

A newsletter for and about  
Community Services staff

Summer 2006, Volume 2, Number 2



Building strong, healthy  
communities together

# the Outlook

An illustration of two stylized human figures in a light blue color, standing and looking through telescopes. They are positioned in front of the large word "Outlook" in the title.

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## Welcome Minister Streach!

The Department of Community Services would like to welcome the new Minister, the Honourable Judy Streach. Minister Streach represents the constituency of Chester-St. Margaret's. She was first elected to the Legislative Assembly in a by-election on June 21, 2005 and re-elected this June. Minister Streach has an Arts degree in French and English from Saint Mary's University, a teaching certificate from Nova Scotia Teachers College in Truro, and a diploma in French from L'Université du Québec à Trois Rivières. She worked as an educator for more than 15 years. She was a high school French immersion teacher at Forest Heights Community School, and was previously employed with the Halifax Regional School Board. Minister Streach has four children and lives in New Ross.

Joining Minister Streach is her Executive Assistant Allison MacLellan – Welcome Allison!



Above: the Honourable Judy Streach, Minister, Department of Community Services





## Name Change...

On January 13, the division formerly known as "Family & Children's Services/Services for Persons with Disabilities" was renamed "Family and Community Supports" (F&CS). This new division name is an effort to capture the services of the division, while streamlining the title.

All sections within the division kept their program names (i.e., Services for Persons with Disabilities, Child Welfare & Residential Services, Early Childhood Development Services, Foster Care Services, etc.) and those staff will continue to have those program names in their titles.

## Exercise - Walking What's Not to Like?

Walking conditions your heart and lungs and helps your body use oxygen more efficiently; it reduces the risk of some forms of osteoporosis and cancer, takes off fat and builds muscle, helps diabetes reduce and/or eliminate the need for medication; burns nearly as many calories as jogging but is much easier on your joints and muscles; helps alleviate stress, depression, and makes you feel and sleep better.

It also has the lowest drop-out rate of any form of exercise and great benefits - better digestion, improved regularity, lower blood pressure and it's inexpensive!

So get walking - you'll do yourself a world of good!



## Happy Retirement Shulamith !

Best wishes to Shulamith Medjuck, Senior Advisor, Federal/Provincial Social Initiatives Unit on her retirement! Shulamith served the Province for 26 years and in her capacity as lead negotiator for Nova Scotia was instrumental in successfully negotiating numerous multilateral and bi-lateral federal/provincial agreements and drafting federal/provincial reports including; Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities, the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Review of Services Affecting Canadians with Disabilities (Mainstream 1992), the Young Offenders Act, Early Childhood Development, the National Child Benefit Supplement, the N.S. Family Violence Initiative and, the Family Mosaic initiative, a 20 year acclaimed study of mothers and their children.

*We wish Shulamith all the best for a sunny retirement at her cottage in Pugwash!*



*Shulamith poses with Deputy Minister Marian Tyson during her retirement party.*

## Gail's Accomplishments:

- Chaired the Client Service Delivery Program that led to the establishment of a self service center for clients
- Worked with a community based group, using a DCS program called the Youth Development Initiative, to establish a meaningful summer entrepreneurial and community development experience for a group of youth associated with the Department
- Served on the Client Program Selection Committee of the South Shore Work Activity Program
- Worked with Verge House, a facility for special needs students, to make arrangements for five wage subsidy placements for students to gain practical work experience in the community
- Chaired the Safe Work Practices group to review and develop safe work practices that were responsive to changing work conditions



## 2005 Minister's Award for Excellence – Recipient Profile

Last October, Community Services Minister David Morse presented Gail Moore, a caseworker with the Employment Support Services (ESS) program in the Lunenburg District Office with the 2005 Minister's Award for Excellence.

Gail was recognized for demonstrating extraordinary leadership skills in her daily tasks and for the work that she willingly took on above and beyond her job description.

Gail carried a full ESS caseload while completing the course requirements for a Bachelor of Social Work degree. And, in the words of the person who nominated Gail, "She fits the description of an ideal candidate for the Minister's Award for Excellence. She is respected by staff members, management and community partners. As a frontline caseworker, Gail serves as a shining star in the department".

The DCS senior management team, along with the four other nominees and their family members gathered at the Maritime Command Museum in Halifax for a celebration lunch to honor all five nominees.

Congratulations Gail! You are most definitely an example of the type of excellence staff throughout the department display on a daily basis. We thank you for the dedication you show in service to the citizens that we serve every day.



From left-to-right: Deputy Minister Marian Tyson, Gail Moore, award recipient, and Minister David Morse.

## Minister's Awards for Excellence Contacts:

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## 2006 Minister's Award for Excellence

Every day we see staff within the Department of Community Services and the Regional Housing Authorities that go that extra mile to deliver excellent service. These are the people who, through their actions, help advance the department's vision, mission and goals.

These are also the people to consider nominating for the 2006 Minister's Award for Excellence! Please look around the department at the good work being done, and help us recognize this excellent work by completing a nomination form.

Each of the four regions and the head office will receive and review nominations from their respective areas, and will advance one final nomination each to the Minister's Selection Committee for consideration. All five nominees will be invited to attend a reception hosted by the Minister during Staff Appreciation Week in October, where one Minister's Award and four honorable mentions will be presented. The Minister will be joined by the Deputy Minister, Assistant Deputy Minister, the senior management team, the person who made the nomination and, the nominee's supervisors at this celebration.

Nomination forms, along with the criteria and answers to frequently asked questions, are available on the Community Services Intranet at:

<http://iweb.coms.gov.ns.ca/EmployeeRecognitionProgram.htm>

If you have questions about this process, please speak to your manager or contact your local Employee Recognition Program Action Team Co-chair.

## New Child Restraint Legislation

Effective January 1, 2007, the Province of Nova Scotia will adopt new regulations to ensure that children are in the appropriate child restraint system. Criteria based on age, height and weight are incorporated in the regulations which will determine whether a child should be placed in a rear facing seat, forward facing seat or booster seat.

These new regulations may have an impact on the programs and services supported by our department or by affiliated agencies and boards. The regulations can be found at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations/rg2/2005/de0905.pdf>.





## 7th Annual Curling Tournament Fun spiel

Digby District Office made quite a 'sweep' when it came to awards at the annual Fun spiel hosted by the Yarmouth District Office in March. They took honors for Honesty, Creativity, Great Falls and Best Button Shot.

Team names included — Four sheets to the Win, Broads and Brooms, and Allsorts!

## Nova Scotia Early Learning and Child Care Plan

Nova Scotia's Early Learning and Child Care plan was announced in May. The plan is worth approximately \$130 million and will help create about 1000 additional child care spaces; establish family home daycare; create 550 portable subsidized spaces; increase funding for children with special needs to enable about 530 more children to be served; and provide funding for repairs, renovations, energy and accessibility upgrades.

## Regional Roundup

### Central

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In February, the Sackville District Office moved to their new location in the recently constructed Cobequid Community Health Centre. Though only a few blocks from their old location, this new facility provides an environment that benefits both staff and clients with improved work areas, interview rooms and waiting areas. The Centre houses a range of health and social services, including some of Community Service's partners such as the IWK Community Mental Health. Having these resources in the medical facility provides a non-stigmatizing environment for clients and provides a holistic approach to client service.

### Western

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#### Yarmouth District Office supports the Y!

Friday the 13th was not an unlucky day for six staff at the Yarmouth District Office. They pooled together to buy a lottery ticket and won \$1000 in the YMCA weekly lottery! The YMCA supports programs for families in the Yarmouth area.

### Northern

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#### New Appointment to Guysborough District Office

Congratulations to Allan W. Best, who joined the Guysborough District as a Senior Caseworker — ESIA in May.

A Portfolio Development Workshop started in May and ran weekly until the end of June. The workshop was designed to assist clients and staff in the development of their portfolios. The first workshop presented to seven clients and one staff member. Facilitators were Patricia A. MacDonald, Guysborough District Office, and Kim Hodgkinson, Antigonish District Office.

#### Case Documentation Training in the Northern Region

In April, 83 Social Workers, Care Co-coordinators and Supervisors from the Northern Region attended Case Management Documentation training at the Stellarton Campus of the Nova Scotia Community College. The training was co-facilitated by Carol MacLellan, Eastern Region Specialist and Lisa Richardson, Social Worker, Colchester Children's Aid Society. A panel presentation was made by Elizabeth Vanden Eyden, Legal Counsel for Pictou Children's Aid Society; Lynn Cheek, Coordinator of Program Evaluation and Valorie Rule, Psychologist/Assessor. The training was well received and further training is planned for this fall



## Client Service Advisory Committee

With a successful Expression of Interest completed and a new logo to help identify the work that lies ahead, members of the new Client Service Advisory Committee met in Sydney on June 27 for the first quarterly meeting. Bringing front line staff, managers and technical support together, with representation from across the departments, regions and programs areas, was an important and exciting first step.

Committee members discussed the need to represent their respective team views about possible client service improvement activities. They also spent time discussing the committee's role in helping to identify and recognize the good client service that is so prevalent across the province.

Although in its very early days, the group is committed to learning more about a rigorously researched and well tested client service model that focuses on five proven indicators of client satisfaction: timeliness of response; access to knowledgeable staff; courtesy; fairness; and outcome. Focusing on how the model developed by the Institute for Citizen-Centered Services ([www.iccs-isac.org/eng/cf-00.htm](http://www.iccs-isac.org/eng/cf-00.htm)) can be helpful to the department will be a key part of the work as we move forward.

Also discussed was the best way to roll out a department-wide client suggestion box program and other methods of seeking client feedback. Efforts that are currently underway to improve departmental signage were addressed, and a joint initiative with the Ombudsman's Office to review concerns of DCS clients. All agreed that communication will be key and within a few weeks staff will be able to learn about these and other initiatives on a new Client Service intranet at <http://iweb.coms.gov.ns.ca/files/welcome.htm>, a new desk top publication and in future issues of Outlook. Watch for details and contact your team representative with your feedback!!

## Oxfam Canada Thanks Community Services Staff

Oxfam Canada presented this plaque to Community Services as a thank you for supporting the Tsunami Relief Fund Raiser during February 2005's casual Thursdays. Community Services staff raised \$1023.95!



Possible events that could cause an emergency, include, but are not limited to, the following:

#### **Public health outbreaks**

- such as influenza pandemic

#### **Loss of utilities/systems**

- power
- water
- telecommunications

#### **Intentional vindictive acts**

- fire caused by arson

#### **Vandalism**

#### **Accidents**

- chemical spills
- hazardous leaks
- fire

#### **Acts of Nature**

- floods
- hurricanes
- earthquakes

#### **Terrorism**

## **DCS Business Continuity Plan**

The Department of Community Services is undertaking a strategic initiative to develop a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) that will be used to enable the department to continue to provide essential services in the event of an incident, emergency or a disaster. The departmental BCP would be activated, where the operation of one or more of our offices, is affected.

During emergency situations, it is unlikely that all departmental services provided would be immediately required. The Department of Community Services' BCP will be designed to identify primary services and then profile the most essential ones like the "Mission Critical Activities." We will be concentrating on ensuring that the essential services have the necessary contingencies in place, so that essential sections of our business can either continue through an emergency or resume expeditiously after an event.

A well developed BCP will ensure continuation of critical services for the citizens of Nova Scotia, regardless of the event.

Departmental business continuity planning is a priority of government, with each department being responsible for developing a BCP.

John Webb, Director of Emergency Social Services, has been assigned as Project Coordinator, Department of Community Services Business Continuity Planning. Project consultants are Susan Logue, Phil Warren, Judy LaPierre, and Wendy Keen. Nancy Carr and Joyce Crowell are providing administrative support to this initiative. In addition, other key personnel will be assigned to this initiative from Regional and District Offices and Head Office Program/Support areas as part of their present work duties.

*BCP Team members >*



## Deputy's Comments on NAOSH

I am very pleased to announce that the Department of Community Services was awarded the 2006 North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Award in the "Large Organizations" category for the development and implementation of our departmental Office Security Manual.

Under the guidance of the OHS Coordinating Committee, the Office Security Manual was a joint effort between management and staff. On behalf of the Department of Community Services, I would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank all past and present members of the Coordinating Committee, the Workplace Violence Sub-Prevention Committees, and all those who were involved with the successful creation and roll-out of this manual. This document positions the department as a leader in the field of workplace violence prevention.

This award exemplifies the Department of Community Services' commitment to the health, safety and well-being of its employees and the clients we serve.

Best wishes for a safe summer!



Marian F. Tyson, Q.C.  
Deputy Minister  
Department of Community Services



## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

We welcome your comments, input and story ideas! Please contact your Advisory Committee representative or the editor and help keep us all better informed!

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