

## Checking in

Welcome to *The Wellness Weaver*!

I hope the arrival of this edition of our newsletter provides you with an opportunity to pause—to check in with our network by way of reading an article, or clicking a link to see what we've been up to collectively, or as individual member organizations and community groups.

Despite , or maybe because of all that is going on around us, there's still great things happening to create community health and well-being.

-Heather, Co-chair



## Meet Our Members



A warm welcome to our most recent members...

[Town of Paradise \(Recreation & Community Services\)](#)

[Local Wellness Collective Association](#)

[Rewild Wellness](#)

[Gonzaga High School](#)

[Queen Elizabeth Regional High School](#)

[St. Edward's School](#)

To see who else is a member and perhaps find a potential wellness partner visit the [membership listing](#) on our website.

## What's Inside?

Project Spotlight: Seniors Get Active for Life

October 2020 Grant Recipients

Meet Worker Bee: Susan Barry

Community gardening catalysts for change

St. John's Food Assessment



**Join our Facebook group!** Connect with other Wellness Coalition-Avalon East members, share what you're doing and find out about resources in our members-only group. [Click here](#) to find us and join the 85 members already



[hi.easternhealth.ca](http://hi.easternhealth.ca)

## Wellness Grants Project Spotlight

### Seniors Get Active for Life

*-based on project report by Robyn Dobbin*

In the Fall of 2019, a group of 50-plus adults living in St. John's decided to get Active for Life!

Active for Life is a progressive fitness program designed to improve balance and strength while focusing on falls prevention. The program, offered by the [City of St. John's Recreation Division](#) was held at the Southlands Community Centre.

"I had to use my cane as an aid to walk around the gym when I first started the program and I just completed four laps without using it at all."

The main goal of Active for Life was to provide educational opportunities on falls prevention through exercises and guest speakers. In addition, healthy nutritional information was provided during social time at the end of each class.

Classes were broken down into three phases, allowing participants to progress appropriately based on their fitness levels. Physical literacy and the fundamental movements of throwing, kicking, and balancing were the foundation for many of the exercises. A favourite part of class that encouraged participants to indulge their inner child was at the end when games such as soccer, basketball, and obstacle courses were presented.

Over the course of the program staff and participants were able to see significant progression in both energy and fitness levels, which in turn contributed to them completing activities of daily living with more confidence.

Partners for the project included Seniors NL, NL Housing, Eastern Health, and Government of Newfoundland & Labrador who contributed by providing presentations, marketing, funding & educational materials for distribution.

The funding provided by the Wellness Coalition-Avalon East gave the opportunity for participants from around the metro area, who would normally not be able to attend due to transportation barriers, to do so with ease.

Active for Life is still offered at the Southlands Community Centre and has expanded to the Kenmount Terrace Community Centre. For more information on this program please call 576-8490 or 576-8411.

### Congratulations Fall 2020 Grant Recipients

- City of St. John's Recreation: Seniors Outreach Programming
- Hazelwood Elementary: Mindfulness Reading Corner
- Kilbride to Ferryland Family Resource Coalition: Pre/Post Natal Mind and Body Wellness Group
- MacMorran Community Centre: Newcomer Engagement
- Newtown Elementary: Outdoor Learning
- Paradise Elementary: Outdoor Physical Education Learning Environment
- Planned Parenthood NLSHC: Gender Affirming Gear Exchange
- Rennie's River Elementary: Outdoor Learning Space
- St. Bernard's Elementary: Sensory Walkway
- Upper Gullies Elementary: UGE Playground Enhancement

Next application **deadline:**

**February 1, 2021**

More info and application at:

[wellnesscoalition-avaloneast.ca](http://wellnesscoalition-avaloneast.ca)

## Wellness Coalition-Avalon East Highlights

### Networking in Nature

by participant Christine Hennebury, [Association for the Arts in Mount Pearl](#)



Members of the WCAE were literally walking their talk at the Networking in Nature event on October 23, 2020. Not only did we network while moving but instead of just talking about wellness, we added to our own wellbeing by connecting with other people, spending time outdoors, getting some exercise, being mindful, and exploring our creativity - all at one event!

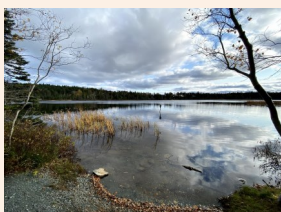
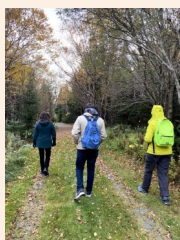
Our leader, Jessica Spooner of [Rewild Wellness](#), guided us along the trail at [MUN Botanical Garden](#) on a beautiful, if slightly chilly, Friday afternoon, inviting us to make the most of our time together. After a brief walk, we paused to connect with nature through a mindfulness activity that focused on our senses and brought us even more into the moment we were sharing.

After that moment of connection, we were given prompts to consider as we walked in reflective silence toward our next stop. The small group conversations that arose during the activity around those prompts were passionate and engaging, as if we had taken a shortcut into a more meaningful connection with the other participants.

After those deep conversations, Jessica lightened the mood by inviting us to share our 6 word autobiography for the past year. The smiles and nods as each person took their turn demonstrated that we are all in the same book, even if we aren't always on the same page.

Our final stop on our hike was at an outlook where we were served some spruce tea and we shared our takeaways from the event. It was the perfect conclusion to a unique and wonderful afternoon of connection and wellness.

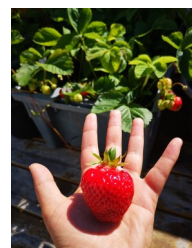
Thanks to Jessica for creating a welcoming and open atmosphere for us to relax and enjoy the company and the conversation.



### Gardeners Participate in #groWCAE Campaign

As a way to virtually connect and to celebrate the growing interest in gardening of all kinds this summer, our coalition launched our first ever Facebook campaign—#groWCAE. This was an opportunity for members to showcase a variety of flowers, fruit, vegetables, or trees growing in their backyard or community gardens.

The campaign took place from July to October, with all those who posted being entered to win a gardening prize pack consisting of a gift certificate from The Seed Company, watering can, seeds packet, and gloves. [Congratulations to MUN Student Wellness and Counselling Centre](#) for their post from Emily Gatehouse. Check out the pictures below to see what members grew. Thanks to everyone who participated. Happy growing!



## Wellness Around the Region

### Community Gardening: A catalyst for change in CBS

-by Sarah Burton



If this year has taught us anything, it is that together we are stronger. Even though COVID-19 has changed all our lives, it has shown us the importance of traveling together instead of alone. We would like to share a great story of a community group that continues to demonstrate how strong and successful we are when we work together.

Community gardening has the potential to offer a range of benefits to individuals, families, communities and the environment. Benefits include eating fresh local vegetables and fruit, physical activity, mental health, shared learning, improving food security, inclusion and community connections.

The [Town of Conception Bay South](#) (CBS) empowers and engages their residents through community led initiatives, like the CBS Community Garden. This group is supported by the town but led completely by volunteer community members. The CBS Community Garden (CG) committee came together to promote sustainability and food security, to share skills and knowledge, to encourage healthy eating, and to foster community spirit in beautiful CBS.

The CG committee began their first development in [Spring 2019](#), The Gateway Garden. This primary garden, located off Legion Road, is the hub for community events and educational activities such as workshops and garden tours for community groups like Sparkes and Scouts. Check out the [CBS Community Garden Network YouTube](#) channel for recorded workshops!

The [CBS Community Garden](#) goal for 2020 was to expand to other neighbourhoods in the town, and they have done that ... and more! Through community consultation, this group created three new partnerships, increased resident and volunteer engagement, improved walking trails in the town and constructed a greenhouse and garden at the Manuels River Interpretation Centre.

During the ribbon cutting event for the greenhouse, a CBS CG Committee member stated "It is such a powerful thing when groups and individuals can come together in the spirit of community. The bigger the collaboration the more deeply it is rooted in our community and the bigger impact it will have."

The Wellness Coalition Avalon East values and recognize the contributions of all our community groups, municipalities, schools and businesses in promoting health and wellness. We thank you all for being innovators and catalysts for change.

### Did you know?

Over the next year, [Food First NL](#) is leading a [St. John's Food Assessment](#). Our goal is to engage with community members, inform people and policy makers, and help everyone take action on food. By involving community members and stakeholders, this process helps us take on complex issues by working together and using our strengths. Here's one way folks can get involved:



- **Eat the City!** This series of webinars, meetings, and online stories will help us **better understand food system issues**. Take part in an [upcoming event](#) or share your food story! Participants will have access to resources on 'how to host' an event, and support from Food First NL.



**Interested in hosting an event, giving a tour, or sharing a story?** Find more information at [foodstjohns.ca](#) or contact Sarah Crocker, project coordinator at 237-4026 or [sarahcrocker@foodfirstnl.ca](mailto:sarahcrocker@foodfirstnl.ca)

## Our Steering Committee— the worker bees behind the scenes



This is our Worker Bees series, where we highlight a member of our steering committee. The steering committee members, with the support of their organizations, give their time to promote the wellness coalition and make sure everything runs smoothly.

### Meet Susan Barry.

**What group, organization or sector do you represent on the Steering Committee?** I represent Eastern Health and the NL English School District. I work as a [School Health Promotion Liaison Consultant](#) (SHPLC) from the Department of Population and Public Health. I've been working in this position since finishing my Master of Public Health in Nutrition Dietetics in September 2019. I'm also a Registered Dietitian and I love running, travelling and good food!

**Tell us about your work** The SHPLC connects the health and education system in order to support the [Healthy Students Healthy Schools](#) initiative. We work to incorporate the Comprehensive School Health framework into our projects with schools which includes four key components teaching and learning, policy, social and physical environment, and partnerships and services. While working to reduce barriers, facilitate partnerships, increase access to services, provide education opportunities for students, staff, and parents, we are dedicated to supporting school communities and enhancing their school health environment. Since beginning in this role, I've developed a strong appreciation for the impact of school health as it supports students to learn positive health and wellness behaviours for life.

**What are the benefits of being involved with the WCAE?** The Wellness Coalition Avalon East (WCAE) supports the components of Comprehensive School Health through funding opportunities and developing new partnerships. For example, the WCAE grants allow our schools to form creative new ideas on how they can improve their social or physical environments and use the funding to purchase new equipment or items to enhance their spaces that facilitate wellness. They also require schools to partner with at least one external group to participate in the grants which develops strong, lasting partnerships with municipalities, community groups, or other schools.

For myself, the greatest benefit of my involvement with the WCAE has been networking. This group has given me the opportunity to meet and engage with members of different organizations I wouldn't typically cross paths with. It's created strong connections and allowed me to stay up to date with all the fantastic work going on in our region related to health and wellness. The steering committee has been a new leadership opportunity where I sit on sub-committees and assist in organizing WCAE initiatives/events. I've been able to work with a strong, welcoming team and I look forward to all we'll continue to accomplish together.

## Wellness Coalition-Avalon East Steering Committee

### Contact Coalition Co-chairs if you have any questions, ideas or comments:

Heather Powell, Co-Chair, Health Promotion, Eastern Health 752-4912 or heather.powell@easternhealth.ca

Vacant, Co-chair, Community Organization

Bruce Knox, City of St. John's

Yamuna Kutty, Multi-Cultural Women's Organization NL

Jennifer Clarke, Public Health Nursing, Eastern Health

Sarah Burton, Health Promotion, Eastern Health

Susan Barry, Eastern Health/NL English School District

Jim Crockwell, MacMorran Community Centre

Ashley Crocker, Health Promotion, Eastern Health