



# Eastern Shore Musquodoboit Valley LITERACY NETWORK

Promoting Lifelong Learning

**Bi-Annual Report September 1, 2020-August 31, 2022**





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**Mission Statement:** To promote lifelong learning by providing adult education opportunities and encouraging family literacy within the rural communities served by our Network.

Our Network is a community learning organization that is supported by the Province of Nova Scotia through the Department of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE) under the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learners program (NSSAL)

**Values:** We work closely with adults and families who participate in our programs. We support them in whatever capacity we can and advocate for their success. Team ESMV has our learners' best interests at the forefront of our work. Our success is a result of our ability to hold our learners in the highest regard while providing accessible, non-judgemental, relevant and meaningful programming.

**Services:** We work toward our mission and goals by offering adult learning programs at various levels, including GED preparation classes and beyond. In addition, we are always on the lookout for grants that allow us to offer lifelong learning workshops and programs covering: employability and essential skills, digital literacy, financial literacy, food literacy, mental health, music and art literacy and appreciation, as well as those that encourage the love of literature and reading. We encourage literacy across the lifespan by partnering within the community and hosting family literacy programs, events, and book giveaways that provide families with the opportunity to learn together in fun, interactive, and engaging ways.

ESMV Literacy Network is a member of **Literacy Nova Scotia (LNS)**, whose vision statement is as follows: All Nova Scotians achieve their learning goals and fulfill their potential.

ESMV Literacy Network is a member of the **Association of Community Learning Organizations**, whose mission statement is **to support community based learning and to advocate for community learning organizations and the learners they represent.**

## Areas Served and Contact Information:

*We serve the beautiful Eastern Shore (inclusive of Porters Lake to Ecum Secum) and the Musquodoboit Valley (inclusive of Dean to Dutch Settlement).*

## Offices are located in:

- 22756 Highway 7, Sheet Harbour (Main Office)
- 12280 Highway 224, Middle Musquodoboit
- 325 Porters Lake Station Road

## Main contact information:

- 902-391-0014
- [esmv@adulteracynetwork.ca](mailto:esmv@adulteracynetwork.ca)
- Website: [adulteracynetwork.ca](http://adulteracynetwork.ca)
- Facebook and Instagram: [@esmvliteracy](https://www.facebook.com/esmvliteracy)

Our Sheet Harbour and Musquodoboit Valley locations are supported by third party organizations through the sharing of rental costs. Our Porters Lake and outreach community is served out of our space in Porters Lake in the MusGo Rider building for reasonable and affordable cost. These partnerships serve ESMV Literacy as a conscientious effort to responsibly manage rental funds and maintain positive community relationships. We thank the following community partners:

- Nova Scotia Department of Justice  
Sheet Harbour office/classroom space
- Eastern Shore Musquodoboit Community Health Board  
Musquodoboit Valley office/classroom space
- MusGo Rider Rural Transportation Association  
Porters Lake office/classroom space



Sheet Harbour Office



Middle Musquodoboit Office



Porters Lake Office

## **ESMV Literacy Board of Directors 2020-2022**

Earline Sharpe – Board Chair - Moser River

Ena Spears – Treasurer - Sheet Harbour

Susan Burt – Secretary - Port Dufferin

Jessie Greenough - Director - Musquodoboit Harbour

Tracy Lowe – Director - Sheet Harbour

Heather Harnish - Director - Musquodoboit Valley

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

Tracy Lowe - retired her position in May 2022

Jessie Greenough - retired her position in June 2022

## **ESMV Literacy Staff 2020-2022**

Vicki Rutledge – Executive Director

Tobbi Dyer – Administrative Assistant to June 2021  
Community Learning Practitioner

Heather Duplain - Community Learning Practitioner /February 2022 to June 2022

Shirley Spears - Administrative Assistant/Adult Learning Program Instructor

Dawn Parks – Adult Literacy Coordinator to June 2021

Crystal Legere – Adult Literacy Coordinator/Community Learning Practitioner to October 2021

Lola Hill – Adult Learning Program Instructor to June 2022

Irma Snyder – Adult Learning Program Instructor

Justin Legere – Adult Learning Program Instructor

Jeff Froese-Stoddard - Adult Learning Program Instructor

## ESMV Literacy Board of Directors Report for AGM

September 2020 - August 31,2022

The Board of Directors is very proud to be part of the activities and outreach for our region. These past few years of COVID restrictions have allowed us to look inwards and begin to strategically plan for the Boards future. We worked on developing Board Policy for six key areas, and will continue to expand these policies each year. We reviewed our By-laws and other guiding documents to ensure alignment between us and our stakeholders. In May 2022 we attended a facilitated Strategic Planning session which really empowered and excited us. Throughout these past few years, we welcomed new Board members and also said goodbye to Board members. Speaking of that, we are recruiting for our Board. If our mission and value statement align with your values and contributing your talents and time to the work we do is something you may be interested in, please visit the ESMV Literacy website at [esmv@adultracynetwork](mailto:esmv@adultracynetwork) for more information. We look forward to continuing to improve and help provide lifelong learning.

Respectfully submitted:

***Susan Burt***, Secretary  
**ESMV Literacy Board**



## This Is Us:

Eastern Shore Musquodoboit Valley Literacy Network, known as ESMV Literacy, is supported by a governance Board of Directors, and an engaged, dedicated staff. Our core funding comes from the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learners grant through the Department of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE). In 2022, under the new provincial government, NSSAL funding was shifted to The Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration (LSI). Administration of our network is supported by the Adult Education Division directly by our Adult Education Coordinator, Stephanie Patriquin, who manages the Northern Region. This provides the gateway for our network to work with best practice principles, participate in professional development opportunities, support adult learners with approved programming curriculum, and to network and build valuable relationships with other CLOs serving rural Nova Scotia.

## What Inspires Our Programming?

We know from networking with our partners, from expert studies and from experience with folks who access our services that improved literacy is the pathway to an improved lifestyle. Sometimes education can be a life line, especially in today's digital world and the expectations to be able to function within that world. We work to empower our adult learners by providing relevant programming that supports education and skill development. Education opens the door to better paying jobs, broader career choices, improved physical and mental health, connection with family and friends, engagement in community, and fosters a love of learning that can be passed down to future generations.

### Adult Literacy in Canada (Stats from ABC Life Literacy - Our Federal Partner)

- 48% of adult Canadians have literacy skills that fall below a high school level, which negatively affects their ability to function at work and in their personal lives.
  - 17% function at the lowest level, where they may, for example, be unable to read the dosage instructions on a medicine bottle (*OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, 2013*).
- Over half (54.7%) of adult Canadians score in the two lowest skill levels in numeracy, up from 49.8% in 2003.
- People with lower literacy skills are more likely to be unemployed than those who scored higher (*Skills in Canada: First Results from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) – Statistics Canada, 2013*).
- Canada ranked 11th out of the 23 OECD countries evaluated by the PIAAC (*The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies*) on the percentage of adults with suitable literacy skills.
- The assessment found that the percentage of adults with suitable literacy skills (48%) has increased notably over the past 10 years (*OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, 2013*)



## ACRONYMS

ALP – Adult Learning Program

ANSCLLO – Association of Nova Scotia Community  
Learning Organizations

CLO – Community Learning Organization

E3 - Education, Essential Skills, Empowerment

GED – General Education Diploma

LAE - Department of Labour and Advanced Education

LNS – Literacy Nova Scotia

LSI – Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration

NSSAL - Nova School for Adult Learners

*During our 2020-2021 reporting period we supported 14 adult learners on their journey to achieving their GED certificate. In 2021-2022 we served 23 adult learners, three of our learners have passed all five of their GED exams and have successfully achieved their GED.*

## NSSAL Funded Programs and Projects

### **The Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL) Mandate:**

(NSSAL) administers, coordinates and supports the development and delivery of adult education programs through learning partners in Nova Scotia. NSSAL offers clear, accessible pathways from adult basic education to a high school credential, empowering Nova Scotians to achieve their learning and employment goals. ESMV Literacy is a learning partner in Nova Scotia, called a Community Learning Organization

### **Adult Learning Program/GED Prep:**

This program provides support for adult learners who have an interest or need to increase their education, and includes a wide range of learning opportunities. The Adult Learning Program provides basic literacy skills instruction, such as supporting adults 18 and over who want to learn to read or write or who want to increase their reading, writing or other academic skills, up to and including GED prep classes. There are five exams that people must write and pass to successfully complete their GED program.



## Lifelong Learning Programs: E3 (Education, Essential Skills, Empowerment)

### NSSAL Approved Programs:

In November of 2020, NSSAL held information sessions for Community Learning Organizations to introduce an opportunity for CLO's to develop E3 programming through a "Sandbox" initiative. NSSAL supported Sandbox initiatives with extra program funding and resources. First steps of submitting an expression of interest was followed by approval to submit grant applications. Thirteen Expressions of Interest applications were submitted by various CLOs and were approved.

ESMV Literacy was successful in our application for our Digital Smarts program.

NSSAL recognized the need to support CLO's across the province as they struggled to achieve program goals throughout the many waves of the pandemic. CLO's were developing new and innovative ways, using digital technology, pick up and drop off worksheets and mailout packages, to keep learners engaged. In consultation with ANSCLO, The Adult Education Division invested in the new Adult Education Division position of Blended Learning Consultant.

The position was designed to build capacity, provide training, consult with CLO's, develop toolkits and more to support CLO's to navigate successfully within the new digital world, and to support learners on their path to higher education.

### Digital Smarts Program:

ESMV Literacy recognized the hardship of the virtual classroom as a result of Covid. Our staff analyzed, developed, designed and implemented program curriculum to serve parents/caregivers with their new role of supporting at home class time within the world of ChromeBooks. Through a mock Google Classroom we helped parents learn the tools required to keep up with their child's assignments. The program also provided support to parents/caregivers in communicating virtually with teachers and administrators in the school system. Our evaluation of the program was an overall success, though some of the participants were more savvy than others, we were happy to have the support of those folks as we moved through the sessions. The evaluations and group discussions also identified the need to provide basic digital learning opportunities beyond this pilot program, which led to the development of our SquareOne Digital Learning and Computer Basics programming. The funding support from NSSAL for our Digital Smarts program allowed us to provide ChromeBooks and sessions for **10** families to participate in. This was a learning experience for all those involved in the project; administrators, instructors, and program participants.



Digital Smarts is a new, **FREE** program for parents, designed to help you learn how to use the PowerSchool Portal and Google Classroom. Keep up with your kids and improve your own skills at the same time! Classes start in February; space is limited.

Don't miss your chance - call or text  
ESMV Literacy to sign up today!



## SquareONE Digital Learning



**Square  
ONE  
Digital  
Learning**

In response to feedback from our Digital Smarts program as well as through general community inquiries we developed and delivered programs entitled SquareOne Digital Learning and Computer Basics. These programs began at the very beginning (square one) with learning how to turn on the computer. From there, we took a step by step approach, with frequent repetition through hands-on learning, to cover using a mouse and keyboard, basic computer skills, internet safety, searching skills, creating and using emails, and communication through social media etc. Feedback was extremely positive with learners stating that family members (usually grandchildren) or classes they had tried to learn from in the past went too quickly or skipped too many steps. This approach met their needs, boosted confidence in their ability, and alleviated feelings of frustration. They reported that family members were excited to hear from them and celebrated their success. The ability to connect and engage virtually with family and friends also contributed to more social engagement.

All our programs are evaluated throughout and at the completion. We learned from this program that there are others in the communities our network serves that are more savvy and needing to learn more advanced digital skills for personal, volunteer, and employment growth.

***“By taking these classes there is a lot I want to learn. I just want to be able to keep up with the digital world today and to communicate with my children and grandchildren. I want to thank you so much for all your help and this wonderful experience.”***



## Tech Connect Program

The development of our Tech Connect program was a direct response to support NSSAL E3 programming which allowed us to support the recommendations from the evaluation of our Square One program. ESMV team worked collaboratively to develop a required program planner for NSSAL to support the request for funding. Our program was approved and we look forward to the launch of this new E3 digital program for the fall of 2022. Tech Connect will teach learners with various levels of ability and is broken into 5 modules, inclusive of 12 teaching sessions each. Module 1 is designed to support those with very limited and/or no digital skills at all, and are looking to learn the basics of computers and other tech devices. Participants can progress through the modules or they can sign up for the level of module that works best for them. The various modules are inclusive of Microsoft Word, Google Workspace, social media for personal use and business promotion, internet safety, and more in response to learner needs. Through NorthStar assessment, participants are able to earn certificates of completion which can be added to portfolios to help increase job success and promotion.



*“Great friends, food and interesting conversation. I never knew a book club could be so much fun and entertaining!!!”*

*“This program was more than I expected: great people, covered a lot of events, had fun and learned. I even took what I learned home and passed it on.”*

## Chrome, BOOKS & Bytes

Chrome BOOKS & Bytes was designed to combine aspects of a book club, digital technology program, and cooking experience, along with the exploration of arts, history, geography and culture, to enhance learner’s essential skills in a fun and accessible environment. As the program explored audible books and ereaders it encompassed a universal design for learning approach while integrating E3 competencies and levels. This program embraced a variety of love of learning sessions encouraged a positive and healthy learning engagement supporting all learners with an equal opportunity to succeed. A unique aspect of this program is that a single book, chosen with input from learners, formed the root of discussion over the duration of the program so that learners could take their time and deep-dive into the material and relevant discussions and activities. The virtual exploration allowed learners to increase their comfort levels with digital exploration, safe searching, information seeking and exploring ideas. As an E3 program, Chrome Books & Bytes was designed to enhance digital literacy, cultural awareness, critical thinking and engaging with others.

We launched our first Chrome, Books and Bytes program during the winter of 2022 and had **18** folks sign up and participate.



*“Covid 19 changed our lives but this program brought life back to normal. Learning to use Chromebooks, reading the book, and cooking such exotic foods made my life richer.”*

## Grant Funded Programs:

Eastern Shore Musquodoboit Valley Community Health Board Wellness Project - redesigned in response to COVID restrictions. Funds received by **ESM Community Health Board** referenced in our 2019-2020 annual report were redesigned and delivered in the winter months of 2021. We were able to complete the objectives of our original grant during the 2020 - 2021 year.

On March 18th/19th, 2021, with funding provided by our the Eastern Shore Musquodoboit Community Health Board, our Coordinator, Crystal Legere, certified Mental Health First Aid Trainer, trained and certified 12 participants in Mental Health First Aid, provided an overview of current/existing community supports and provided the participants with a Mental Health Commission of Canada Mental Health First-Aid certificate. This certification is a recognizable addition to a resume or enhanced personal coping and resilience tool kit.

### Music Moves Me

In keeping with the desired outcomes expressed in our grant proposal, and written in our 2020 report, we were able to support the Music Moves Me program within a virtual platform. We hired a professional musician and with the support of our multi talented team member, Tobbi Dyer, who is a qualified videographer we were able to tape multiple music videos to be posted on our new youtube



channel and available for access via our website link. The work involved for editing and posting some of the videos is still in progress, but the groundwork has been completed, and we are looking forward to the posting of all the songs that were recorded. We enjoyed linking our music video for the ABC song to our Jolly Phonics activities for families to access and enjoy.

**Copy this link: <https://bit.ly/ABCsongESMV>**

### Long Life Learning Series

With permission from CHB, we were able to redesignate funds not able to be spent for the original request of bringing artists into the community (because of Covid restrictions). We provided participants from our Eat, Read, Love Program with Self Care mail outs to help boost mental wellness. We also were able to enhance our Chrome, Books and Bytes Program by taking folks on a field trip for an authentic cultural food experience related to the book they read.

***“Thank you ladies for all your assistance and for making this such a memorable evening. Good food, laughs, and most of all special people. Look forward to our next meeting!”***

## Emergency Community Support Fund through NS Rural Communities Foundation: Connected Together

In September of 2020, as a result of the funding applied for in June 2020, we were able to return to our work spaces feeling much safer and ready to tackle our new approach for running our programs. We wanted to keep our learners connected, reduce stress and anxiety and help folks continue on their path in a safe environment. We were also concerned about the safety and well being of our staff members. We were able to keep everyone working, connected and safe. We were awarded \$20,782.00 to support a blended learning platform (online and in person) and to alleviate other financial burdens brought on by COVID 19. This money was a saving grace during the difficult days of the pandemic and alleviated a lot of the stress factors of functioning through this time. This support allowed us to purchase COVID cleaning supplies, masks, rapid tests and air purifiers. We were able to purchase laptops, Ipads, and mifi devices (for cell internet service), along with data for folks who weren't able to afford the added cost associated with learning online. We were able to offer our learners the opportunity to work from home, work within our space in smaller socially distanced classrooms and continue on their learning journey. This grant was awarded by the federal government through the Rural Communities Foundation. With surplus funds from the grant we were able to purchase "wrap around" supports for our learners, such as gas cards and grocery cards. These supports enhance accessibility to our programs and make it possible for folks to enter our programs without adding unaffordable costs to their learning experience.

***"I like the atmosphere because it's warm and friendly.  
I like the individual help we get while we are learning."***

### Tech Savvy Seniors:

With \$6,011.00 of funding from New Horizons Grant for Seniors, we were able to support seniors to increase their digital literacy skills. We purchased iPads, keyboards, and stylus pens to help improve ability and teach areas of interest. Seniors supported one another and engaged in many online platforms. They learned how to navigate to areas of interest and more. They discovered how to recognize scams and learned internet safety tips. Through participation in our program folks were able to share a meal and stories with one another which opened the door to new friendships and enhanced community engagement. Curriculum from the program was developed in response to learner input and requests. People learned from our direct instruction, but also learned from each other as more questions and suggestions arose. By the end of the program folks were very familiar with their devices and were well on their way to becoming TECH SAVVY Seniors. It was heartwarming and rewarding as we watched this wise generation become more competent in the digital world and to realize the wisdom they had to share with one another. (Copy Link: <https://bit.ly/YouTubeESMV>).

***"I decided to join this group to further my education because we are in a digital world now and it is really hard to understand what is going on unless you take some classes and learn. You can't keep giving your computer to your son or grandchildren to get them to explain what is going on."***

## Seniors Connect

The success of **Tech Savvy Seniors** inspired us to reapply to New Horizons Grants for Seniors for funding to expand the pilot for delivery in our Musquodoboit Harbour/Porters Lake and Middle Musquodoboit communities. We renamed the program **Seniors Connect**, because of the feedback expressed by the participants about how they valued and benefitted from the social engagement and connection with one another. We were successful in our application and will run **Seniors Connect** in the fall of 2022.



Between 2018 and 2020 there was an increase of 232,000 internet users in Canada representing a decrease of non-users by 0.9%. Unsurprisingly, in 2020 there was an overall increase in people participating in digital voice or video calls. This represented 23% of people with basic digital skills and 54.7% of people with intermediate digital skills (an increase of 10.8% for basic users and 18.6 % for intermediate users).

However, despite their increased online presence, **only 8.7% of the basic users and 23.2 % of intermediate users adjusted their privacy settings to protect personal information, compared to 84.8% of advanced users.**

**This highlights the glaring need for less proficient users to learn how to safely use the internet.**

(Statistics Canada, 2022, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/36-28-0001/2022004/article/00004-eng.htm>)

## Food Programs:

### The Mobile Food Market

This initiative brings healthy, affordable, high quality foods to HRM neighborhoods who have limited access. This food initiative was up and running in the Musquodoboit Valley. We were approached by our local community health board to offer the program in the Sheet Harbour community and we were happy to be able to provide this service with support from MusGo Rider and Halifax Public Libraries. This program made it possible to provide fresh produce to folks at a significantly reduced cost. This project supports healthier choices. ESMV Literacy supplied each food bag with a recipe that encouraged trying new foods. We provided instruction for cutting, and processing (cooking, freezing, preserving) various fruits and vegetables. This is a great avenue for us to promote our philosophy that “learning happens everywhere”, while supporting whole health.

### Nourish Your Roots

We supported this initiative which provided produce boxes to families in need for Thanksgiving and were delivered in partnership with MusGo Rider.

### Learner Support Programs

We are always on the lookout for ways to support our Helping Hands program designed to help folks with the added cost associated with attending programs. We look to community grants to help with some of these supports. In the past we have requested transportation support via MusGo Rider within the context of our grant requests, have received support from our local Community Health Board and we will continue to explore grant opportunities which allow us to continue providing this support. We recognize that worry and stress about how to afford lunch or gas expenses are sometimes the game changer for program attendance and adult learner success. Again, we were able to use surplus RCF funding to provide some of this essential support during this reporting period to the benefit of our learners.



## Family Literacy Program:

Our goal for our family literacy programming is to promote and encourage literacy development across the lifespan by creating, developing, and facilitating fun, interactive, and educational community events, programs, and initiatives that bring families together. We promote the philosophy that learning happens everywhere and we believe in lifelong and experiential learning.



***During this fiscal reporting year, we hosted, facilitated, and supported various programs, and initiatives that promoted and enhanced family literacy in the communities we serve with our community partners.***

Statistics Canada has found that in 2020 there was a large decrease in the age-appropriate literacy levels once children were of school age. In discussions with professionals working with young children, we have become aware of the reduced levels of school readiness in young children since Covid restrictions have loosened and programs are back in place.

**This highlights the critical role that ESMV can play in providing family literacy support.**

**Table 2: Number of Children and Youth with Below Desirable Literacy Skills - Upper Bound**

	2020 Population <sup>1</sup>	% with Low Literacy Skills	Population with Below Desirable Literacy	Source of %
<b>0-5-year-olds</b>	2,325,082	8%	186,007	EDI
<b>6-9-year-olds</b>	1,641,465	26%	426,781	EQAO Assessment
<b>10-14-year-olds</b>	2,072,100	19%	393,699	EQAO Assessment
<b>15-year-olds</b>	398,489	14%	55,788	PISA
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>1,062,275</b>	

**1. Statistics Canada Table: 17-10-0005-01 (formerly CANSIM 051-0001). Retrieved October 2020.**

<https://childrensliteracy.ca/cclf/media/PDFs/Deloitte-Report-An-Economic-Overview-of-Children-s-Literacy-in-Canada.pdf>

## Love of Learning/Jolly Phonics:

### Family Literacy Initiative Endowment Fund (FLIEF)

FLIEF provides a grant opportunity for organizations to apply for funding to support projects with a family literacy focus for children 0 to 6.

With approval we used unspent FLIEF funds from our **Love of Learning** project, defined in our 2020 report, to support a school readiness program: **Jolly Phonics**. This program was delivered in partnership with Dartmouth Learning Network, Musquodoboit Valley Family Resource Centre, Between the Bridges, Northgrove Family Resource and Halifax Public Libraries in the winter months of 2022 through a private online interactive facebook group. The Jolly Phonics program promotes a systematic and progressive approach to teaching children essential literacy skills, and encourages early literacy development. The Jolly Phonics program supports caregivers/parents and children ages 0-6 as they engage in fun multi-sensory activities that are delivered through letter sounds, fun actions, stories and songs through program-specific books and materials.



# Jolly Phonics

We applied for new grant funding and received approval to continue offering the Jolly Phonics program into our 2022-2023 year. As a result of evaluation from our 2022 families, we will be working to deliver the program in person, in community, which will provide the requested hands on support folks felt they were missing, the engagement with other caregivers/parents, socializing for the little ones, and the ultimate result of enhancing the value of the program. It is our hope to work with and provide support to our community family resource centres for the future delivery of the **Jolly Phonics Program**.

## A Brief Overview of Family Literacy events and Engagements (Fall 2020 to Summer 2022)



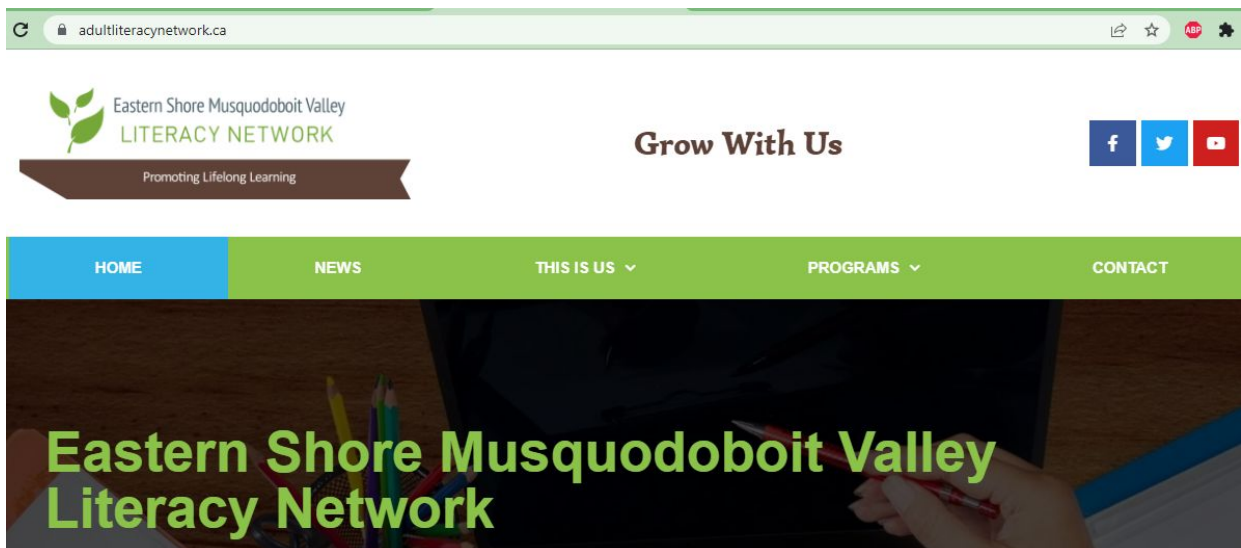
- Christmas on Main Street in Sheet Harbour outdoor event 2020-2021 (140 children)
- Gaetz Brook Legion Community Kids Christmas Party 2021 (80 books)
- Schools Plus: partnership to provide Christmas bags for children 2021 (75 children)
- Timbits Hockey Christmas Party 2021 (63 books)
- National Family Literacy Day (ABC Life Literacy Themes): 2021, 2022 promoting literacy with community partners through engagement in fun interactive games, crafts and books (100+ children)
- Porters Lake Hallowe'en Trail Walk book giveaway 2021 (225 families)
- Easter Egg Hunt in Partnership with MVFRC and Halifax Public Libraries 2022 (50 children)
- Musquodoboit Harbour Public Library launch for Summer Reading 2022 Program (43 books)
- Sheet Harbour - Heritage Society Fun Children's Day 2022 (60 books)
- Hans Christian Andersen Birthday Celebration (April 2021) Contest to encourage reading (20 plus children)
- Dr. Suess's Birthday Celebration (March 1-4, 2022)- Contest to encourage reading (15 children)
- Summer Kick Off event 2022 (50 plus families)
- Winter Puzzle Swap 2022 Promoted family interaction (65 families)



**First Books Canada:** *We are thrilled to report that we have won the first ever **Best Home Library Project** grant offered through **First Book Canada!** We were one of 11 recipients of this new grant offering across Canada. This money will be spent in the new fiscal year of 2022/2023. Watch for fun pop up events coming to your community in partnerships with libraries and family resource centres.*

## Promotion/Networking

- With \$2,500.00 of funds from the **Department of Heritage and Culture** we were able to launch our website. We hired Patrick McLaughlin of McLaughlin Web Development Systems who worked closely with our team partner, Dawn Parks, who helped design the look and feel of our new site. We think it turned out beautifully, so please be sure to check it out at [www.adultliteracynetwork.ca](http://www.adultliteracynetwork.ca). We continue to access services from McLaughlin Web Development for our updates and tech support.
- We maintained and updated our Facebook and Instagram presence and enjoyed providing literacy tips and event notifications. We posted various literary contests with a chance to win grocery or gas cards, or children's books.
- We posted a Google Survey for insight into community needs.
- We advertised our programs in the Eastern Shore Cooperator
- We continue to participate in community meetings, support community events, hand out our promotional materials, and talk one on one with folks to promote our programs.
- We are a member of Literacy NS, The Association for NS Learning Organizations and the Sheet Harbour Chamber of Commerce. One of our students currently sits on the Board of Literacy NS. These memberships broaden awareness of our organization.
- We continued to produce our Literacy Look quarterly newsletter - but had to discontinue due to loss of human resources.
- Grad Packs: 2022 graduates of Musquodoboit Valley Rural High were provided with an insert in their grad packs that promoted the supports within our network, and offered a coupon to their local ice cream shop.
- Ongoing partnerships with community organizations expand opportunities to promote our programs.



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our team was busy improving their skills to better serve their positions and to support their learners. NSSAL provides Professional Development funds to allow instructors and staff to improve their skills and knowledge in relevant educational opportunities, such as tuition fees to cover courses.

NSSAL Training Opportunities

### Camera Training

Assessment Training: Communications and Math Employment Readiness Assessment. This is a tool used to place program participants in the correct level of learning and program stream, and helps folks to function at a level that enables them to succeed.

### Northstar Training

We are a registered agency with NorthStar Digital. This assessment tool helps us understand the level of digital skills someone has and allows us to understand where to begin. This program can be used by learners for personal and/or career development or as a certification program to build up portfolios. Certificates are available when learners take NorthStar online assessments with proctor trained facilitators, which all ESMV Literacy staff are required to complete.

### D2L Brightspace Learning Management System

Two online-only, asynchronous courses presented through

1. Teaching and Learning Online 101 (TLO 101)
2. Instructional Design Strategies 101 (ID 101)

### Zoom Training

This was relevant training that helped us figure out how to stay connected with each other, our partners and community and how to support our learners and programs.

### E3 Training - Education, Essential Skills, Empowerment

This extensive training was provided to staff of CLO's to assist in the development and design of new curriculum to align with the outcomes of the E3 program. The program is tied to the federal government essential skills and helps folks expand their opportunities to be successful in life.

### Lampss training for Administrators

Labour Market Program Support System) Service Registration and Learner Management System Training. This system registers learners in our programs, provides stats for NSSAL, and provides NSSAL with important information that allows our programs to be supported by government funding. The system also acts as a tool to support the adult learners journey, so as they progress through their goals there is a record of their achievements. This information can be directly transferred to other CLOs if learners move outside of the community.

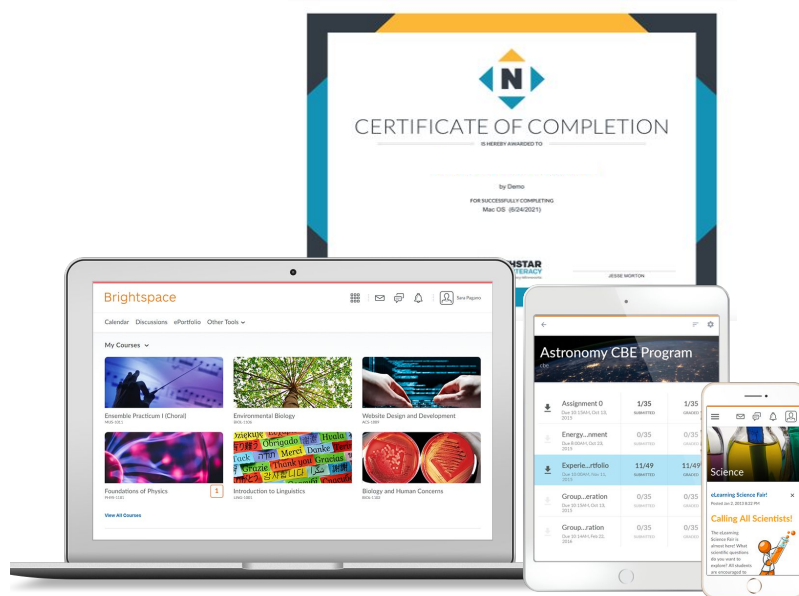
Other training for staff that was supported with **NSSAL Professional Development Funds** was:  
Standard First Aid Certification and Food Handlers Certification

## Literacy Nova Scotia training (LNS)

Wednesday Webinars. Instructors and practitioners participated in a variety of webinar workshops designed to support the learners and to build practitioner capacity. These webinars were the LNS response to the Covid pandemic, and replaced the annual LNS in person conference.

## NS Foundational Training for Adult Literacy Practitioners

This training is provided by Literacy Nova Scotia and is presented in an online platform. There are nine course subjects plus practicum provided in this training, and a certificate completion requires six plus the practicum. The training objective is to increase practitioner knowledge and skills and is designed to support adult learning principles, and increase awareness of the uniqueness of the adult learning experience. ESMV Literacy asks that all staff participate in this training and achieve their certification.



## COVID 19 RESPONSE EFFORTS:

During our 2021-2022 school year we continued to follow Public Health protocols. We remained aware and cognizant of the health risks to our learners and staff. We adopted new best practices for delivery of our programs. Classes were smaller, social distancing was respected and masks were optional but available, along with hand sanitizer and Covid Rapid Tests. We used our air purifiers, aired out classrooms, and sanitized surfaces and materials before and after classes. We adopted a vaccination policy and ensured staff and learners tested when at risk of Covid exposure.

NSSAL supported these social distancing best practices by providing additional rental funds to allow us to rent larger more accommodating program spaces. We were also awarded a **\$10,000.00 Tech Grant from NSSAL** to purchase technology equipment needed to support our lending programs, online blended learning programs, zoom subscriptions, and up to date technology for our instructors and other staff members.

## Thank you to our Funding Partners who make our work possible!

- Department Of Communities, Culture And Heritage
- Department of Labour and Advanced Education
- Eastern Shore Musquodoboit Community Health Board
- Family Learning Initiative Endowment Fund
- Literacy Nova Scotia
- Nova Scotia Rural Community Foundation (ESCF Federal Initiative)

## *THANK you to the community partners that we continue to work with:*

- Dutch Settlement Elementary School
- Eastern Shore Memorial Hospital
- Eastern Shore Musquodoboit Community Health Board
- Gaetz Brook Legion
- Gerald Hardy Memorial Society
- HRM Parks and Recreation
- Lake & Shore Community Recreation
- LEA Place Women's Resource Centre
- MacPhee House Heritage Society
- Marine Drive Academy
- MusGo Rider Transportation
- Musquodoboit Harbour Public Library
- Musquodoboit Rural High School
- Musquodoboit Valley Education Centre
- Musquodoboit Valley Family Resource Centre
- Musquodoboit Valley Library Office
- Nova Scotia Department of Justice
- Oyster Pond Academy
- Royal Bank of Canada
- SchoolsPlus
- ScotiaBank (Sheet Harbour)
- Sheet Harbour Legion
- Sheet Harbour Lions Club
- Sheet Harbour Public Library
- The Old School Community Gathering Place
- Upper Musquodoboit Consolidated Elementary School
- YMCA Nova Scotia Works

*"I loved the program and meeting other people in the community."*

*"Loved every minute of the time spent taking this course."*

## Closing notes from the Executive Director

I would like to thank you for taking the time to read over our report. I am very grateful for the dedication of our team and their sincere caring commitment to our learners. When I began this job in September of 2016 I really had no idea how rewarding it would be. I have learned that working in this field has given me more than I have given. It is amazing to observe and support adult learners who for whatever reason were not able to complete their education during the “expected” years of high school, and are now juggling jobs, families, financial obligations/hardship and transportation barriers in working towards and achieving their goals. I take my hat off to those adults, for it is not easy to return to academic learning. For some it is frightening and intimidating. ESMV Literacy promotes a philosophy that learning happens everywhere, and what adult learners discover is that they know a heck of a lot more than they realize, because they have learned much outside of classroom walls from life experiences. I have witnessed that it is not the learning that is the most difficult, it is the juggling of adult life commitments. My message is that we understand that life happens, and you may have to miss class at times for a variety of reasons, but we are always here, waiting for you to pick up where you left off. We believe that ‘forward is forward’ no matter what the pace. We are here to support your success and welcome you without judgment.

Beyond the GED program, I love the essential skills programs that we are able to provide our communities. Our value as a community learning organization is to turn the word “learning” into the verb it is intended to be. Whether it be learning about computers, digital devices, mental health awareness, healthy nutrition, money management etc. It is our goal to engage our community in programs that are relevant to life, personal and/or professional.

ESMV Literacy is a team player and we are always willing and happy to partner within our communities with other organizations to enhance, design and develop programs that meet community needs. Please, reach out to us and let us know what learning opportunities would be relevant for your success.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my Board of Directors for their time and commitment to our mission and values, and for their support of my role as Executive Director. Again, a sincere thank you to the ESMV Literacy team who are the backbone of our organization and make it all happen.

Wishing you all the best in your life journey.

***Vicki Rutledge***, Executive Director, ESMV Literacy Network

*"Learn like you are going to live forever"*

*Mahatma Ghandi*