

Community Spirit Award – Stories from the Prospect Communities

Introduction

The diverse, primarily rural/coastal villages, collectively known as the Prospect Communities, encompass communities from Goodwood through West Dover. The Prospect Road, or Route 333, winds through most of them, but some are nestled closer to the coast, down picturesque side roads. While these communities are separated by distance, they come together sharing their pride both in their home neighbourhoods and the greater Prospect Communities. The villages in our area are mainly residential with a smattering of neighbourhood businesses and service providers, set alongside wilderness preserves and pristine lakes and coastline.

Some of these small communities were traditional, self-sustaining fishing villages whose economies are in the process of changing since the collapse of the fisheries, causing economic hardship in areas with rich cultural heritage. Some of these communities have been recognized internationally for their arts and crafts, weaving, rug hooking, woodworking, folk art, painting, and sculpture.

Throughout the area there are countless community initiatives undertaken by residents. What keeps these initiatives alive is community engagement and connectedness. There are many small successes to be celebrated and we are able to share these through prospectcommunities.com

Barb Allen, former Chair, Resource Opportunities Centre (1998-2011):

In the mid 1990's I became the part time coordinator for the Terence Bay & Area C@P Site, which provided community access to a computer lab set up in the Terence Bay School.

We did some fabulous projects, my favourite being Teaching Technology Through Tradition, a digital history project <http://history.prospectcommunities.com/about/index.html>

Conversations with other local non profit organizations always came back to the same issue, the lack of a central recreation facility to serve the larger area, from Goodwood to West Dover.

The Recreation Association started to save money toward a new community centre to serve all of the Prospect Road Communities and in 2003 we were able to demonstrate community support for such an initiative to the Municipality who were conducting their Indoor Recreation Facility Master Plan.

For seven years the Steering Committee worked with the community to design and plan the new facility. Public meetings were very well attended, focus groups were held with every section of the population and everyone's voice was welcomed. One of the most impressive aspects of this outreach work was that no one community insisted that they host the facility but rather everyone came to the same conclusion that it belonged in the centre of the area where the majority of the population lives. Also of note was that no one group demanded to have their own space within the facility, rather every group and demographic were sure that all spaces within the building should be shared multi use spaces available to all.

Since the building opened its doors in 2010 it has been a huge success offering classes and workshops, sports and social events, community celebrations and so much more. We are proud to have the Prospect Road Community Centre in our midst, it certainly is the central hub for the Prospect Communities.

Shirley Jollimore, Current Executive Director, Resource Opportunities Centre, operators of the Prospect Road Community Centre:

With the opening of the Prospect Road Community Centre in 2010, the ROC grew from a strictly

volunteer organization to one whose volunteer board employs up to 60 people in full time, part time, casual/instructor and summer positions. One of the major employers in the area, apart from local schools, we consider ourselves wonderful training ground for young people looking for summer jobs, and a source of economic development for the community at large. We hire program instructors, summer camp counselors, technology assistants, maintenance staff, managers and childcare workers. Many of these positions are funded through program fees but we also rely on provincial and federal employment grants, and use these to expand programming to accommodate as many people as possible. At the centre, we offer free wi-fi and computer access for the community. We host many recreation/sport programs and offer both a preschool and before and after school care for local residents. In the summer we provide week-long day camps for children up to age 12, ensuring local youth have space in their own community to spend their summers while parents have to work. A fitness centre is available for those making physical activity a priority, or looking to supplement other training without needing to go into the city.

We also rely greatly on volunteers from the community to help host regular events like our Friday Feasts, a community meal offered by donation to anyone wishing to partake. The food is made on site and we offer vegetarian and gluten-free options. These monthly events are a wonderful gathering time for people throughout the Prospect Communities, and all are welcome. We also offer a bi-weekly seniors lunch and learn, where a healthy meal is offered by donation and free technology support is provided. We have seniors learning internet basics, and more advanced interactions such as social media and email. Some of the happiest moments are when we can connect grandparents with their grandchildren across the country via Skype or Google Hangouts.

We are the only facility to offer regular Teen Dances in our community. Regularly sold out, these social events allow local youth and their friends from outside the community an opportunity to socialize in a safe, supervised environment that is volunteer run. We also offer a free Youth Sport Drop in every day for our junior high youth, who are within walking distance from the school.

In 2017, a Farmer's Market was established from May to October at the Community Centre. Farmers and local craftspeople are on site biweekly on Sundays to share farm-fresh foods and craftwares with residents of the Prospect Communities. This has provided opportunity for local craftspeople to boost their market awareness, and a venue for sales. It provides a wonderful interaction for residents to interact with farmers, and develop a farm-to-table appreciation for Nova Scotian food. Local musicians come out to play, and at least one community table is available each market for local not-for-profit organizations to hold fundraisers or awareness campaigns and boost their signal with local residents.

One challenge provided by our distance from the city core is the lack of public transportation. The ROC supported a transit pilot several years ago that did not meet the needs of the population, and in 2018-19 will revisit the possibility of door-to-door rural transportation by conducting a feasibility study and engaging in community conversations about the need for this kind of service.

Senior Citizens

Some of our greatest resources in the Prospect Communities are our seniors. We have two active senior groups in the community, who meet on opposite weekdays, for social gatherings at the local legion. These groups plan outings to various events in the community, organizing car pools and coach trips to areas outside Prospect to ensure that their peers without access to transportation are included. They attend other senior-focused events together, and make concentrated efforts to reach out to seniors in the community who are homebound or living alone, to decrease the social isolation that puts many seniors at risk. Senior volunteers participated in a program funded by the New Horizons federal funding opportunity,

organizing social and learning events such as cold plate luncheons with darts and washer toss, a boardwalk stroll and tour of the SS Atlantic Heritage Museum, an RCMP-led Fraud Awareness Session, among other events. Seniors are regular volunteers at community events from yard sales to community meals, and have organized a weekly Jammer's Night at the Community Centre, where local musicians set up and have an informal concert. All musicians and vocalists are welcome to join in, and this event continues to grow as word gets out. Not only are local seniors coming out to be in the audience, they are bringing their friends and families from neighbouring communities as well!

Local Worship Community

The local churches are strongholds in our community, offering not only spiritual outreach and opportunity but are firmly entrenched as broader community support as well. We have several Christian denominations active in Prospect, and just recently a new Ethiopian church has applied for a development permit to add a new religious perspective and the possibility of more diversity in our community.

New Life Baptist Church in Hatchet Lake offers family movie nights, community meals and breakfasts, parent and tot groups and youth events, open to all members of the community. The Pastoral Ministries team from the Anglican Parish of St Timothy and St Paul in Hatchet Lake and Terence Bay run the Prospect Road food share, which is supported by every local non-profit organization and local businesses in terms of food collection. They host different styles of worship services from Sunday night Rock Music to book club-style and video Bible study. They further their community outreach offering programs like Divorce Care and Grief Share, counselling-based supports that are non-denominational and open to anyone. They host a substance recovery program, and a local quilters group that donates their product to charities supporting hospices and homeless shelters. The local Catholic community Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Shad Bay supports missions to Guatemala, local homeless organizations, and offers a variety of worship services and studies. This spring they partnered with the local Boy Scouts to assist in their efforts to attend a national Jamboree, providing auction and volunteer support for weekly fundraisers. Bayside Baptist Church also promotes international outreach and uses their Bayside Care Group to fundraise and provide outreach to local residents in need. They have sponsored home repairs and upgrades and other assistance anonymously when they are aware of someone needing help.

Our local faith community is part of the fabric that keeps the Prospect Communities focused on helping others and growing our compassion for our neighbours. This past year, The Prospect Road Churches' 150 Committee for Reconciliation with First Nations worked with Catherine Martin, a First Nations filmmaker and educator, to present a Blanket Exercise. Their purpose is threefold: to begin to break down barriers between First Nations and settlers within our area so as to increase awareness and understanding of the oppression of First Nations; to take steps towards true reconciliation and right relations in our local communities; to do this work in partnership with First Nations with humility, respect and openness. Therefore, they are attempting to provide opportunities for residents of this area to learn the history of colonization from First Nation perspectives, its consequences for all of us today in Canada, and in particular the history of this area from pre-colonization to the present. The Blanket Exercise is a useful tool for reconciliation and understanding, and is recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a way for Canadians to embrace the need for reconciliation with our First Nations communities.

The Prospect Road Crafter's Market – provided by the Board of Directors

It all began with the Prospect Road Craft Crawl, where local crafters opened their homes for 14 years to offer handmade products for sale in the Fall of every year. We felt it was important to have the event to draw people and tourists to our communities, to see our villages with the breath taking views, and to experience the hospitality of our people. When we heard that we were going to have our own Community Centre in 2010, the community was all a-buzz! We discussed the concept of having everyone under one roof! The friendship of the crafters, and the welcoming of citizens and guests are important to us. Every year, the committee gives back to the groups and organizations that contribute to the success of the event. This is done by way of financial contribution to help them recoup their costs or support their cause. What better way to give back to the community, our community. The Crafters' Market was established and continues to provide a flavour of local artists and artisans. Participants are mostly from the local area from Goodwood to Dover (and many areas in between); but, we've also brought in other local crafts people from the surrounding area, and as far away as Chester. In the spirit of cooperation with the Prospect Road Community Centre, our organizing team has been working hard to making our Crafters' Market the success that it is today. Over the past couple of years, we enjoyed receiving the following accolades: Prospect Communities Volunteer Award 2016, Commendation from the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, and a Congratulatory Message from the House of Commons. Needless to say, we thrive on serving our communities through craft. We even have our own website: www.craftersmarket.prospectcommunities.com

SS Atlantic Heritage Park Society

The immigrant steamship SS Atlantic of the White Star Line, en route to Halifax, ran aground near Lower Prospect, Nova Scotia on April 1, 1873. Of the approximately 950 aboard, some 560 perished in the worst single-vessel marine disaster to occur off the Canadian coast prior to the sinking of the Titanic. Thanks to the efforts of fishermen from Lower Prospect and Terence Bay, nearly 400 were saved. The bodies recovered that were not claimed by relatives were buried in the village of Terence Bay (277 in St. Paul's Anglican Cemetery) and Lower Prospect (150 in the Star of the Sea Roman Catholic Cemetery). Monuments were erected as a sacred memorial to those lost in the disaster.

The SS Atlantic Heritage Park Society is a group of volunteers dedicated to preserving the memory of this dramatic event through research, safekeeping of artifacts and memorabilia, and education. The results of their efforts include the SS Atlantic Heritage Park and Interpretation Center, which is home to the museum and craft shop, the gravesite and monument, the ruins of the church of Rev William Ancient, who was prominent in the rescue, and a park featuring a rustic walking trail and boardwalk, providing wonderful ocean views. We maintain and operate the Interpretation Centre, a lovely boardwalk that wraps the coastline, complete with gazebo. We are committed to providing the opportunity for residents and visitors alike to absorb the history of this event and explore the communities that were involved. Meanwhile, we hope you will take the time to explore our website. We have included historical information and accounts if you would like to learn more about this tragedy. There is also information about the Heritage Park, museum and craft shop. You can also check out our interactive calendar to find out Park and local activities. <http://www.ssatlantic.com/>

Village Green Recreation Society – Jennifer Veres

The Village Green Recreation Society is made up of community volunteers in the Big Lake-Black Duck Run-Scott's Point-McGraths Cove and East Dover areas of the Prospect Road. Through our own email list and Facebook page, we keep in touch with area residents to share information of activities in the hall

and on the park. The VGRS maintains our local recreation hall and adjacent field, and the Hall has played host to various events; birthday parties, anniversary and wedding celebrations, artistic programming and Federal and Provincial polling locations. We host monthly social events there, including concerts and dances, and provide a local gathering place for our residents in their home community. The Hall used to be the local church; we pay homage to our roots by hosting weekly rosary prayers for those who wish to gather for prayer together. We're very proud of our recent Archives project, where we harvested historic photos of our community, enlarged and mounted them on the walls of the halls, and added some written context. This will help preserve the history of our communities long after the current generation has passed on.

Terence Bay Lighthouse Preservation Society

As of May 29, 2015 our lighthouse has earned her heritage status! The federal government has divested itself of lighthouse ownership, and this committee is working closely with Department of Fisheries and Oceans to have ownership turned over to the community. The committee hosts an annual 'Lighthouse Day' celebration each September. Final papers were submitted for the transfer of the deed to the community (through the Terence Bay Lighthouse Committee). There are a few details to get sorted out before we can begin repairs. The next step is for DFO to arrange the staking out of the official right-of-way to the light. Considerable community support within Terence Bay and Lower Prospect are driving this project forward, and the society is grateful for the support from the surrounding communities as well, who recognize the historical importance of lighthouses in our coastal neighbourhoods as part of our shoreline heritage.

Prospect Road Recreation Association – Kelly Carlton, Chair

The Prospect Road Recreation Association (PRRA) is comprised of representatives of various community groups that are active in the Prospect Communities, between the areas of Goodwood to West Dover. Our role is to manage the local area rate in partnership with HRM by way of grant applications for community recreation projects. Additionally, the PRRA also manages the mowing contracts for the sports and recreation fields and parks in the Prospect Communities as well as the outdoor washroom facilities. The PRRA meets monthly and invites members from local groups and organizations with an interest in recreation facilities and programs to attend our monthly meetings.

Youth Grant Fund: The PRRA has also established a Youth Grant Fund. This fund is open to youth who reside in the Prospect Communities from Goodwood to West Dover, who are seeking help to subsidize National level play or above, or the highest level of the sport being played. Grants of \$200 per player are available or \$1000 per team. These can be applied for throughout the year.

Prospect Peninsula Residents Association– Allison Lawlor, President

Local residents formed the PPRA in 1983 in opposition to a developer's plan to use Kelly's Point as a site for building offshore oil platforms. Since then, the PPRA has continued to focus much of its attention on the protection of the area's beautiful, natural habitat, especially the High Head trail along the shoreline. The PPRA has worked for decades to ensure that as many pieces of land in that area are protected from development. We continue to work closely with Nature Conservancy of Canada and the provincial government on this front. In recent years, the PPRA has also acted as an umbrella group for the building of a trail off Selig's Road and has held annual community garbage clean-ups along Prospect Road in the spring. The Community Wharf, known locally as The Govie, survived both Juan and Noel intact and is still able to offer temporary berth. With ownership of the wharf comes the responsibility to maintain liability insurance. This and other expenditures are paid for through a number of PPRA fund-raisers. The biggest

of these events is our Lobster Supper, held in August. Every year the PPRA holds Canada Day celebrations in Prospect Village. Children's games, and a free community BBQ are all part of the fun. In December, the PPRA hosts a Children's Christmas party, including a visit from Santa. The PPRA is also about helping people in need. Fund-raising events have been held for local residents on the peninsula and for international relief efforts in Haiti and to help sponsor a refugee family from Syria.

Route 333 Refugee Sponsorship Association – Allison Lawlor, Chair

Through the tremendous efforts of the community, a family of three from Syria finally arrived in Halifax on July 13, 2017.

After 18 months of fund-raising, planning and waiting by the Route 333 Refugee Sponsorship Association, the family of three were greeted by a group of about 20 excited children and adults at the Halifax airport. They were tired from their long journey from Lebanon, where they had been living for more than six months, but were happy to have arrived safely.

Thanks to the efforts of many volunteers, a widowed mother and her two daughters were taken to their furnished apartment. There they found their fridge and cupboards filled with donated food and other useful items for them to begin their new lives. The generosity of people they had never met before touched them. They were eager to start new lives in Canada and began English lessons upon arrival.

Route 333 Refugee Sponsorship Association was supported by the entire Prospect Communities, raising \$20,000 to help support this family during their first year in Canada. We have worked in partnership with the Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth and the Halef family, the owners of Halifax Exhibition Centre, to sponsor the family through the federal government's private refugee sponsorship program.

Schools – submitted by Barb Allen

The Prospect communities are home to a wonderful family of schools that feed into Halifax West High school. Young people are our future, and the values instilled in our young people are reinforced in all of our schools daily. Our school communities each work in concert with the community at large. Every opportunity to bring community into our schools is extended, from the RCMP dropping by to say good morning, to the local artists who give freely of their time and talent to complement the arts programs in our schools. These valuable relationships are developed by dedicated school staff to ensure our children have the best possible educational opportunities. We are indeed fortunate to have school staff who value the input and influence of volunteers, as it is through exposure to the selflessness of community volunteers that our children learn the value of giving back. We are proud that each of our schools practices PEBS – positive effective behavior support – and that each belongs to the League of Peaceful Schools, all of which contribute to a positive learning environment for our children.

Volunteers play a large role in school life at all levels. From classroom helpers, to library support, chaperones on field trips, and leaders of fundraising efforts. Each of our schools has their own Home & School group and each has an active School Advisory Council made up of parents, community, staff, and students. All of these dedicated individuals contribute to a well rounded and inclusive school system. The focus of our schools is student excellence, which is apparent in the accomplishments of our students in recent assessments and evaluations. Our schools are a tremendous community resource and our students are wonderful ambassadors for the schools and the Prospect communities at large.

In Conclusion

The pride our residents have in their communities is demonstrated in hundreds of ways. While each community has its own unique aspects that define them, this group of communities bands together to offer mutual support and sharing ideas and volunteer resources whenever possible. We offer the Prospect Communities as an excellent candidate for the Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award.