



# Chebucto Family Centre

A Service of the Home of the Guardian Angel

*Annual General Report - April 1, 2015 – March 31, 2016*



## ***Our Mission:***

***To nurture and enhance the quality of life of families through the delivery of community based programs and services.***

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## Executive Director Report 2015-2016

Chebucto Family Centre continues its contribution in building a strong and healthy community. We do this through the delivery of quality programs, supports and services for all family members.

During the past year we continued to build on our past growth and accomplishments:

- We were the recipients of the ***Parenting Journey program***, funded through the Department of Community Services. The program aims to provide individual strength based supports for families.
- Chebucto Family Centre ***expanded the Youth and Community Program***, hiring a full-time staff dedicated to increasing programs and engagement.
- In ***partnership with the IWK Young Mothers Project*** we were able to offer mental health services to young women aged 17-23, on-site, removing the barriers of child care, stigma, transportation and long wait times.
- We received ***increased funding from Sisters of Charity*** in February 2016, enabling us to support more community members in way of food security, basic need items, and bus tickets.
- This year we ***increased our fundraising efforts*** through a new initiative, our Community Craft Market that took place in November, 2015 and was a great success.

In conclusion, we wish to thank our many funders and partners who provide us with the means to deliver valuable programming, supports and services to the community of Spryfield and beyond. A sincere thank you goes out to our amazing staff and board members for their commitment and dedication in making this a successful year. ***Together, we continue to nurture and enhance the quality of life, and are building stronger communities!***

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Turple, Executive Director

Eileen Pelham, President

## Finance Committee Report

As per the unaudited financial statements, the Home of the Guardian Angel (HGA) came in above budget this past 2015-2016 fiscal year.

Annual revenue came in over budget by ~\$15K (adjusted to exclude Province NS Home Daycare Subsidy). This was primarily driven by an increase in fundraising and a few other small sources. Special thanks to the Executive Director and staff of HGA who diligently pursued all available options for funding.

Annual expenses came in over budget by ~\$1.5K (adjusted to exclude Child Daycare expenses which are subsidized). Additional expenses were offset by relief in other areas. There is nothing out of the ordinary to report regarding expenses.

**At the end of the year, HGA saw a surplus of just under \$3K, beating the \$9K deficit which was budgeted.** HGA is in a strong position to continue its growth with community programs and support. The budget for the upcoming year has been prepared based on trends we saw this past year, along with adjustments to changes in funding that are expected (new Parenting Journey funding, and slight increase in Family Home Daycare funding).

The 2016-17 budget has been completed and approved by the Board of Directors.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucas Rowicki, MBA, CPA, CMA  
Chair, Finance Committee

## Personnel and Management Committee Report 2015-2016

The focus of the Committee's work this year was to complete the update of the Personnel Policy Manual of the Agency, in order to ensure the policies were up to date, and in keeping with current legislative requirements and employment practices.

The ***completed and updated policy was approved by the Board*** after final review in the fall of 2015.

We also regretfully bid goodbye to committee member Carol Fardy who left the Board last year.

### **From the Committee,**

Dale Darling, Chair

Members:

Karen Burke

Tammy Turple

## Fundraising Committee Report 2015-2016

### Committee Members:

Jim Evans (chair)

Pat Lefebvre

Eileen Pelham

Eileen Pelham

Tammy Turple (ex officio)

Erin Bleasdale



Comedy for Community event featured James Uloth and Steve Mazan and was held on May 7, 2015. The event was attended by approximately 225 people, raising \$10,094.00. A special thank you to the many businesses and individuals who donated silent auction items, Moosehead for donating beer and Scotiabank for their continued sponsorship.

A Fundraising Committee was formed following the success of this event. It was decided that a similar fundraiser for 2015-16 would be held at the Bella Rose Theatre once again. We look forward to starting to plan for the next event.

### **New Initiatives**

This year, members of the board teamed up with staff of Chebucto Family Centre and community members to support their new initiative, a Community Craft Market. The board provided baked items for the November Craft Market. The event proved to be successful with 18 local vendors and close to 100 community members in attendance. A spring time Community Craft Market is now being planned.



It is only with the combined effort of staff, board members, volunteers and community partners that our fundraising events continue to be successful. We look forward to our future partnering and in bringing long term financial security to Chebucto Family Centre: A Service of the Home of the Guardian Angel.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jim Evans, Chair

## Nominating/By-Laws Committee Report 2015-2016

### **Committee Members:**

Alyson Hillier                      Karen Burke  
Rena Maguire                      Eileen Pelham  
Lorraine d'Entremont, SC, Chair

**By- Laws** - No by-law changes were needed this year.

**Board membership:** Board membership has been consistent this past year, with some changes.

In fall 2015, we welcomed Diane Wooden. Four members whose first term expires in 2016 offered to serve for another term. They are: Jim Evans, Pat LeFebvre, Alyson Hillier and Lucas Rowicki.

Karen Burke completes her second term this year, and according to by-laws, she cannot serve for a third consecutive term. During her two terms, Karen has taken the roles of secretary, president and past-president, and has contributed in numerous ways to Home of the Guardian Angel/Chebucto Family Center. *We thank Karen for her generous and effective service and reluctantly say good-bye.*

At this meeting, we welcome Erin Brown as a new Board member for a 2016 - 2019 term.

While we have an adequate number of Board members, at the time of this report, two unfilled positions remain. ***We will continue to search for new Board members.***

Submitted by:

Lorraine d'Entremont, SC  
Nominating Committee Chair

## Staff Listing

Tammy Turple	Executive Director
Deborah Hutchinson	Office Administrator
Andrea Hutchinson	Centre Coordinator
Nicole Clarke	Family Wellness Coordinator
Theresa Banks-Rex	Community Home Visitor
Sarah Hicks	Community Home Visitor
Erin Fair	Volunteer Doula Program Coordinator
Erinn Baillie	Volunteer Doula Program Assistant
Jane Hall	Family Home Daycare Consultant
Erinn Baillie	Youth and Community Outreach
Krista Greencorn/Taylor Gear/ Megan Finlay	Program Assistant
Ginny Hennigar	Playroom Facilitator
Josie Webster	Parenting Journey
Kira Kelly	Parenting Educator
Trena Slaunwhite-Gallant	Prenatal/Postnatal Support Worker
Sylvia Sullivan	Volunteer

***“Unity is strength...when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved” - Mattie Stepanek***

## Board of Directors 2015-2016

Eileen Pelham – ***President***

Pat Lefebvre – ***Vice –President***

Lucas Rowicki – ***Treasurer***

Tammy Moffatt – ***Secretary***

Sister Lorraine d’Entremont ***Ex-Officio***

Tammy Turple –***Executive Director***

Rena Maguire

Karen Burke

Dale Darling

Diane Wooden

Jim Evans

Alyson Hillier

Erin Bleasdale

## Community Programming 2015-2016

This has been a wonderful year here at Chebucto Family Centre as we continue to help more and more families. One way that we have expanded our support is through ***an increased supply of basic needs assistance***. This includes such things as bus tickets for people to attend necessary medical and legal appointments, assistance with personal care and hygiene items, as well as increasing the emergency food supply we have on hand. ***We are now able to offer fresh foods, meats and dairy***, rather than just canned and dry goods.

We have also continued with many of our well attended programs from previous years. ***Community Kitchen*** is great for bringing people together over cooking a meal. ***Girl talk*** allows women who may not otherwise know each other to connect over some interesting discussion in a safe space. ***Infant Massage*** offers a way for new parents to get out and connect with other new parents, and the babies seem so relaxed and content afterward. ***Community Drop-in*** is always popular and continues to be a great first introduction to the centre. It gives families a chance to connect with staff and other users of the centre and is often accompanied by a tour and information about our other programs and resources. ***Spry Café*** continues to be an opportunity for community members to gather and enjoy a meal together, at no cost to them. We would like to thank our sponsors of the past years meals: Corporate Research Associates, M&M Meat Shops, the MSVU Residence Life Team, Scotiabank Call Centre, the CFC Board of Directors, Uncle Buck's, and the 'Chickmas' group (who did 2 meals for us this year!). All their support is very much appreciated.

***Our yoga and Zumba classes are still some of our busiest times.*** People love to come together to better their physical selves, as well as enjoy some relaxation. Our participants are of all ages and physical abilities and are quite supportive of each other. Following the classes we always gather for a little social time and a snack.

We also offer many 'one off' programs, these are welcomed by our participants. Programs offered range from learning opportunities; such as ***First Aid Training***, to celebrations; such as our ***Halloween Party, Mother's Day Gathering***, or the ***Advent Spiral*** that we have each year in December. In addition, this past year we have also had community walks, an Earth Day gathering, an Ice Cream Social, community breakfasts, and Drop & Shop, which we do in December to give people the chance to get some of their 'Santa shopping' done.

***We continue to partner with the Chebucto Community Health Team in offering a few programs every year.*** This past year we had 'My Child is Anxious, Should I Worry?', 'Building Better Sleep', 'Making the Most of Your Food Dollar' to name a few. We also partnered with Credit Counselling Services of Canada to offer a budgeting workshop and The Sambro Loop Dance Academy to offer children's dance classes. The Residence Life Team at Mount Saint Vincent University put on a movie night and invited users of our centre to attend. ***It is always nice to have collaborations, as it allows us to broaden the scope of the programs we are able to offer.***

Understanding that many of our participants do not get the chance for much 'me time' we also offered programs such as Nails and Nurture, where the opportunity was given to give themselves manicures, have social time and just have a chance to nurture themselves with some wellness activities. Along the same lines we offered Color and Chat a couple times over the year. The coloring is a nice addition to the chatting as people tend to open up a little more with the distraction.

After some challenges, we continue to move forward with our mural. Between staff and help from community members, we hope to have it finished and in place over the summer. I think it is really going to help with our visibility in the community.

Lastly, we were sad to have our long time volunteer Sylvia Sullivan retire this spring. She was always such a joy to have helping out at the centre, whether in the playroom, helping with other special events, or even sending cookies along when she wasn't able to be here. She will be missed by both the staff and the many families she came in contact with over the years.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrea Townsend  
Centre Coordinator

## Early Childhood Program 2015-2016

The early childhood program at Chebucto Family Centre exists both as a support for programs and as a service to the community. ***Throughout the course of each week, free childcare and a nutritious snack are provided to families who attend parenting courses and wellness events at the centre.*** Infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school aged children are welcomed into the playroom where they are cared for, nurtured, and engaged in playful learning experiences with trained staff, students and volunteers. During the Monday morning Community Drop-in Program, families come together to play, socialize and get to know the caregivers. This is especially important for new families to build a trusting relationship.

Throughout the spring and fall seasons, families who have limited access to group care experiences for their children are invited to apply for a space in the early learning programs designed for 3-4 year olds, (“Playschool”) and 4-5 year olds school readiness program (“Pre-school”). All of these programs have been full to capacity. They are designed and led by the playroom facilitator and assisted by support staff &/or practicum students.

***There has been much growth in programming to meet the needs of our families.*** Consequently the need for childcare has grown as well. Most noticeably over the past year, there has been an increase in the frequency of individual family appointments through the Family Wellness Coordinator, Parenting Journey and support to the Young Mothers project.

A big component of our community based service work is providing practicum positions for post- secondary education students. ***This year we had 4 Mount Saint Vincent University students successfully complete their practicum with us.*** Students are given the opportunity to practice their professional childcare skills as well as become aware of the many ways our organization works to provide a diversity of services to the community. We also mentored two J.L.Isley high school students in their Options & Opportunities program and 1 student from Eastern College.

***A huge thank you goes out to our dedicated volunteer, Sylvia Sullivan.*** Sylvia was a positive presence in the playroom every week for more than three years. Because of her help, we were able to reduce the number of times we needed to call on staff assistance. She also volunteered her time for childcare during the monthly Doula in-services. We will miss her greatly, and send best wishes for a long and healthy retirement. ***We are pleased to welcome Geri Burke, a new volunteer.*** Geri is able to join us on Thursday mornings to help out in the playroom during the busy fitness for parents program.

The childcare staff plays an integral role during special events at the centre. We team up with the rest of the staff to provide activities and/or childcare during seasonal activities like our annual back to school party, Ice Cream Social, Welcoming Newcomers to Canada event etc. The playroom is made available to support the evening Incredible Years program for parents with school aged children. Except during winter months, our fenced play yard is available during regular business hours for families to use.

Literacy and language development continues to be an integral part of everyday play at CFC. We sing, talk, dance, read stories, tell stories, “write” stories, say rhymes, act out finger plays, draw, color, paint, etc.. We have 9 “circle time” activity boxes (Tote Tales), as well as a wide selection of children’s books, a binder of flannel board stories and poems, and puzzles for every age group.

***The main goal for the 2015-2016 year was to upgrade the outdoor play area to provide year-round accessibility and egress (fire escape route), and attractive for a wider range of age groups, thus increasing the opportunities for physical play.*** A source of funding had been identified, and a 3 stage plan was being developed with input from staff. Unfortunately we were unable to meet this goal as we were not successful in our application for funding. We are still working on securing funding to fix the fence. Panels in the fence that have blown over in the wind have been repaired and the gate changed to swing outward for easier snow removal and safer egress in the event of a need to evacuate the building.

Another goal is to find a way to continue to support the monthly Doula in-services by providing childcare and program support.

Thank you to Tammy Turple, E.D. and the Board of Directors, and the Sisters of Charity for your ongoing support and dedication to the families we serve.

Sincerely,

Ginny Hennigar,  
Playroom Facilitator,  
Chebucto Family Center

***A letter from a playschool parent (Fall 2015)***

“Dear Ginny,

With my husband having just been posted away, my best friend having moved to the valley recently and my son being the loveable handful that he is, this fall would have been very overwhelming without Wednesday and Friday mornings to give me a break. I’m a stay at home mother at first, but a stay at home potter as well. A full, uninterrupted hour and a half to create without worrying about a toddler has been amazing for my mental stability. A year ago I was going through a stint of depression and was worried that it might settle in again this fall, but thanks in part to you and the Chebucto Family Center it hasn’t.

My son has a bit of a language delay and this experience was amazing for him in so many ways. Not only does he want to go hang out with “the kids” every time we pass by your building, he has gotten experience talking to other adults and kids his age and that has been great for his language skills. We’ve been on the waiting list now for the speech and language folks and have finally gotten an appointment.

I just wanted to say how grateful we both are for this experience. Keep up the great work, as I’m sure there are other families that need this program as much or more than we did.”

## Family Wellness 2015-2016

The Family Wellness Coordinator Position (FWC) is celebrating its' first full Fiscal Year.

In essence, the FWC service was created to provide a full-time presence where community members could access a consistent platform of support by way of advocacy, community linkages and referrals, information sharing and other services in the name of wellness. ***Service delivery is done using a strength-based approach in an effort to assist people to overcome personal and lifestyle barriers.***

Out of the 80 plus people that took advantage of the FWC, over 450 services were delivered. The most common services solicited were concerning family dynamics and the impact life challenges and barriers placed upon family relationships. Another common need was practical support around food security and transportation, as well as emotional and social wellness.

These services, amongst others were delivered at times to people who were transient, in crisis, and/or became part of a case management.

***An increase in attending Family Court Matters with parents/caregivers experiencing Child Protection Services involvement saw an acknowledgement of Chebucto Family Centre's presence and support by Judges and Nova Scotia Legal Aid Lawyers.***

In addition to the above noted services, I also facilitated programs in partnership with our Parenting Educator, in areas of trauma, parenting, emotional and social wellness, and budgeting. I also facilitated reiki and yoga.

***A significant working relationship was formed this past year with the Young Mothers Project (YMP) through the IWK.*** The YMP is an initiative to provide individual and group support to expecting or present mother's up to age 24 of children up to age 3. Psychiatrist, Dr Joanne MacDonald and Social Work Therapist Coleen Flynn led such initiative and we hope to carry on such connections into the future.

I continue to be grateful for employment with the Chebucto Family Centre and to the people I share my work space with.

Sincerely,

Nicole Clarke  
Family Wellness Coordinator

## Youth Programming 2015-2016

Our monthly Youth Drop-In program began in February 2015 and has remained strong. This is a partnership with Family SOS, who offer a similar program. Together, we are able to provide a Friday evening youth drop-in twice a month. **The program is a success, with attendance ranging from 7 youth to 26 youth.** We utilize our existing partnerships with Rockingstone Heights School, the Captain William Spry Public Library, and other organizations in the area to advertise. ***CFC Youth Night received a Participaction/Coca Cola Teen Physical Activity Grant for \$500. In January 2016, we were awarded funding from the Chebucto West Community Health Board to further support our program.***

April 2015 - Bowling  
May 2015 - Ultimate Frisbee & BBQ  
June 2015 - Art & BBQ  
September 2015 - BBQ & Karaoke  
November 2015 - Breakdancing  
December 2015 - Holiday Party & Craft  
January 2015 - Bowling  
February 2016 - Glow-in-the-Dark Yoga  
March 2016 - Sports at Rockingstone Gym



In December 2015, we asked the youth to complete a short survey about their experiences at the youth drop-in. The feedback was very positive and indicated an interest and a need for more youth programming in the area. I have included quotes from these surveys:

“It’s all about having fun.”

“Best part of CFC Youth Night? Everything and the people running it.”

“Best part of CFC Youth Night? Seeing my friends and the activities.”

“You guys are the best for coming up with youth night.”



In addition to our drop-in night, we expanded our youth programming to include March Break activities. Five youth joined us for a trip to Clay Cafe, where each youth chose their own clay figurine and decorated it. We also enjoyed an afternoon of cooking, where the youth made tacos, chocolate chip cookies and smoothies.

I look forward to the new opportunities that will arise as we continue to build our relationship with youth in the community and develop stronger partnerships with other youth-focused organizations.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Erinn Baillie

## Community Outreach 2015-2016

Chebucto Family Centre participated in the 2015 100in1day Festival, with a **free outdoor Zumba** class. We saw great attendance from both staff and community members. Staff members from Chebucto Family Centre were present at the **In The Loop Summer Celebration** in July, as well as the **Breastfeeding Family Fair** in October, handing out stickers and sharing information about the centre. We created a float for the **Spryfield Santa Claus Parade** and were joined by centre participants and local youth for a great afternoon.

I continue to represent the centre at the Eastern Chebucto Hub Organization meetings, Family Support Team Meetings, and at the Multiservice Roundtable. In 2016, we were also invited to join the Community Food Network, later renamed the Food Action Network of Spryfield. I will represent Chebucto Family Centre at these meetings in the future.



Respectfully submitted,

Erinn Baillie  
Youth & Community Outreach Coordinator



## Parenting Program 2015-2016

***Transformation and Growth have been the primary themes for the Parenting Educator Program.*** We welcomed back long-time staff person, Kira Kelly, and said grateful farewells to her Leave Placement; Crystal John. After over half a decade of service, we said a heartfelt goodbye and best wishes to Kira Kelly, to which we eagerly welcomed Josie Webster. And in that transformation we are now fortunate to have Sabah Randell on board until Josie's return!

And the change doesn't stop there! ***Department of Community Services, Early Intervention and Prevention afforded Family Resource Centres funding to implement Parenting Journey, of which we rolled into in November 2015.*** It has been a smooth transition for us, as we were essentially delivering the core principles and practices under the Parenting Educator role. With the emphasis on the holistic needs of the family in the name of parenting, we are excited to now operate from an in-depth framework. We are grateful to the Department of Community Services for their support and invaluable training opportunities.

Under the umbrella of Parenting Educator, as well as Parenting Journey, ***over 52 families have been case managed and supported*** for the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year. In addition, countless families have been educated and supported with services. Alongside individual support services, highlights of the group programs implemented are as follows, ***Incredible Years***; a Parenting Program for Toddlers and Preschoolers, ***Support and Healing***; a group for those who have had or currently have involvement with Child Protection, as well as the formation of a ***Daddy Group***; a social time for fathers and their children. The Parenting Educator also took the lead initiative on securing funding and resources for a Community Mural that will soon be installed on the outside of our building for all to enjoy!

***Parenting Journey is a strength-based service where families' strengths are acknowledged, respected and utilized as a platform of growth in their chosen learning experiences.*** This flexible and responsive program works collaboratively with families, building supportive relationships while identifying strengths and priorities to address. The Parenting Journey program allows for long-term engagement to support the ever-evolving needs of each family through a more in-depth case management perspective. Support, education, advocacy, referrals and resource linkages and community connections are key ingredients in the recipe of service delivery.

We look forward to learning and helping create new possibilities for families that Chebucto Family Centre has the privilege to serve.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicole Clarke  
Family Wellness Coordinator

Sabah Randell, Parenting Journey Home Visitor

### **Parenting Journey Program – Family Quote**

“Before I came to the centre I was scared, sad, heart broken. It was then I met the great people here, who told me to lift my head up, you are strong, you’re a mother, you can do this. I got so much support from everyone here. Since then the centre has helped me with group talks and how to change my thinking. And for that I’m grateful to have such an awesome place in our community, to take full advantage of great staff. Always smells so good, feels like home!”

Thank-you for your services and support,

Candace Rafuse

## Family Home Daycare Agency 2015-2016

***Through our agency care providers receive the assistance needed to run a family day home that meets their needs as well as the family's needs.*** Families have the assurance that the care provider and their home have met all requirements determined by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD).

***As of March 2016 our Agency supports 7 Family Day Homes providing care for 28 children (1 of who has special needs) both full and part time, plus 9 care provider's children.*** Many families, including those who qualify for the NS Child Care Subsidy program, are able to access family day homes and are enjoying the benefits of a smaller, more flexible program.

We finished of the year with 7 homes, however due to a shortfall of our goal of 12 homes in 2014/15 we were required to pay back funding in the form of reduced funding for the following year (2015/16). During this time the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development initiated a massive Child Care Review, during the process and evaluation, there was a freeze on funding for any new homes. We were not able to add any new homes or apply for additional funding in September of 2015 which had been available in previous years. In an attempt to trim the budget I worked a 4 day work week and eventually cut back to 3 days a week on the Family Home Day Care Program.

***The ultimate goal of the Home Day Care Agency is to increase to 16 homes with 1 full time consultant and 1 full time consultant /director.*** The goal for 2016/17 is to provide support for 9 homes. We are hopeful that we will continue growing and increasing our support to care providers and families recognizing that it takes time and hard work to increase our reach and build community awareness on a strong foundation. We continue to build a strong, supportive network to relieve the isolation and other challenges associated with providing child care in your own home.

As we enter into a new year with many positive changes within the Early Childhood Development field we are **feeling a sense of pride** to be offering what we know is the best approach for a children's program, one that is based solely on respecting the individual needs of every child and that the best learning for preschoolers happens through play. We remain hopeful in a continued change of attitude towards our care providers, and that they will be recognised not as babysitters, but as **competent, trained, knowledgeable providers** who understand children's individual needs and offer a program that is in the best interest of each individual child.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Hall

Family Home Consultant

## Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting 2015-2016

The Enhanced Home Visiting (EHV) program is designed to instill and build upon the skills required to build healthy children and healthy families from the prenatal stage, until the age of three. During the 2015 fiscal year, Theresa Banks-Rex and Sarah Hicks continued to be the two Healthy Beginnings Home Visitors. The average caseload for each has been between 10-15 families, with visits ranging from weekly to monthly depending on the individual families preference.

While each family is unique, many themes are continually raised that the home visitors address. These include **food security, positive parenting and returning to the work force** after maternity leave. For families struggling with food security, families were referred to the local food bank, and provided with support in doing so, as well, they were linked to the on-site food cupboard located at Chebucto Family Centre for short term or emergency needs. Positive parenting strategies are frequently addressed within the EHV program; families are frequently acknowledged and praised for positive changes in their parenting and communication skills. Striving for financial independence is something that many Healthy Beginnings families identify as a goal for themselves. The home visitors role is to support the family in identifying what the barriers to employment are, problem solve and encourage them while they do this. Families may require **emotional support**, information regarding educational opportunities, or require assistance in filling out forms or applying for a daycare space.

This past year the program has seen three families “graduate” from the program (having been enrolled from birth to age three), with a few more anticipated for the upcoming year. With the support and information given to her by her home visitor, one mother completed a 17 week paid internship and later enrolled in the Adult Learning Program to update her education, while another successfully applied and began her education at Hair Design Centre. This quote comes from a young single mother with respect to the letter written for her in support of her return to school, **“Oh my god this is amazing... You always go far above and beyond!”**

With respects to professional development, there has continued to be **a focus on infant and parental mother health**, with both Theresa and Sarah attending the Mental Health in the Early Years conference, as well as program specific training with Dr. Joanne MacDonald in the Mothers Mental Health Toolkit. Sarah also completed her CIMI Infant Massage trainer certification to be able to share the information to families she is supporting.

At the end of this year Theresa gave her notice to leave Chebucto Family Centre. The families she worked with, as well as everyone at Chebucto Family Centre will miss her and the wealth of knowledge she brought with her. Krista Greencorn will be coming on as the second home visitor for the upcoming fiscal year.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah Hicks, BA, BAA  
Enhanced Home Visitor

## Pre- and Post- Natal Educator 2015-2016

2015 and 2016 was a time of change for the pre- and post-natal educator position at the Chebucto Family Resource Centre. In March of 2016, the role was offered to and accepted by Jessie Harrold. Jessie, a doula and lactation educator, has worked with the Centre previously, acting for Erin Fair as the Volunteer Doula Program Coordinator while Erin was on maternity leave. Jessie is delighted to have the opportunity to serve the community once again.

Many of the partnerships and activities of the pre- and post-natal educator remained the same over the course of 2015/2016. Several sessions of well-attended ***prenatal classes*** were offered, and the partnership with Dalhousie Family Medicine, offering prenatal education to patients in alignment with the Centering Pregnancy model of care, continued successfully. The desire to be responsive to the breastfeeding support needs of the community culminated in the transition of the weekly breastfeeding support group sessions to a broader post-natal support. ***Breastfeeding support will now continue in the form of telephone calls and home visits as a way of providing timely and appropriate support to women and babies.*** Work also continued with the Women's Wellness Within initiative, and an information session was offered to the women at the Burnside Correctional Facility. Another session is planned for June 2016. ***Infant massage and Rock n' Rhyme remained foundational elements of the pre- and post-natal educator role in 2015 as well.***

The coming year is a funding renewal year for the CPNP program, which is the program that funds the pre- and post-natal educator position. This funding is renewed every three years, and involves the submission of a new workplan for the subsequent three years. The timing for this is ideal, with Jessie starting in the position, allowing for the emergence of new programming that best suits the community's needs. Though the current programming will continue, ***Jessie is exploring additional options for providing support to women in the antenatal period.*** Jessie will be attending "BabyLove" training with Krista Greencorn, and will co-facilitate the program, which is based on fostering infant-mother attachment and bonding, in the Fall of 2016. Additionally, Jessie hopes to further explore other potential offerings to the community, ***including birth story integration and healing groups, a babywearing program, and a pre- and post-natal mental wellness program.***

***Pre- and post-natal education and support by the Chebucto Family Centre is well-known around the city for its excellence, comprehensiveness, inclusivity, and responsiveness to the community's needs.*** Jessie looks forward to continuing to grow and develop the support offered to women through this program.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessie Harrold

## Volunteer Doula Program 2015-2016

***As we dawn on the landmark occasion of celebrating twenty extraordinary years in this program, it has allotted me time to reflect on how this unique and internationally acclaimed program was born, and how far we have journeyed.*** On July 6<sup>th</sup> in the Parker Reception Room at the IWK, along with the volunteer doulas, CFC staff, DSC members, HGA Board members, community partners, families, and stakeholders, we will be honoring the longevity of this program and the service we provide. At our annual Spring VDP training we **trained 17 new doulas**. Needless to say, it's been a busy spring.

We will be welcoming back Whitney Cruikshank from her maternity leave, at the beginning of May. Erinn continues to be a fantastic addition to the very small (but oh-so-mighty!) VDP team.

This past year has been very busy as per usual, and transitional as well. ***The recommendations from the Evaluation brought forward a more streamlined approach to our list-serve of volunteers and who is considered active in the program and who is not.*** Now, every January, volunteer doulas are asked to self-identify where they fall on the volunteer spectrum (either active, supportive, or inactive). It very much helps to have this new system in place, as it makes for a more manageable method of knowing which doulas are available to support our many moms. We work very closely with the management team at the IWK Volunteer Services to insure that these lists are kept up to date. As the doula profession continues to grow and develop, both in the volunteer capacity and in the fee-for-service/private capacity in HRM, we have seen this transition and what it means for our volunteer doulas; many of whom have begun their own private practice in addition to their volunteerism with the VDP.

In addition to our monthly VDP in-services, we celebrated our volunteer doulas with our annual Holiday party in December, with a pizza + movie night in April (for National Volunteer Week).

In the middle of last year, I began teaching Infant Massage here at the CFC, and have loved every minute of it. ***It feels really good to get out of my nest upstairs in the VDP office, and be with the new moms and their babies downstairs.*** I certainly get my fair-share of being around moms and babies out in the community, but this is a different experience, and one that is so very enjoyable.

I also continue to sit on the ***Breastfeeding Community of Practice Milk Bank committee***, as well, continue to be a member of the Volunteer Professional Management of Nova Scotia/Canada. I also completed my re-certification with DONA this past year, and participated/attended DONA's Virtual Conference (2015).

The VDP was very fortunate this past winter to be given an additional \$3000 to our core funding from Public Health; to be specifically used for interpretive services. ***We were also fortunate to be the recipient of a one-time grant of \$1500 from The Diversity and Inclusion Committee at the IWK to go towards the training of newcomers at our recent training.*** Although there was

quite a bit of interest when initially advertised, we did not end up training any newcomers, and so we have been instructed to shelve that grant until our next VDP training in spring of 2017.

Our **partnership with Burnside Correctional Centre** is evolving and we have met with them recently to clarify our continued roles - both within the jail and once those who are incarcerated have been released back into the community. The doula program will continue to do all **intakes for pregnant inmates** (with referrals coming directly from the jail or from the women themselves), as well as offer **monthly in-services to the women who are incarcerated on a quarterly basis**. These workshops will range in topic from prenatal care to parenting to attachment to healthy living.

**Every September, for over a decade, we have been assigned two student nurses from Dalhousie University to act as preceptor for their Community Placements.** In addition to a year-long project that we assign them, they assist with daily operations of the program that are suitable to their skill-set. We will meet in April with the directors of the school of nursing to fine-tune the partnership to insure moving forward, that the VDP gets the most out of the placement, as does the student nurses.

**Early 2016 officially brought us a new and very much improved database!** We are happy with how user-friendly it is, and how much easier it is to produce our bi-annual stats. We are hugely grateful to Martin Davidson at NSCC, who spearheaded this daunting task.

And last but certainly not least, early 2016 brought us a different kind of busy, with the **support that we have been offering to many Syrian Refugee families**. We have been working very closely with ISANS and with the IWK's Extra Support for Parents Program (ESP) on this. To date, we have done **intakes for 18 families**, with more scheduled. It is proving to be quite a process to insure that interpretation needs + the practical needs of the family are being met – in addition to the pregnant mom's prenatal and postpartum needs. We are very happy to be able to offer doula support to these new refugees; in addition to the many other newcomers that are referred to us.

As with all of my AGM reports in years past, I regret to declare that sustainable and increased funding is still a huge concern. Once the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary event is behind us (and I have some spare moments to brainstorm!), along with the Doula Steering Committee (DSC), we will continue exploring what other options might be available for the financial growth of this program.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin Fair, Coordinator of the VDP

**WE WISH TO THANK AND ACKNOWLEDGE OUR FUNDERS, DONORS AND BENEFACTORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT THIS YEAR!**

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