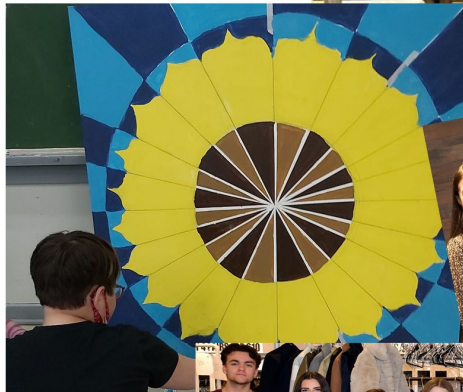




# EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM INNOVATIONS CHARITY SOCIETY

## ANNUAL REPORT



# 2022

## **EPIC - CONTACT INFORMATION**

*Please feel free to contact us with any questions or requests you may have.*

### **Educational Program Innovations Charity (EPIC) Society**

Email: **epiccharity@gmail.com**

Website: **<http://epiccharity.com>**

Mailing address: **PO Box 1897  
North Sydney, Nova Scotia  
B2A 3S9 Canada**

Phone: **902-794-7225**

Fax: **902-794-9225**

### **Youth Peer & Outreach and Parents PEACE**

Email: **youthpeerprogram@live.com**

Location: **Youth Peer Centre  
Sydney Adult High School, downstairs**

Mailing address: **290 Whitney Avenue  
Sydney, Nova Scotia  
B1P 5A6 Canada**

Phone: **902-539-8228**

Fax: **902-794-9225**

### **EPIC Youth Peer Video**

YouTube Search: **Youth Peer Program - EPIC**

### **CRA Charities Listing**

Google Search: **CRA Charities Listings  
Registration #89214 9964  
Educational Program Innovations Charity Society**



# CHARITY OVERVIEW

2022

## MISSION

The mission of **Educational Program Innovations Charity Society** is to advance marginalized learners through innovation, empathy, volunteerism, diversity and partnership.

## FOCUS

The charity's focus is on children and youth at risk, especially those from marginalized cultures, who are self-motivated but require enhanced accommodation and support to ensure attainable social adaptation and educational advancement.

## ACTIVITIES

The charity's activities include:

- educational projects filling voids in services for disadvantaged and high-risk learners
- tutoring, mentoring, and creative arts services
- high school grad humanity/scholarship awards; post-secondary volunteerism awards
- secondary and post-secondary field-of-study work internships
- educational initiatives serving marginalized youth and their caregivers
- networking with other charities to promote parallel initiatives in other Canadian sites

## HISTORY

EPIC was founded in Nova Scotia in 1996 by Barry Waldman. At that time, he was Director of Unama'ki Training & Education Centre (TEC) in Eskasoni First Nation, an alternative high school and adult education facility which he had nurtured from a 1-year pilot project to a mainstay of the community. Through daily contact with marginalized learners, Barry came to understand the nature of their challenges and the potential loss of life-transforming opportunities if sufficient program funding could not be accessed. He envisioned a community-based charitable organization, fully supported for its innovative approaches, rapid and flexible in its responses to identified needs, effective in recruiting and engaging young volunteers, and transformative in delivering programs for the advancement of high risk participants who were otherwise likely to fall through the cracks of agency services. His solution was to form **Educational Program Innovations Charity Society** and to oversee program and charity activities as a volunteer to keep administrative and fundraising costs to a bare minimum. He continues to volunteer as EPIC's Executive Director and Board Finance Director. EPIC has also been able to recruit and retain outstanding and dedicated Board members, distinguished in their fields, to volunteer substantial talents and resources and ensure fulfillment of EPIC's mission. For 17 years, concluding in 2014, the Donner Canadian Foundation provided national non-profit awards for Excellence in the Delivery of Social Services. For 9 years, EPIC applied and was evaluated rigorously through a 2-stage Fraser Institute protocol. In that period, EPIC received more Donner Foundation cash award recognition than any of the other 2,000 competing Canadian charitable programs competing over the 17-year awards program. EPIC received the \$5,000 Donner Foundation Award 6 times as the highest achieving non-profit in Services for Children. In 2010 and 2013, EPIC received the \$20,000 highest Donner Foundation Award across all social service categories. In 2012 received the Peter Drucker Award for most consistent record of excellence and innovation in the management and delivery of non-profit program services. In 2020 and 2021, Charity Intelligence conducted comprehensive reviews of 800+ Canadian charities and assessed EPIC as a 5-star charity - listed in the Top 100 Canadian charities, Top 10 Canadian Impact Charities, and Top 5 Impact Youth Charities.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EPIC's Policies and Procedures state: *"The Board shall be made up of collaborative, dedicated, and open-minded individuals with a commitment to achieving the broadest community benefit, and who each effectively represent the needs of marginalized learners from a unique perspective."* EPIC's volunteer Board operates by consensus, and great effort is made to ensure 100% attendance at Board meetings. Board members also fulfill the five Executive positions. Board members are encouraged to serve the charity on an ongoing basis, so two-year terms are renewed automatically unless a Board member requests departure.

### CHAIR / PLANNING DIRECTOR

#### Janet Robinson



Janet is a self-employed workplace facilitator who works on contract to help struggling women find jobs. She was formerly a Counsellor for the Ann Terry Society and served on the Board of New Dawn Enterprises. She currently works part-time for the Old Sydney Society. She has a wealth of community-based career and volunteer experience including valued assistance with the Celtic Colours International Festival. She has served on the EPIC Board since 2005.

### VICE-CHAIR / VALUES & ETHICS DIRECTOR

#### Dana Feltmate



Dana is the Minister of the United Protestant Church in Sydney River, a church which has grown rapidly in congregation and community service under his leadership. Dana and his wife Delores have been instrumental in enhancing provincial services to children in care. They have also been foster parents to 11 children including a daughter they adopted. He has worked tirelessly for the United Church Children and Youth in Crisis working group and the Cape Breton Child Welfare Board. He joined the EPIC Board in 2016.

### VICE-CHAIR / PROGRAMS DIRECTOR

#### Barb Donovan



Barb has been an integral part of EPIC for 24 years. She was pivotal in the development of the Youth Peer Program as Director for 13 years, Breakthrough Facilitator & Back-up for 6 years, and has served on EPIC's Board as Programs Director since 2016. She is considered by EPIC and most others she has worked with to be extraordinarily gifted in fostering healthy relationships with marginalized youth and continues in her retirement to help former Youth Peer participants overcome social challenges.

### TREASURER / FINANCE DIRECTOR

#### Barry Waldman



Barry is EPIC's founder, Executive Director, and supervisor of its programs. He considers himself retired, but oversees EPIC's operations and finances as a volunteer, a role he has sustained since 1996. He was formerly a carpenter, teacher, educational administrator and consultant, who spent most of his career serving the Eskasoni School Board. In 2008 he received the Cape Breton United Way Harvey Webber Volunteerism Award and in 2013 received Cape Breton's Tom Miller Human Rights Award for services to the disadvantaged. He joined the Board in 2007.

### SECRETARY / COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

#### Nancy S. M. Waldman



Nancy is a writer, artist, and retired psychiatric nurse who holds a Master's Degree in Nursing. She has served on the Board of Cape Breton Mental Health Association, is one of three founders and editors for Third Person Press which nurtures and promotes emerging Cape Breton speculative fiction writers, and has created By and By Press which features her own short story collections and novels. She has volunteered for EPIC since 2000 and has served as EPIC webmaster ever since. She joined the Board in 2007.

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

2022

## Youth Peer

Youth Peer is a free, daily 2½ hour after-school program for Cape Breton Regional Municipality youth ages 8-18 referred by EPIC's 34 community agency partners to address social and academic challenges. Each day, up to 15 youth at high risk are matched 1-to-1 with their own volunteer tutor-mentor who was recruited from university, college, or high school to help the youth overcome educational challenges and personal obstacles and to engage in positive social activities like art, music, workshops, and educational games. The relationship that develops between high-risk youth and tutor-mentors is magical. Participants advance rapidly in social skills and academic achievements. Troubled youth begin to feel and behave like regular kids in the structured, yet fun, environment. Youth, volunteers, and staff interact like a wonderful family, which results in reduced risks to self, family, and community; enhancement of school attachment and achievement; and increased self-esteem and positive behaviours. Youth Peer operated as a hybrid onsite-online program in the pandemic 2021-2022 year. In the coming school-year, EPIC anticipates in-person participation of 70 marginalized youth referred from 15+ different schools. If pandemic issues re-emerge, Youth Peer will adapt accordingly to optimize social and academic benefits for youth participants while sustaining a healthy environment for all.

## Youth Peer Outreach

Youth Peer Outreach evolved 5 years ago from community requests and the opportunity to collaborate with SchoolsPlus in partnership with Cape Breton Victoria Regional Centre for Education. The program is delivered weekly for 2 hours after-school in New Waterford, Northside, and Glace Bay. Health protocol constraints last school-year moved the program online for 10 weeks, significantly reducing participant numbers. However, youth and volunteers were so eager for in-person programming after March Break that participant numbers swelled and Outreach carried out 454 tutor-mentor matches by June, setting an all-time record. Outreach will expand in September to add Whitney Pier as the 4<sup>th</sup> Outreach community. The new site will augment cultural diversity and increase active Youth Peer & Outreach participants to 100. In 2022-2023, Outreach will be carried out on Mondays at Whitney Pier Middle School in Whitney Pier, Tuesdays at Breton Education Centre in New Waterford, Wednesdays at Memorial High in Sydney Mines, and Thursdays at Oceanview Middle School in Glace Bay. Outreach staff are well prepared to move the program online in 2022-2023 if re-emergence of the pandemic constrains in-person activities. Outreach will continue to optimize social and academic advancement of marginalized youth.

## Parents PEACE (*Practicing Esteem-building Acceptance Communication & Evaluation*)

Parents PEACE is a free, ongoing parenting workshop, open to caregivers with school-aged children. Parents meet Mondays from 6:30-8:30 pm at the Youth Peer Centre, downstairs in the Sydney Adult High School. In the 2021-2022 pandemic year, the program moved online from Jan to mid-March when parents were not allowed in the facility. Attendance remained stable, in-person and online, with an average of 5 parents per session. Several of EPIC partner agencies volunteered to facilitate discussions on anxiety, mental health services, and gender identity. Parent challenges have increased with the pandemic, so Parents PEACE has been greatly appreciated in any form. The program continues to help parents better understand their interactions with their children and to put that knowledge to work for them. The program provides a safe place to talk, practical strategies, and social support in coping with real parenting problems. The Facilitator obtains parent input on areas of concern, either facilitating those discussions or arranging for expert community agency representatives to present relevant discussion ideas.



## PROGRAM NEED

2022

For many years, social agency staff in CBRM (**C**ape **B**reton **R**egional **M**unicipality) have conveyed frustration with the severity of youth cases they handle and isolation dealing with compound social dysfunction factors. The youth immersed in social conflict have tended to be both Mental Health and Child Welfare clients who have been suspended from school and are deficient in social skills, impulse control, and self-esteem. The communities served by EPIC experience all the conditions that place communities at high-risk of social maladaptations: comparatively low education levels, high unemployment, and a high percentage living in poverty (*Nova Scotia Government*). The percentage of CBRM adults who have completed a university degree or diploma is 34% lower than the national average (*Community Foundation of Nova Scotia*). The average unemployment rate in CBRM over the past 20 years – 15%, is more than double the national average – 7% over the same period (*Statistics Canada*). A pan-Canadian comparison of CBRM with similarly-sized cities in 6 other provinces (Kelowna, BC; Red Deer, AB; Regina, SK; Thunder Bay, ON; Saint John, NB; and St. John's, NF) revealed that average family income in CBRM is 28% lower (*Environics Analytics*). Including communities like Eskasoni with a child poverty rate of 73%, the average child poverty rate across CBRM is 29%, which is 53% higher than the Canadian average of 19% (*Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives*). Unfortunately, despite encouraging signs related to international university students, the overall demographics in CBRM are not improving. The bleak employment outlook has driven the population of CBRM spiralling downward for decades with an average annual population decline of 1% (*Statistics Canada*).

The youth referred by social agency partners to EPIC's core program – Youth Peer & Outreach – are prioritized for being at high risk of social conflict and academic challenges. As a result, over 90% of participants ages 8-18 have been formally assessed as being socially and academically at high risk, and have an average poverty rate of more than 70%. If EPIC did not provide free transportation, providing access from 20+ different schools, the majority of participants would be unable to attend. The free snacks provided are often the closest thing to a nutritional meal that day.

EPIC's goal in the delivery of Youth Peer & Outreach is to provide acceptance, support, encouragement, and a transformative safe haven environment for youth who might otherwise be headed for a lifetime of dysfunction.

## RESOURCE ALLOCATION 2022

The table below provides a breakdown of costs allocated by program category for EPIC's most recent fiscal year, from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. Additional revenue and expense details are provided in EPIC's financial statements conducted by MNP Accounting and are available each year on EPIC's website by November... <http://epiccharity.com>

EXPENSES BY PROGRAM	COST
Youth Peer, Outreach, & Online Program	174,130
* Administration	9,950
Parents PEACE Program	3,500
Scholarships and Awards	3,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$191,080</b>

*\* Rounding to the nearest \$10, EPIC categorizes the following expenses entirely as Administration costs: external audit, liability insurance, donations to fundraisers for others, directors' travel, bank charges, dues and fees. All other costs involved in overseeing program activities including housing the programs and charity, and managing operational finances, continue to be provided as in-kind services as itemized below. Fundraising is carried out almost exclusively through proposal writing as part of Supervision and provided as an in-kind service by the volunteer Executive Director.*

## IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS \* 2022

CATEGORY	CONTRIBUTOR	CALCULATIONS	COST
Supervision	Executive Director SchoolsPlus Facilitators Board Members Partner Agency Members	25 hrs/wk x 44 wks x \$45/hr 3 x 3 hrs/wk x 40 wks x \$35/hr 2 hrs/wk x 40 wks x \$45/hr 2 hrs/wk x 40 wks x \$40/hr	49,500 12,600 3,600 3,200
Youth Services	Tutor-Mentor Volunteers	1640 youth matches x 2 hrs x \$16/hr	52,480
Program Facilities	Sydney - Adult High New Waterford - Breton Mid Northside - Memorial High Glace Bay - Oceanview Mid	2 class & 2 office x 10 mos x \$500/mo 1 classroom x 10 mos x \$500/mo 1 classroom x 10 mos x \$500/mo 1 classroom x 10 mos x \$500/mo	20,000 5,000 5,000 5,000
Financial Services	Executive Director	4 hrs/wk x 44 wks x \$45/hr	7,920
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$164,300</b>

*\* All calculations are based on wage rates and market value costs that would apply if these services were not provided as in-kind contributions. The comparable totals for charity expenses and in-kind contributions are consistent with the long-established trend in the Youth Peer & Outreach Program that the number of paid staff hours closely matches the number of volunteer hours.*

## PROGRAM OUTPUTS 2022

Youth Peer & Outreach Program	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020
Management Team Partner Agencies #	34	34	34
Schools & Other Referral Sources #	26	26	28
Youth Participant Referrals #	117	116	134
Active Youth Participants #	93	92	100
Tutor-Mentor Volunteers Trained #	118	111	128
Active Tutor-Mentor Volunteers #	100	93	101
Average Improvement in Protective Factors %	14%	9%	11%

Site	Output Indicators	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020
Sydney & Online	Active Youth Participant #	65	72	71
	Active Tutor-Mentor Volunteers #	67	73	71
	Protective Factor Improvement %	14%	7%	11%
New Waterford	Active Youth Participant #	8	6	9
	Active Tutor-Mentor Volunteers #	9	5	12
	Protective Factor Improvement %	13%	14%	15%
Northside	Active Youth Participant #	8	7	11
	Active Tutor-Mentor Volunteers #	10	9	13
	Protective Factor Improvement %	11%	20%	10%
Glace Bay	Active Youth Participant #	12	6	9
	Active Tutor-Mentor Volunteers #	14	6	11
	Protective Factor Improvement %	16%	23%	14%

SEGWAY (Social Emotional Growth & Wellness Assessment of Youth) protective factor changes are calculated on 20 evidence-based risk indicators with raw scores from -40 to +40. To adjust for unintended staff bias and attribution to other sources, raw scores are divided in half before conversion to a percentage of improvement.

Site	Output Intensity	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020
Sydney	Tutor-Mentor Youth Matches #	1187	1303	1174
New Waterford	Tutor-Mentor Youth Matches #	132	117	172
Northside	Tutor-Mentor Youth Matches #	133	107	188
Glace Bay	Tutor-Mentor Youth Matches #	189	85	156
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1641</b>	<b>1612</b>	<b>1690</b>

Marginalization Demographics	Youth Peer & Outreach	CBRM *
Child Poverty (school-aged children)	71%	29%
Indigenous (on-reserve and off-reserve)	13%	4%
Visible Minority (African / Asian / Middle Eastern descent)	2%	3%
Transgender (non-birth gender identity)	4%	0.4%

\* Annual data for Youth Peer, Outreach, and Online programs, updated monthly, is compared to the most recent annual data from Statistics Canada for CBRM (Cape Breton Regional Municipality).



## **PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

2022

### **Youth Peer & Youth Peer Outreach**

In school-year 2021-2022, 117 high-risk Youth Peer and Outreach participants were referred by 5 partner agencies, and volunteers were referred by 4 other partners. Guidance Counsellors referred 80% of Youth Peer-Sydney participants from 17 different schools in Cape Breton Victoria Regional Centre for Education. SchoolsPlus referred 90% of Outreach participants from 5 additional schools. Youth Peer - Sydney operated 5 days per week onsite averaging 9 tutor-mentor matches per day and 3 per week online. Outreach operated 1 day per week each in New Waterford, Northside, and Glace Bay averaging 7 tutor-mentor matches each. There were 118 tutor-mentors trained and 100 actively volunteered, 76% from 5 different high schools, 20% from Cape Breton University, 3% from Nova Scotia Community College, and 1% from other universities. The total number of tutor-mentor matches was 1,641, more than 97% of the 24-year record. The site breakdown – Sydney & Online-1,187, New Waterford-132, Northside-133, and Glace Bay-189 – reflects 6,564 hours of positive youth academic and social activities. Over 90% of youth participants were assessed at all 4 sites as being at high risk. Despite the pandemic, attendance was remarkably robust and EPIC was highly successful in generating environments that uplifted marginalized youth to feel and behave like regular kids. Shifting to online for 10 weeks created additional challenges, but Youth Peer & Outreach students continued to advance socially and academically while simultaneously, staff and administrators of their schools reported significant school-wide declines in attendance and academic performance.

### **Program Changes**

In 2021-2022, the pandemic necessitated offering Youth Peer Online to 3 students who could not be accommodated onsite due to health concerns. All onsite students, volunteers, and staff were required to wear masks. In the 10 weeks from Jan to mid-March when EPIC's were delivered exclusively online, participation rates dropped by about 30%. However, as soon as youth were able to attend in person participation rates increased dramatically. Ultimately, Youth Peer & Outreach were able to carry out 97% of the tutor-mentor matches of the all-time record year. Many students, despite limited peer interactions, told staff they looked forward all week to their Youth Peer, Outreach, or Online session. In May, staff assessed 91 marginalized youth, 58 in Sydney and 33 in Outreach, using SEGWAY (**S**ocial **E**motional **G**rowth & **W**ellness **A**ssessment of **Y**outh) which tracks behavioural changes across 20 research-validated risk indicators. Final results, reflecting changes over 8 months, confirmed what staff had observed anecdotally that ~90% of participants were internalizing protective factors that counteract social conflict risks. The average assessed change in social conflict risk indicators was a 14% improvement in pro-social behaviours. Overall, for every 2½ hours students attended Youth Peer, there was a 1% average improvement in protective factors to counteract social risk.

### **Parents PEACE**

An average of 5 parents participated in weekly Parents PEACE evening sessions, whether onsite or online, improving parenting skills and enhancing capacity to support their children. Four of EPIC's partner agencies engaged parents in interactive discussions on critical parenting issues which provided parents with greater insights for helping their children, and nurtured support from other parents to navigate family pandemic challenges.

## **OUTPUT GOALS**

2022

### **Short-term**

EPIC hopes to sustain 1600+ youth matches each school-year, irrespective of constraints on in-person activities as was experienced during pandemic adaptations. We also hope to achieve a smooth roll-out of the new Outreach site in Whitney Pier. We envision this as a great service to an underserved community, an opportunity to enhance Youth Peer's cultural diversity, and an impactful way to ensure that over 100 high-risk youth across the municipality receive EPIC's transformative services each year.

### **Mid-term**

EPIC is expanding to include Whitney Pier as a 4<sup>th</sup> Youth Peer Outreach site, not only because the need is great, but also because we received sufficient funding through faraway unsolicited donations that resulted from national exposure and recognition by Charity Intelligence. Mid-term, we hope to sustain donations at a level that will enable the pilot site in Whitney Pier to become a permanent part of EPIC's services. We have a long history of positive connections in this community and know there is currently not a comparable service for youth who are socially & academically at high risk, live in poverty, and face challenges of cultural marginalization. We also believe that sustained engagement with youth volunteers is their best hope of transformative change.

### **Long-term**

EPIC seeks long-term resources to ensure optimal operation of 5 sites. The Succession Plan is to increase donations and other non-government revenue to ensure that EPIC can hire an effective replacement when the volunteer Executive Director is unable to continue.

## **PROGRAM CHALLENGES**

2022

\* In 2021-2022, EPIC moved services online for 10 weeks when onsite health protocols constrained participant numbers and split youth into those who could or could not be accommodated in person. While we projected that participant numbers would decline because of that decision, we also believed it was more important to treat participants equally. After March Break, we returned in-person, all fully masked, while keeping the online option open for a small number of youth. Ultimately, despite a 30% decline in tutor-mentor matches during that 10 week period, most students and volunteers were so eager to engage in person that matches for the year ended up exceeding the previous year's total, at a level 97% of the 24-year record number.

\* We also experienced a delightful problem in 2021-2022. The comprehensive review of EPIC by Charity Intelligence resulted in our inclusion on 3 lists: Top 100 Canadian charities, Top 10 Canadian Impact Charities, and Top 5 Impact Youth Charities. The strong correlation between EPIC's national recognition and donations from places far away transformed donations into our highest source of revenue. Once we realized EPIC was on a trajectory for a year-end surplus, we explored how best to expand our services. We met with SchoolsPlus partners, determined that Youth Peer Outreach would be greatly appreciated in the culturally diverse Whitney Pier community, and set the wheels in motion for EPIC's 4<sup>th</sup> Outreach program in 2022-2023. The site at Whitney Pier Middle School, SchoolsPlus support, and staffing have now been arranged. Identification of the target youth and recruitment and training of youth volunteers are the only remaining steps before Youth Peer Whitney Pier is delivered after-school every Monday starting in September.

## LESSONS LEARNED

2022

\* The need for new revenue sources to support Youth Peer & Outreach invariably results in seeking one-time grants for novel activities. While these activities have consistently enhanced the services offered, they have had little impact on longer-term sustainability. A lesson from this revenue quest is that EPIC needs to limit short-term projects to activities which either assist partner organizations or innovate features which merit permanent adoption. This is likely to require additional funding to be sustainable. The Parents PEACE Program, art, and guitar instruction are examples of one-time projects which became imbedded in Youth Peer many years ago. Outreach has operated only for 5 years, but has evolved into a permanent and still-growing extension of the Youth Peer Program because of its demonstrated merit in addressing the needs of underserved communities.

\* Constraints on program participation, whether due to increased transportation costs or health-protective in-person adaptations, can compromise program impact if they dim the program's focus. We have learned that countervailing actions can always be pursued to keep the charity's mission from wavering. In the midst of Covid-related limitations, we anticipated unavoidable reductions in total tutor-mentor matches. Whether onsite or online, we have actively collaborated with partners to ensure prolific referrals and youth volunteer recruitment. We have recognized that leadership demands tireless innovation to nurture program resiliency, regardless of challenges faced.

\* Fostering program partnerships with like-minded community organizations through interactions similar to those of a large family, incurs power dynamics and sibling rivalries as well as validation and mutual support. We have learned that effective partnership is more than a delicate balancing act; it also needs to reflect a laser-focus on the maximization of positive impact for all beneficiaries.

\* In the past few years, EPIC has developed several evaluation tools. SYRA (**S**creen for **Y**outh **R**isk **A**ttraction) enables EPIC to identify and prioritize the most marginalized youth for intake into Youth Peer & Outreach. As a result, school counsellors and other sources have diligently referred the kids at highest social and academic risk, and over 90% of our participants fulfill that criteria. Recognizing that staff can only assess the behaviours they observe and not the baggage associated with them, we developed SEGWAY (**S**ocial **E**motional **G**rowth & **W**ellness **A**ssessment of **Y**outh). Now, after 5 years of field-testing, we have learned that Youth Peer & Outreach results vary significantly on an individual basis but fall within a narrow positive range on a group basis, regardless of the site or year. We believe this reflects consistent excellence in the staff hired and youth volunteers trained. We can now project that Youth Peer & Outreach participants, over the course of any school-year, will demonstrate an average of 12-20% improvement in socially adaptive behaviours. This conclusion resulted from recalibrating our interpretation of raw score results to acknowledge the unintended bias of staff conducting the assessment and the recognition that some observed changes may be partly attributable to other sources. Raw scores are now divided in half before conversion to percentages, so that a perfect score of 40/40 is interpreted as 50% change rather than 100%.

\* We have come to believe that, beyond thoughtful leadership, the real magic of EPIC's programs comes from relationships built within environments that encourage older youth to keep volunteering to be nice to younger marginalized kids, because this is what enables recipients to look forward every week to feelings of support and acceptance.

# SCHOLARSHIPS VOLUNTEERISM AND HUMANITY AWARDS

2022

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Beyond its school-year community programs, EPIC actualizes its mission to advance marginalized learners by providing scholarships. The first scholarship was awarded in 1997 with multiple scholarships awarded since 2002.

The scholarships are provided under the following criteria:

*“Awarded by Educational Program Innovations Charity Society to further the education of a graduating student distinguished by high school staff for commitment to community or perseverance in overcoming obstacles to advancement”*

Each of the following students received EPIC’s \$500 Scholarship in 2022:

- |                 |                        |                               |
|-----------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Chase Denny   | Eskasoni First Nation  | Allison Bernard Memorial High |
| • Tyson Jencks  | Membertou First Nation | Sydney Academy                |
| • Cailen Davis  | African-NS Community   | Sydney Academy                |
| • Shelby Wagner | *Rural Community       | *Riverview Rural High         |

*\* This is the second year of the Rural Community scholarship – sponsored by a generous donor, enabling EPIC to celebrate Riverview’s role as EPIC’s largest source of volunteers.*

## VOLUNTEERISM AWARDS

EPIC initiated the EPIC Volunteerism Awards in 2012 in recognition of the volunteer contribution of post-secondary students in service placements in which they have assisted tremendously with Youth Peer, Outreach, and Online. An award has been issued annually to Cape Breton University and Nova Scotia Community College graduates ever since.

The volunteerism awards are provided under the following criteria:

*“Presented by Educational Program Innovations Charity Society to a graduating post-secondary student distinguished for outstanding volunteerism beyond course requirements”*

The following student received EPIC’s \$500 Volunteerism Award in 2022:

- |                  |                        |                   |
|------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| • Makayla Snow   | Cape Breton University | Community Studies |
| • Kristen Howley | NSCC - Marconi         | Social Services   |

## HUMANITY AWARD

Vincent Waterman served on EPIC’s Board for 20 years and was an extraordinary friend and exceptional giver to the community before he passed away in January, 2019. As an ongoing legacy suggested by his sister-in-law and former Nova Scotia Lieutenant Governor Mayann Francis, EPIC initiated the Vincent Waterman Humanity Award in collaboration with Cape Breton County high school guidance counsellors who nominate an award finalist from each of 5 high schools.

The humanity award is provided under the following criteria:

*“Awarded by Educational Program Innovations Charity Society to a graduating high school student for exemplifying Patriarch Vincent Waterman’s boundless community giving and treatment of others as winners of the human race”*

The following student received the \$500 Vincent Waterman EPIC Humanity Award in 2022:

- |                   |              |               |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|
| • Rebecca Handley | Sydney Mines | Memorial High |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|

## **MANAGEMENT TEAM PARTNERS**

2022

EPIC oversees the finances and daily operations of Youth Peer, Youth Peer Outreach, Youth Peer Online, and Parents PEACE, in partnership with 34 community agencies who refer high-risk kids, volunteers, and/or caregivers to the programs, network to enhance the community's services, and offer advice to ensure the smooth dovetailing of EPIC's programs with other community supports. The Management Team meets quarterly, while staff and referring partner representatives are in regular contact, often on a daily basis.

The following 34 community partner agencies continue to serve on the Management Team:

- Island Community Justice
- Salvation Army
- Cape Breton Victoria Regional Centre for Education
- Nova Scotia Legal Aid
- Nova Scotia Community Services - Child Welfare
- Nova Scotia Health Authority Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Cape Breton University - Career Services
- Black Educators Association
- Membertou Education
- Nova Scotia Correctional Services
- Cape Breton Regional Police
- Transition House
- Whitney Pier Boys and Girls Club
- Native Council
- Centre Scolaire Etoile de l'Acadie
- Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia
- Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority
- Family Place Resource Centre
- Nova Scotia Community College - Marconi Campus
- YMCA of Cape Breton
- Association For Safer Cape Breton Communities
- Adult Literacy Association of Cape Breton County
- SchoolsPlus
- CaperBase Access 808
- Nova Scotia Public Health
- Ally Centre of Cape Breton
- Housing First
- Cape Breton Centre for Sexual Health
- Cornerstone Cape Breton
- Cape Breton Youth Project
- Undercurrent Youth Centre
- IWK Mental Health and Addictions
- Northside Employment & Resource Centre
- Five Eleven Youth and Family Center

# REVENUE SOURCES

2022

## Core Funding

Law Foundation of Nova Scotia



## Multiple Years

United Way Cape Breton



Nova Scotia Community Services



Nova Scotia Justice



Nova Scotia Education & Early Childhood Development

Bluenose Insurance



Sydney Credit Union



Ted Rogers Community Grant



Individual Unsolicited Donors

## Canadian National Recognition

Charity Intelligence - Top 10 Canadian Impact Charities  
2 years... 2020-2021



Charity Intelligence - Top 5 Impact Youth Charities  
2 years... 2020-2021

William H. Donner Award - \$20,000 highest award  
2 years... 2010, 2013

Donner Canadian Foundation Award - \$5,000 award  
6 years... 2007-2013

Peter F. Drucker Foundation - \$5,000 award... 2012





## **YOUTH PEER STAFF**

### **PROGRAM DIRECTOR**

#### **Delores Feltmate**



Delores was an elementary/middle school teacher & guidance counsellor for many years, fostered 11 children including 1 she adopted, and is a Nova Scotia leader in child advocacy. She became Youth Peer Co-Director in 2014 but retired a year later with health challenges. Her prognosis improved and Youth Peer has thrived exceptionally well since 2018 with Delores as full-time Program Director. She generates a positive team-building atmosphere and demonstrates extraordinary compassion and finesse making marginalized youth feel accepted and supported.

### **VOLUNTEERS COORDINATOR**

#### **Kendrick Miller**



Kendrick distinguished herself as a Youth Peer tutor-mentor volunteer before being hired as Outreach Program Assistant and Online Program Assistant. In 2021, she was elevated to the role of Volunteers Coordinator and has risen impressively to meet each new challenge. She completed a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and is currently enrolled in an online Bachelor of Social Work program while working full-time at Youth Peer and sustaining part-time work as a beloved dance instructor.

### **ONLINE COORDINATOR**

#### **Michelle McGean**



Michelle distinguished herself at Youth Peer for 5 years, first as a volunteer tutor-mentor volunteer, then as the Volunteers Coordinator. When she became a new mother, we were pleased to keep her engaged as Online Coordinator and Outreach Tutor Trainer. Her open-minded, caring, and gentle personality working with youth, volunteers, and staff have ensured her place on staff in any feasible capacity. She brings natural calmness, maturity, and outstanding organization in any capacity.

### **OUTREACH COORDINATOR**

#### **Anna George**



Anna has been the Outreach Coordinator since 2019 after endearing herself for 2 previous years as a tutor-mentor volunteer. She is highly skilled in multi-tasking and coordinating programs in New Waterford, Northside, and Glace Bay. She sustains a positive outlook when crises are encountered and works seamlessly with Outreach Assistant Kaitlyn O'Neill to recruit volunteers, contact parents, organize activities, provide nutrition, create a healthy learning environment, and make youth and volunteers feel valued.

### **EDUCATOR**

#### **Anne Pentecost**



EPIC was introduced to Anne as Math Coach Specialist for Cape Breton Victoria Regional Centre For Education. Staff were so pleased with her expert advice and supportive demeanor that she was hired as Outreach Educator in 2019. Her extraordinary organizational skills, vast knowledge of helpful resources, and exceptional rapport with staff and volunteers have led to her serving as Educator for all of Youth Peer's programs, the daily program in Sydney and the 4 weekly Outreach sites.

## **YOUTH PEER, OUTREACH, & ONLINE PROGRAM ASSISTANTS**

Youth Peer, Outreach, & Online Program Assistant staff are all post-secondary students who first distinguished themselves as outstanding tutor-mentor volunteers. Program Assistants Jennifer Nicholson and Adam Thorn, Online Assistant Riley Gardiner, and Outreach Assistant Kaitlyn O'Neill brought great enthusiasm and empathy to their respective programs, endearing them to participants, volunteers, and staff, and ensuring wonderful experiences from arrival through tutoring, nutrition, social breaks, and mentoring.

### **ART INSTRUCTOR**

#### **Susanne Donovan**



Susanne has been the Art Instructor since art was introduced to the program in 2002. Susanne provides youth and their mentors with a wide range of fun, enriching and educational creative activities two afternoons a week. She holds a Fine Arts degree from Mt. Allison University in New Brunswick. Her imaginative projects engage even the kids who think they lack artistic talent and all participants feel encouraged and honoured.

### **MUSIC INSTRUCTOR**

#### **Emile Conn**



Emile has been teaching guitar, harmonica, and keyboard at Youth Peer since 2004. He provides private instruction to any interested student along with the tutor-mentor for two afternoons a week at Youth Peer. His quiet demeanor is calming to the participants and his strong musical skills draw in kids to explore their own musical talents. For several of the students, Emile's gentle instruction entices them to attend the program more consistently which enhances their advancement academically as well as socially.

## **PARENTS PEACE STAFF**

### **FACILITATOR**

#### **Ann McPhee**



Ann became Parents PEACE Facilitator in 2016. She began her career as a high school teacher, but served as Executive Director of the Ann Terry Society for over 25 years overseeing projects focused on women's employment. She is highly skilled in designing, developing, delivering, and tailoring programs for adult learners that address challenges faced by the caregivers of children at high risk. Her easy rapport with parents, wealth of experience, and extensive community connections contribute greatly to participant confidence and adaptiveness and to the enhancement of parent-child relationships.

## YOUTH PARTICIPANTS AND VOLUNTEERS

EPIC's programs engage high-risk marginalized youth ages 8-18 and caregivers of all ages who strive to improve relationships with their troubled children. All activities involve 1-to-1 matching or small group interactions. Aside from Youth Peer Outreach Programs for youth ages 10-16 in New Waterford, Northside, and Glace Bay, all activities take place at the Youth Peer Centre, downstairs from the Sydney Adult High School. It is a safe haven in which participants and volunteers feel mutually accepted, valued, and treated like family. Youth tutor-mentors have volunteered from Grade 9 through university, claiming that the program has been as fulfilling for them as it has been for the kids they've assisted. Staff, who have also served as volunteers, consider it a magical place to work because they consistently feel they are able to witness their own impact in helping struggling youth to improve their lives.



The following quotes reflect commonly expressed feelings about the Youth Peer Centre:

*"I never used to trust people because I was bullied a lot. When I lashed out at the ones who threatened me, that brought the authorities and Mental Health crashing down on me. Youth Peer helped me overcome what I thought was impossible. Without Youth Peer support, I would never have completed high school, gone on to secure a trade, and gotten better control of my life. I'm lucky I was part of it."*

~ former Youth Peer participant ~



*"Parents PEACE has been my lifeline - the place where I can go for help. Everything said is kept confidential so I can be very open and leave feeling better than when I came. My daughters have reading disabilities and severe anxieties. Youth Peer has been a godsend, helping them work independently with confidence."*

~ former Parents PEACE participant whose children attended Youth Peer ~





*“Youth Peer forever changed my life, as a volunteer then as a hired Program Assistant. My leadership was sharpened and I became more positive with an open, accepting mind. No job was ever more challenging yet so rewarding. Such wonderful people and such an amazing program.”*

~ young teacher and former Youth Peer tutor-mentor volunteer and Program Assistant ~

