't necessarily need to have a mental health issue to be part of this conference; this is about maintaining everyday mental health - some days are better than others for everybody."

Ostrem said the conference features a number of mental health workshops, including adjusting to change, coping with illness, and you are what you eat.

It runs from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Richmond Education Centre/Academy in Louisdale.



the Reporter
THE STRAIT AREA NEWS

Residents certified in Music Care

L'ARDOISE: Twenty-one people are now certified in using the power of music to help care for others in the Strait area.

Music Care Level 1 was provided by Toronto-based Room 217 Foundation in Louisdale on April 16-17.

Music care - different from music therapy - is an approach to caring for the sick and/or elderly that uses music to promote healing. Training shows caregivers how to use music to improve quality of life. Ultimately, the culture of care changes from a largely clinical one - which is often hurried and stressful - to a setting that is more relaxed, supportive and stimulating.

The music care students included community volunteers, musicians, family members and professionals who work in caregiving. Sheila Foggie is a retired registered nurse, with multiple sclerosis, who lives with her 77-year-old sister in a remote area of Richmond County.

"I found the workshop invaluable. The energy in the room was amazing," she said. "Resources in the Richmond County area could be improved upon and a grassroots organization can take that further for the benefit of people, not only in my case, but many others, such as in palliative care."

The recent training was done through the MIND-BODY-SPIRIT (MBS) Project, which focuses on improving seniors' mental health and building social connections. The \$120,000 grant is administered by the Dr. Kingston Memorial Community Health Centre (KMCHC) and funded by Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness and the Municipality of the County of Richmond.

While Level 1 certification through the Room 217 Foundation would cost each student about \$300, last week's training was free to students who submitted applications. It is part of the MBS priority of building a framework for community-based, volunteer-led programming.

"The idea is to spread knowledge about how to use music care so this cost-effective and proven method grows," said MBS project coordinator Dawn Ostrem.

"These 21 people are now music care providers who can use it through day-to-day interactions with people, as well as through larger projects or initiatives from a community base, rather than relying only on government programs and services."

Ostrem explains this knowledge will help build a community-based social safety net for seniors. The area has one of the highest senior populations in Canada.

"This area is already in a crisis situation when it comes to the effects of an aging global population," she said.

"Things like social security, access to family doctors, and government funding to provide other services no longer exist the way they once did. We have to do something different."

A Facebook page called Richmond County Music Care has been created by the group who attended training in order to share what they have learned.

The overall goal of the MBS project is keeping vulnerable seniors socially engaged for better overall health, and mutually reinforcing collaboration between supporting organizations.

Don't Forget to ask Partners and Supporters to Spread your Message

In all communities there are organizations and businesses who are happy to support community initiatives and help to get the word out.

In addition to using local media and social media, we relied on our many partners and supporters to help promote our various training opportunities, and programs offered.

Check with the seniors clubs in the area as they often have their own member email distribution list and are happy to share information when asked to help spread the message.

Local businesses are often happy to display posters on a bulletin board.

Local libraries are always great to have information available for pick up.

Our local municipality produces a quarterly newsletter and they featured something about the project in each publication.

[Click here to check out Richmond Reflections.](#)

Partners like Richmond County Literacy Network and other service providers would also share information through their networks.

The [Kingston Community Health Centre](#) featured articles in their newsletter and on the website.

RICHMOND COUNTY

MIND-BODY-SPIRIT Update

MIND-BODY-SPIRIT Project for seniors going strong in Richmond County

THE PROJECT

The overall goal of the MIND-BODY-SPIRIT Project (MBS) is to improve the mental health and quality of life for seniors in the Strath-Richmond area. The programs being developed will address key areas of mental health and addictions, with an emphasis on the important connection between social relationships, and feelings of inclusiveness within community, that lead to better health outcomes. The MBS grant is administered by the Dr. Kingston Memorial Community Health Centre (DKMCHC) and is funded by Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness and the Municipality of the County of Richmond.

UPDATES

1. An MBS Advisory Committee has been put in place to advise and provide feedback to the project team. Members help to identify opportunities, potential partnerships and champion the goals and activities of the MBS Project.
 - Dorothy Bernard (Dr. Kingston Memorial Community Health Centre)
 - Celeste Oatell (MBS Project Advisor)
 - Dianne Poirier (St. Anne Community and Nursing Care Centre)
 - Wendy Lanteman (Pudokotok Health Centre)
 - Erin Lempig (Nova Scotia Health Authority)
 - Teresa MacOlea (Adult Education/Community Development)
 - Dawn Ostrea (MBS Project Coordinator)
2. The Connecting Seniors Through Technology program is now underway. The program is for seniors to learn iPad skills in order to stay connected with family and friends via social media or other digital platforms. It is being facilitated through the Richmond County Literacy Network and has 15 participants registered.
3. In October and November two training sessions in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) were offered to 30 community members in the Strath-Richmond area. Participants now have an increased awareness of signs and symptoms of common mental health issues and confidence interacting with individuals experiencing a mental health problem or crisis.
4. Members of the project team, Dawn Ostrea and Michele MacPhee, participated in facilitator training with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) on November 27 & 28, 2017. These programs will soon be available.
 - *Foundation of Health - Optimal Aging* is an evidence-based curriculum that outlines key actions to age healthily and happily.
 - *The Art of Friendship* is a particularly helpful course for creating social connectivity in communities and offering peer support with an emphasis on maintaining good mental health.
 - *The Art of Recovery* encourages social connectivity within a group setting that focuses more specifically on using a social network to support those facing mental health struggles.
5. Several pilot sessions of the *Around the Dinner Table* program (working title) are being organized. This program will provide an opportunity for seniors to connect socially through conversations associated with the nurturing aspects of food.
6. Work is underway to develop a *Friendly Visitor's Program*. The purpose of the program is to provide friendship to seniors who would benefit from social connections through meaningful one-to-one relationships with community volunteers.
7. Dates have been set for Music Care training in the Strath-Richmond area (April 16 & 17, 2018). This two-day course will provide participants knowledge about the positive and adverse power of music in care. It will be available to health care providers as well as interested community members. More information on how to apply will be available in the new year.

To stay up to date on all these programs, as well as others provided by the DKMCHC, please visit the DKMCHC home page, go to community programs and sign up to be put on our contact list. Or get in touch with project coordinator Dawn Ostrea at mindbodyspirit@dkmchc@gmail.com.

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Health Centre Herald

Dr. Kingston Memorial
Community Health Centre

December, 2018

**Unique approach to getting seniors Around the Dinner Table
a success in Richmond County**

A new program called *Around the Dinner Table* is showing great success in addressing social isolation among seniors and building stronger social connections in Richmond County.

Twenty-two people hosted more than 100 guests at a community dinner in Louisdale, N.S. on Dec. 5, 2018. The community feast was set up with 11 tables and two hosts. Hosts invited guests they wanted to bring together to socialize. Each host was responsible for preparing the meal earlier in the day and transportation for their guests. During the dinner a loosely structured story circle was done in order to promote meaningful conversation at each table – in this case Christmas traditions.

"It was a wonderful, well-organized event with a beautiful meal and great company," dinner guest Lorraine Briand. "It was so good to hear all the stories of Christmas at the table. A thoroughly enjoyable evening!"

Debbie Sampson led organizing the event in association with the Fleur de Lis Seniors Club at the Louisdale Parish Hall.

Sampson says the *Around the Dinner Table* program is a way of putting thought into gathering socially among supportive people to share experiences and stories. And as communities change, the ability for people to reach out or ensure community members are taken care of is becoming more difficult.

"The hosts of this event did just that," she said. "It was heartwarming to see all the invites arrive and light-up with the warm welcome, a good meal as well as engaging in enthusiastic conversation on past and present Christmas traditions. Most were asking, as they were leaving, when the next event would be - a great testimony to the meaning of this event and the need for social inclusion."

The *Around the Dinner Table* concept was created under a grant administered by the Dr. Kingston Memorial Community Health Centre (DKMCHC) called the MIND-BODY-SPIRIT project, funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness and the Municipality of the County of Richmond.

Sampson took the original idea and tweaked it in a way that suited the community of Louisdale as a pilot project in May 2018. People surveyed said the event provided them with camaraderie and fellowship.

Sampson notes that during the meal preparation hosts also share a bonding experience.

Social isolation among seniors has been linked to adverse health effects comparable to smoking. Richmond County has one of the highest populations of seniors in Canada.

As the program develops it is hoped that participants from all Richmond County communities will take part. For more information about how community groups can use the *Around the Dinner Table* program please email mindbodyspirit@dkmchc@gmail.com or call the DKMCHC at 902-587-2800.

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