

Introduction:

The Main-à-Dieu and Area Community Development Association (MCDA) is a not-for-profit volunteer organization that runs the Coastal Discovery Centre (CDC) as a community hub for the area. The association is dedicated to assisting economic and social development in the following communities; Main-à-Dieu, Bateston, Little Lorraine, Baleine and Catalone. The overarching vision of the association is to establish and sustain the Main-à-Dieu area as an economically prosperous and socially vibrant network of rural fishing communities. Our programs meet unique resident needs, foster social engagement, and reduce social isolation often prevalent in rural communities.

The programs offered at the CDC target the diverse needs of a wide range of residents from children to nonagenarians. Run entirely by volunteers, these programs include crafts, games, painting, and plant care among others. Our programs are free of charge but generous donations from our community are routinely relied upon. The Centre also houses a “Kids Zone” and a branch of the local library. Our community garden provides fresh herbs for afternoon tea service and produce for our harvest lunch in October. Special programs are also offered such as exercise instructions, learning to digitize old photos, foot care clinics, hosting the Good Food Bus, and tutoring for students. These initiatives provide mental stimuli and reduce isolation. The volunteers who run these activities take pride in not only offering their time and energy, but also participating in and using the services offered.

Community pride is an integral part of the MCDA. This has encompassed raising funds to support the building of a home for a resident in need:

<https://www.saltwire.com/atlantic-canada/lifestyles/regional-lifestyles/video-cape-breton-widower-overwhelmed-by-gift-of-new-home-from-community-members-516158/>;

taking a leadership role in an environmental initiative for the safe salvage of the MV Miner ship: <https://www.saltwire.com/cape-breton/news/local/mla-says-removal-process-of-mv-miner-prevented-possible-catastrophe-9097/>;

and hosting engaging events appreciated by local residents:

<https://www.saltwire.com/cape-breton/lifestyles/local-lifestyles/tea-by-the-sea-in-main-a-dieu-337238/>.



The Story of Tea-by-the-Sea:

2021 is the third year of our Main-a-Dieu version of “high tea”. It began with a volunteer experience. I was helping a friend set up for the pop-up shop in support of a palliative care hospice for the Sydney area. I was a volunteer and was privileged to see all the wonderful items so generously donated by the community. One of the donations caught my eye as it was a display of beautiful bone china cups and saucers. An idea began to germinate as I worked. Could we use these china cups at the Coastal Discovery Centre? A discussion with some board members led to the idea of a tea at the Centre, a “tea by the sea” uttered one volunteer! I purchased the first 40 cups and saucers as a donation to both the hospice and the Centre.

The MCDA board embraced the initiative and so began the donations to outfit our enterprise. People were so happy to find a new home for their precious china that their children no longer valued. The most heart-warming donation came via a person who had enjoyed one of our teas. She noticed a sign on a lawn that said ‘Free’ above a beautiful china cup and saucer. She stopped and found the owner inside. She asked if it really was free and the home owner said yes and subsequently donated an entire set.



The Tea-by-the-Sea program has continued despite the pandemic as the social aspect is essential to our community. The program is well attended and appreciated by our communities. The donations of homemade sweets and offers to volunteer are indicative of community involvement. The interaction between seniors and youth are positive and rewarding. These programs raise over \$10,000 per year with an example of the attendance listed below:

| Tea by the Sea | | | | | |
|------------------|----|------------------|----|------------------|----|
| 08/04 Party Size | | 08/05 Party Size | | 08/11 Party Size | |
| Laura MacN | 10 | Nalepa | 6 | Sharon Black | 4 |
| Rebecca | 4 | Debi | 2 | Debbie | 2 |
| Josephine | 4 | Karl | 2 | Effie | 4 |
| Denise | 4 | Elizabeth | 2 | Eileen | 2 |
| Betty | 4 | Sharon | 6 | Julie | 4 |
| Theresa | 8 | Tanya Harris | 3 | Elizabeth | 7 |
| Fay | 3 | Marg | 2 | Bob | 4 |
| Bob | 4 | Linda | 6 | Total | 27 |
| Total | 41 | Fay | 3 | | |
| | | Sheila | 2 | | |
| | | Paul | 4 | | |
| | | Eileen | 4 | | |
| | | Marissa | 3 | | |
| | | Total | 45 | | |

Story of our Kids Zone:

Main-a-Dieu used to be a thriving community with schools, churches, and a vibrant fishing industry. The fisheries, mainly lobster, remain but the community and its infrastructure have declined to the point where there is a single church and the Coastal Discovery Centre (CDC) as the community hub. That trend has begun to change and was noted by some of the volunteer board members when following the school bus. More young people were choosing to stay even before the pandemic occurred. We are an enduring community and will seize any opportunity to support our citizens. With this in mind we created a Kids Room. With the financial support of our local Sydney Credit Union volunteers worked hard to create a warm friendly environment in which kids can play and caregivers can sit and enjoy a break. There is no charge to enjoy this room and tea and snack are always available across the hallway.



The labour to design and build the room was donated as were the furnishings. One of the biggest achievements was to figure out how to make the room inviting and interesting for children. A group of volunteer parents got together and strategized a way to use vibrant colours that required many coats of paint. There were doubters in the group, but as they persevered with the hours of painting, a warm kaleidoscope came to life in the room. Who knew that green and yellow geometric shapes could evoke joy for both children and the elderly alike? The squeal of a child having fun is a welcome sound at the Coastal Discovery Centre.

The Story of Future Projects:

The MCDA responds to and works with all residents. Two current projects demonstrate an openness to new ideas and changes that can strengthen our community. With a view to the future, we are embarking on two new projects inspired and driven by residents. The first project is to provide a safe space for kids to play outdoors. A group of young parents approached the MCDA to help with their idea to repurpose the local tennis court into a play area for street hockey, basketball, and racquet sports. This initiative has resulted in a partnership to generate a grant proposal to obtain funds to resurface the area and purchase the necessary equipment. These parents and residents are the future of our community and their willingness to step up to make a difference is inspirational to all of us.

The second project relates to the need for a safe walking area in our community. The Main-a-Dieu beach boardwalk has been a fantastic community resource for the past four decades but time and the sea have deteriorated it to the point that it is no longer safe for walking. Due to land ownership issues at the beach the only alternative for walking is the road which is not an option especially for seniors. We are in the process of seeking help to repurpose the local ball field into a walking track to be used by all residents. These types of changes take time to achieve but the dedication and commitment of our volunteers and engagement by residents make changes possible over the long haul.

The Story of Lunch-a-Month:

A recent new volunteer who made the choice to retire in Main-a-Dieu expressed an idea at the end of serving 122 meals at our August Lunch-a-Month. She stated to no one in particular "so this is what it feels like to belong". This statement perfectly describes the spirit engendered working as a volunteer in Main-a-Dieu. There is a culture of openness and genuine interest in others with a willingness to help and to never miss an opportunity to laugh.



The pandemic presented many challenges for the MCDA. One of the positive things that happened to the CDC was related to the fisheries. One of the board members was speaking to her son, a lobster fisherman, who mentioned that because of COVID the brokers would not purchase single clawed lobsters. He was throwing them back into the sea! His mother was aghast at this and suggested he donate them to the Centre. The next challenge was figuring out how to cook and shell over 16 dozen lobsters. There were sore hands and smiling faces when all was said and done. We were able to have a special program of a lobster burger meal over the summer that raised significant funds.



It is a testament to the sense of belonging that so many participate the programs at the CDC. An example of the lunch-a-month participation is below:

| Date: | July 9th, 2021 | | | |
|---------------|----------------|---------|------|------|
| Names | # of Guests | Chowder | Soup | Paid |
| Sid | 4 | 4 | | Y |
| Mary | 3 | 3 | | Y |
| Pauline | 5 | 4 | 1 | Y |
| Jim | 2 | 2 | | Y |
| Ed | 2 | 2 | | Y |
| O'Connell | 3 | 3 | | Y |
| Roberta | 1 | | 1 | Y |
| Anne | 17 | 13 | 4 | Y |
| Frances | 6 | | 6 | Y |
| Rose | 2 | | 2 | Y |
| Glen | 2 | 2 | | Y |
| Mark | 1 | 1 | | Y |
| Elizabeth | 1 | 1 | | Y |
| Marilyn | 10 | 9 | 1 | Y |
| Glenda | 6 | 3 | 3 | Y |
| Wharf | 12 | 12 | | Y |
| Danny | 2 | | 2 | Y |
| Peggy | 2 | 2 | | Y |
| Yvonne | 1 | 1 | | Y |
| Sylvia | 2 | 2 | | Y |
| Dolores | 3 | 3 | | Y |
| Andra | 1 | 1 | | Y |
| Willie | 1 | 1 | | Y |
| Alice | 1 | 1 | | Y |
| Margaret Rose | 1 | 1 | | Y |
| Keith | 4 | 4 | | Y |
| Shepherd | 2 | 2 | | Y |
| Joan | 7 | 2 | 5 | Y |
| Ketih | 3 | 2 | 1 | Y |
| Lenore C | 5 | 5 | | Y |
| Debbie C | 1 | 1 | | Y |
| Glenda | 1 | 1 | | Y |
| Betty | 1 | 1 | | Y |
| Margie C | 1 | 1 | | Y |
| Donnie | 2 | 2 | | Y |
| Gayle | 4 | 4 | | Y |
| Total | 122 | 96 | 26 | |

The Story of the Give and Take Room & the Food Bus:

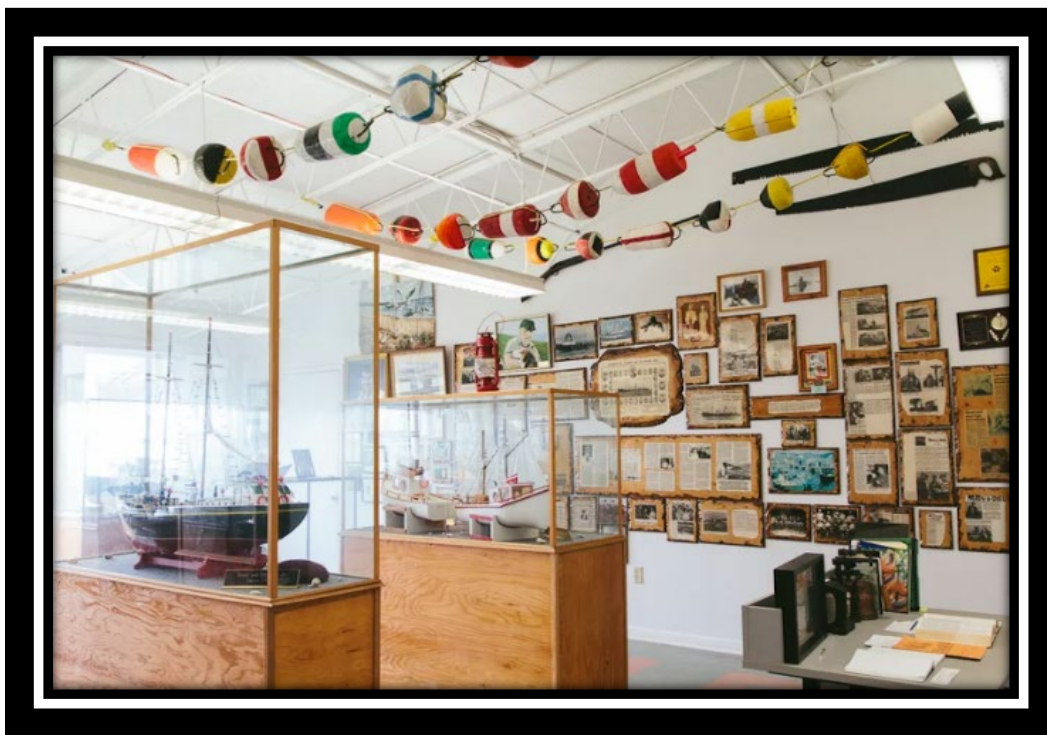
All of the programs at the CDC reflect a philosophy of openness and caring. The Give & Take room is a good example. This room houses donations of a wide variety of items. Recycling is valued and finding a treasure someone else donated is fun. A couple of young girls were assisting with meal preparation for the Lunch-a-Month and when finished, they asked if they could look in the Give & Take room. It was just like it was Christmas morning. They were so excited by the treasures they found. Instead of a financial donation, a wise resident suggested that they choose something of their own to give back to the room. This helped them understand the value of sharing. Volunteers monitor the room and donate to local groups when things outlast their stay keeping the recycling circle going. Donations are always appreciated but never expected.

The Food Bus is a relatively new program in the area and one that is very popular. It was a novel idea to have fresh fruit and vegetables brought directly to our remote rural area. It was a new service and the schedule was unpredictable, but that's not a problem for our community. It only took one or two residents noticing the bus coming along the road to pass along the information that the bus had arrived at the CDC. Low and behold, within 15 minutes there is a lineup to take advantage of any opportunity for fresh produce for a reasonable price. You can also depend on the Facebook community to get the word out!



The Fishers' Museum Story:

One of the unique aspects of the CDC is that it houses the Fishers' Museum. The history of Main-a-Dieu and area is a story of fishing. When the downturn in the fisheries occurred preserving the history became an important testament to the hard work of the men and women who toiled on the sea. The creation of a fishers' museum was the logical choice. All the artifacts in the museum were created by fishers themselves. Over time financial troubles threatened this tribute to our industry. It was the spirit of cooperation and determination not to give up that brought the museum under the care of the MCDA and into its new home at the Coastal Discovery Centre where it remains. It is maintained by donations and is a definite tourist attraction for our visitor to the Centre.



Community Spirit:

The list of what happens at the Coastal Discovery Centre is long as seen in the newsletter below. There is a deep tradition of support and belonging that reaches through generations and there is no better testament to community spirit!!



The Coastal Discovery Centre
2886 Louis-Main-a-Dieu Road Main-a-Dieu, Nova Scotia B1C 1X5
Email: office.mcda@gmail.com Ph: 733-2258

July Newsletter 2021

DROP-IN CENTRE

Schedule

1-3 Monday to Friday

Monday- 1-3pm Drop-In
Tuesday- 1:30pm Bingo
Wednesday- 2pm Tea by the Sea
Thursday- 2pm Tea by the Sea
Friday- 1:30pm Bingo

Library Hours

Tuesday 1:00 PM - 5:00
6:00 PM - 8:00
Friday 10:00 AM - 1:00
2:00 PM - 5:00
Saturday 2:00 PM - 5:00

WELCOME BACK

The CDC has re-opened and we are following all Covid19 protocols. We look forward to offering our summer programs. Tea by the Sea will be on Wednesday and Thursday this year. Reservations required. We are fortunate this summer to welcome three students who will be supporting all our programs.

Due to Covid19 our fundraising activities have been limited. Your support for our Lunch-a-Month and Tea by the Sea will help us get back on track. Donations are always appreciated especially lobsters at this time of year. Visit us and enjoy the many activities offered at the CDC. If you have questions or suggestions, please call 902-733-2258 or email at office.mcda@gmail.com

KIDS ZONE- a place for kids to play and caregivers to take a break. Open whenever the CDC is open.



Mystery Draw tickets are available at the Centre. \$1.00 each



Lunch-a-Month



Due to Canada Day we have moved our lunch to Friday, July 9. The menu will be our traditional seafood chowder or turkey soup with strawberry shortcake for dessert.

Take out only. Pick up from 11:30 to 1:00PM

Reserve your meal by leaving a message at 902-733-2258 or email office.mcda@gmail.com

Or call Elizabeth at 902-733-2803



Reservations required for Lunch a Month and Tea by the Sea
Email: office.mcda@gmail.com / Call 902-733-2258 or Elizabeth at 902-733-2803

2021

JULY

CALENDAR YEAR

CALENDAR MONTH

MONDAY

FIRST DAY OF WEEK

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 01 | 02 |
| | | | Canada Day CDC closed | Drop-In (1:00-3:00) Bingo Library Picture This |
| 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 |
| Drop-In (1:00-3:00) Picture This | Drop-In (1:00-3:00) Bingo Library Picture This | Tea by the Sea 2:00PM Cost \$8.00 | Tea by the Sea 2:00PM Cost \$8.00 | Lunch a Month Cost \$10.00 Bingo, Library |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| Drop-In (1:00-3:00) Picture This | Drop-In (1:00-3:00) Bingo Library Picture This | Tea by the Sea 2:00PM Cost \$8.00 The Good Food Bus | Tea by the Sea 2:00PM Cost \$8.00 | Drop-In (1:00-3:00) Bingo, Library Picture This |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| Drop-In (1:00-3:00) Picture This | Drop-In (1:00-3:00) Bingo Library Picture This | Tea by the Sea 2:00PM Cost \$8.00 | Tea by the Sea 2:00PM Cost \$8.00 | Drop-In (1:00-3:00) Bingo, Library Picture This |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| Drop-In (1:00-3:00) Picture This | Drop-In (1:00-3:00) Bingo Library Picture This | Tea by the Sea 2:00PM Cost \$8.00 | Tea by the Sea 2:00PM Cost \$8.00 | Drop-In (1:00-3:00) Bingo, Library Picture This |