



# SHINING A LIGHT ON MENTAL HEALTH

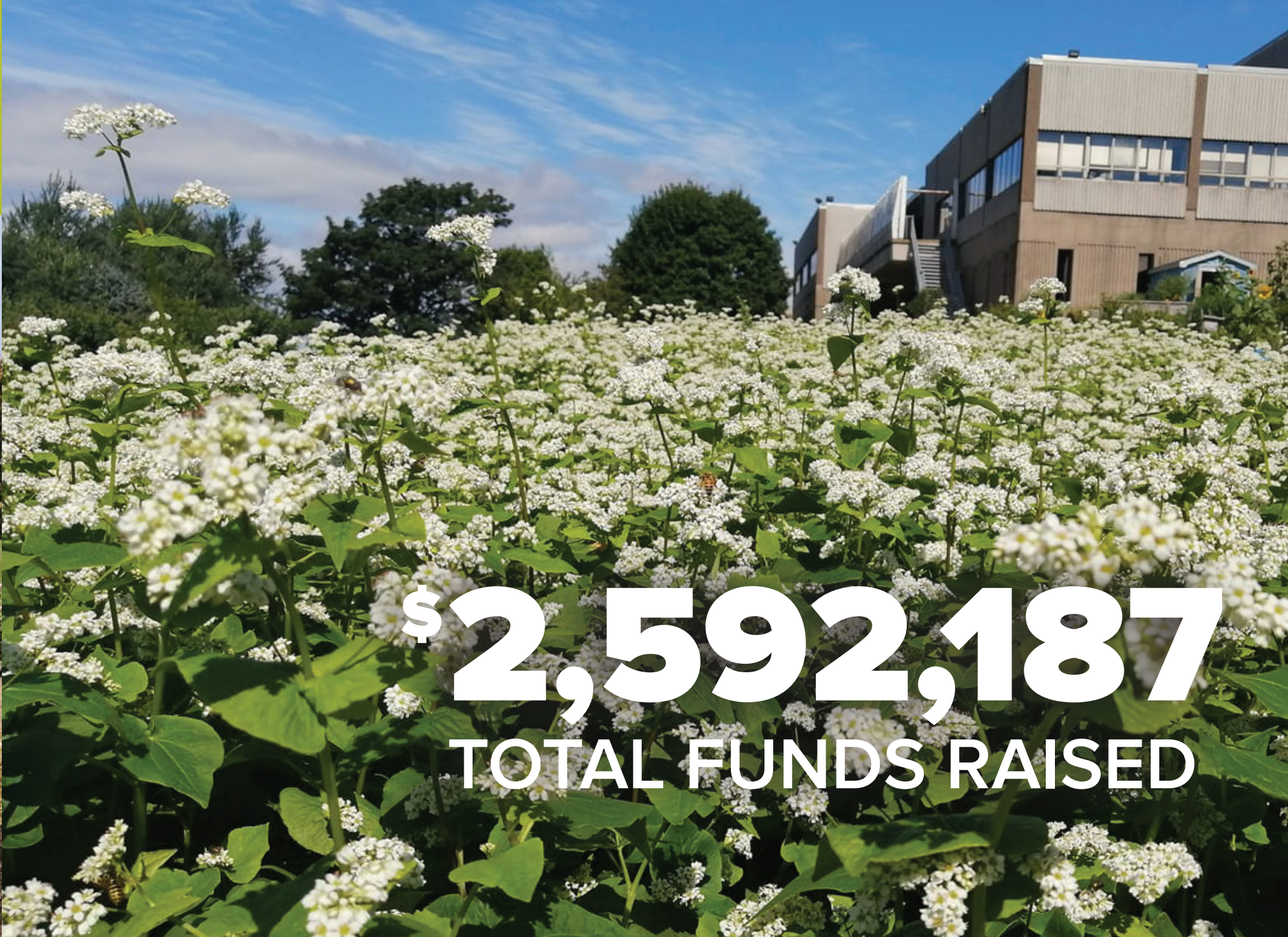
Changing The Way People Think

Mental & Health  
Foundation  
of Nova Scotia

COMMUNITY REPORT 2020-2021



Common Roots Woodside, located just outside the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia office, provides therapeutic gardening opportunities for all community members and Nova Scotia Hospital inpatient, outpatient, and community-based initiatives.

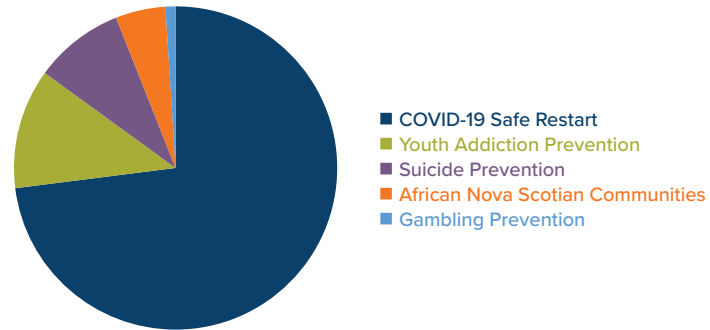


**\$2,592,187**  
TOTAL FUNDS RAISED



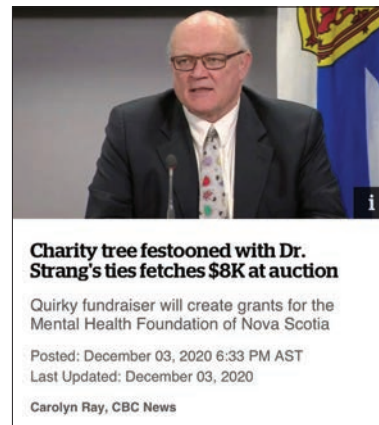
# MAKING FOUNDATION HISTORY

On December 11, 2020, the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness and Government of Canada awarded \$1.625 million, the single largest donation in the history of the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia. Funds were distributed through the Community Grants program to mental health and addiction initiatives throughout the province. Foundation staff asked not to be compensated to provide as much grant funding to Nova Scotians as possible. More than \$1 million was distributed in the first round of these grants in March 2021.



## THE GOOD DOCTOR GIVES BACK

Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Robert Strang's "The Ties that Bind" tree becomes the highest-selling auction item at the Festival of Trees.



## Where to begin?

**We asked and YOU were there at a time when we needed you most!**

When COVID-19 impacted mental health on an unparalleled scale, the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia was there to help, distributing an unprecedented \$1.8 million to mental health and addictions programs throughout the province. You enabled us to respond when Nova Scotians were cut-off from programs and supports they relied on to thrive, and loved ones were left to worry if those they cared for most would survive the next day of recovery.

With support from donors, partners and advocates, the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia helped bridge the digital divide. On April 6th, 2020 we launched our COVID-19 response fund, *Be the Link*, connecting Nova Scotians to the voice of their counsellor, online support groups, and loved ones. For Nova Scotians living with mental illness and addiction, it was a lifeline.

The COVID-19 pandemic strengthened society's understanding of mental health, ultimately *changing the way people think*. Our community showed up with kindness and compassion. Musicians gave generously despite their own shuttered industry. Local businesses held ongoing fundraisers to support those in

racialized communities. Businesses partnered to create heartwarming displays to brighten our lives as the second wave swept the province.

Your belief in the Foundation allowed us to provide funding for the urgent expansion of our region's foremost youth help line, virtual peer support through dozens of mental health programs, and put technology in the hands of our province's most vulnerable.

We have all suffered a collective trauma: the horror of the mass shooting, precious lives lost to COVID-19 and multiple tragedies, and the devastating impact of racism. But through it all, Nova Scotians have shown their empathy and resilience by speaking out against inequities, hanging flags on porches, writing anonymous messages to inspire hope and giving generously to those struggling with mental illness and addiction. It's this bold and beautiful behaviour we encourage you to carry beyond COVID. Together, we can continue to *change the way people think* about mental illness and addiction while creating a healthier, happier way forward.

Thank YOU!

Starr Cunningham  
President & CEO

Alisa Alyward  
Board Chair



# WHO WE ARE

Thanks to the generosity of donors, the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia increases financial support to community initiatives throughout the province that provide hope and eradicate the stigma surrounding mental illness and addiction. Together, we make a difference in the lives of the 1 in 4 Nova Scotians living with psychiatric disorders, and their loved ones. Our vision is to enable Nova Scotians living with mental disorders to thrive in their own communities.

# OUR VALUES

At the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia, we are guided by our values of hope, compassion, acceptance, innovation, and trust. We are committed to being bold by promoting mental health through self-care, honesty and inclusion.

## **WE CARE.**

We have deep compassion for Nova Scotians living with mental illness and addiction. We also care about the well-being of their circle of support.

## **WE ENABLE.**

We exist to raise money to fund mental health initiatives in Nova Scotia communities.

## **WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE.**

We are stewards of the money we raise and responsible to our donors and volunteers to ensure transparency, integrity, efficiency and public trust. We are consistent yet nimble.



The Open Hearth Art Installation was created by Margot Durling in partnership with Killam Apartment REIT and inspired by the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia. The colours of the 145-year old gothic windowpanes are an ode to light therapy often used for seasonal depression and were designed to brighten the spirits of Nova Scotians at the Evergreen Festival.



# PANDEMIC TIMELINE







Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia (Erica Allanach, Laura Clark, Sara Smysniuk, Kate Udle, Starr Cunningham, Jill Chappell, Sherri Topple)

# CREATING EQUITABLE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

It takes a circle of support to make a difference in the lives of Nova Scotians living with mental illness and addiction, especially during a pandemic. We have millions of reasons to celebrate, including these:



### PASSIONATELY RAISING FUNDS

Our team worked tirelessly through the challenges of a pandemic to raise a record-setting **\$2.6 million dollars**.



### DIVERSIFYING REVENUE ONLINE

The Foundation launched a whole new revenue stream raising more than **\$300,000 in virtual events**.

**Social giving increased by 38.6%.**



### FUNDING MORE PROGRAMS

From 29 community and inpatient grants in 2015-16 to **112 grants in 2020-21**.

We distributed **\$1.8 million** in funds to inpatient, outpatients, and community-based initiatives from Shelburne to Membertou.



The lived experience of Nova Scotians with mental illness and addiction varies greatly when racism, and discrimination are considered. The Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia is committed to addressing the mental health inequities that exist for marginalized and racialized communities through equitable distribution of its Community Grants as directed by an independent Grants Committee with diverse representation. The Foundation welcomes Deloitte Indigenous National Advisor **Fiona Kirkpatrick Parsons**, and Former Halifax Pride Chair **Morgan Manzer** to the Grants Selection Committee.



Two new grant programs were created to support the specific mental health needs of Indigenous, Black and People of Colour. The Foundation partnered with the Nova Scotia Brotherhood Initiative to create a new fund to direct financial support to mental health programs for men of African descent and their families. The Nova Scotia Brotherhood Fund was launched in December with a \$10,000 donation from local retailers, Ana & Zac. Additionally, the Pringle-Wilson Grant was established with two generous donors to create and foster awareness for mental health supports within the population of communities of colour.

Through the recognition of systemic racism and marginalization of these communities, and working toward true equity in mental health support, the Foundation is committed to creating a healthier future for Indigenous, Black and People of Colour, and their communities.



# BE THE LINK

Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia donors helped connect loved ones during lockdown through *Be the Link*, our COVID-19 Response Fund. More than \$162,000 was distributed to bridge the digital divide for both inpatients and outpatients throughout the province through data packages, devices and technology-based initiatives with support from our friends at Bell.

Organizations who received support include: Adsum for Women & Children, Affirmative Ventures Association, Ally Centre of Cape Breton, Big Brothers Big Sisters Pictou County, Chebucto Communities, CMHA Halifax-Dartmouth, Coverdale Courtwork Society, East Coast Forensic Hospital, Eating Disorders NS, ElevateHER Mental Health Support, EPIC, Eskasoni Mental Health Services & ACCESS Open Minds Eskasoni, Family SOS, Glooscap First Nation, Halifax Refugee Clinic, Health Association of African Canadians, Healthy Minds Cooperative, Hope Project Addiction Services Cooperative Ltd., LakeCity Works, Landing Strong, LOVE Nova Scotia, Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Society - Direction 180, New Ross Family Resource, North End Community Health Centre, Northwood, Nova Scotia Brotherhood, Pictou County Sexual Health Rally Point Retreat, reachAbility, Riverview Home Association, Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia, Second Story Women's Centre, Shelburne County Youth Health and Support Association Society of Atlantic Heroes, Stepping

Stone, Survivors of Abuse Recovering, The John Howard Society of Nova Scotia, Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw, United African Canadian Women's Alliance, Wabanaki Two-Spirit Alliance, We Are Young, and Welcome Housing and Support Services.

***"I cannot begin to tell you what this means to me. Yes, I have email and Facebook. But to be able to talk to someone directly, is a whole other level. To hear a voice. To be able to laugh together. My sister in Ontario, my aunt on the other side of the bridge, my cousin out in Bedford, a cherished friend in Antigonish... because of your donation, I am hearing their voices. Thank you so, so much."***

Thanks to our donors, hundreds of our most vulnerable community members were connected to voices of love, support and reassurance during a time of fear and uncertainty.



The Nova Scotia Brotherhood receives vital *Be the Link* funding to connect members to peer support.



# ADVENTURING THROUGH ADDICTION RECOVERY

Nova Scotia youth are swelling with hope after participating in the inaugural **Swany's Challenge**.

"I have gained so much motivation to stay healthy and sober. The connections I made on this trip will help me make other healthy connections in the future, and remind me that I am not alone," says one participant.

The adventure-based therapy program in memory of Jonathan 'Swany' Cosman provides intensive therapy and peer support for young adults living with mental illness and addiction. A small group of young men were provided with the opportunity of a lifetime this past September— a multi-day therapeutic retreat exploring Nova Scotia's stunning LaHave Islands. Facilitated in partnership with *Free Range Therapy's* Nick Cardone, the initiative provides an alternative form of counselling.

"Men and boys respond well to therapy that is outside of the

traditional four-walls of an office," says Nick Cardone, Registered Counselling Therapist. "When we use natural spaces, physical movement, and adventure experiences, guys tend to show up and access those difficult inner spaces. Sure, men have poor help-seeking behaviours, but we seldom ask whether the therapy offered resonates with how guys are wired. So with Swany's Challenge, a kayak adventure becomes the perfect metaphor for what young men are struggling with in their lives."

The therapeutic wilderness paddling expedition supports behavioural change by enabling participants to reconnect with themselves and the natural world while bonding with others over similar life challenges. Participants can hear the stories of others, recognize they are not alone in their struggles, and support each other in meaningful ways.

"Being on the water, on the ocean is very humbling and invites honesty," says Scott McCormack, Swany's Challenge Facilitator and Cousin to

Jon. "I was so impressed with the courage, honesty and humility of the participants. The intrinsic healing qualities of the ocean coupled with the meaningful interactions from the group set the stage for a path of hope and recovery."

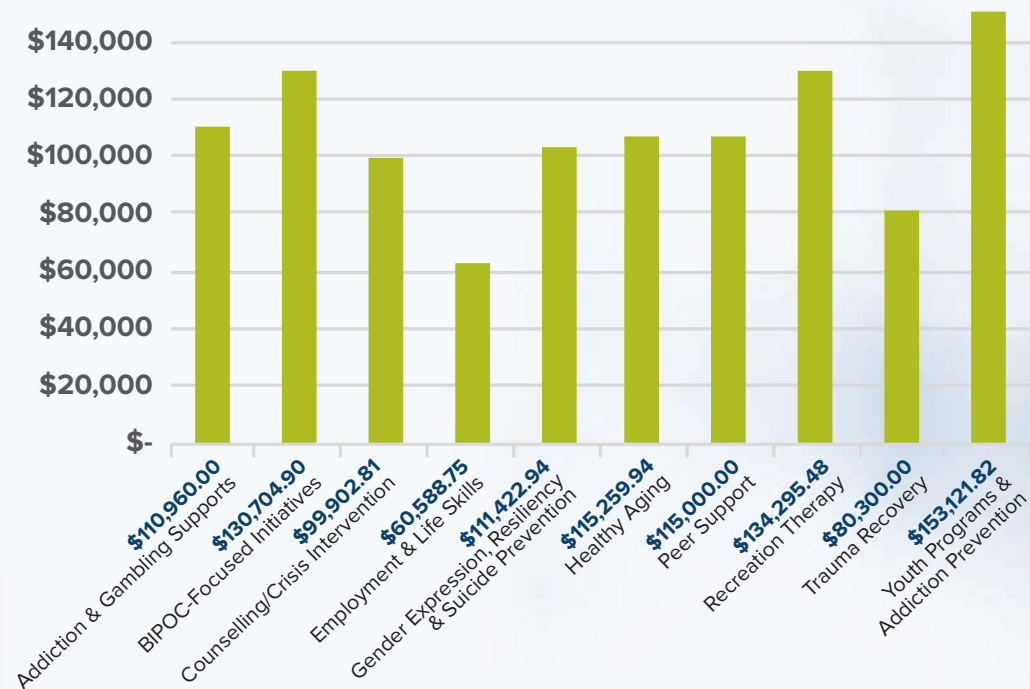
Jonathan David Cosman would have turned 28 years old this year. Tragically, his life was cut short due to an ongoing battle with mental illness and addiction. Thanks to our donors, we are changing this outcome for other young adults by funding Swany's Challenge while creating a legacy of adventure in his memory.



Participants of the inaugural Swany's Challenge paddle through the water off the LaHave Islands in September 2020.



# COMMUNITY GRANTS



*"I went from being in tears and wanting to kill myself to feeling safe and not wanting to harm myself. Thank you. I'm afraid to think about what would have happened if you weren't there to talk to."*  
- Anonymous caller to Kids Help Phone

Mental Health Foundation  
Community Grant Recipient

# TRANS-FORMATIONAL CHANGE

Transgender and non-binary individuals in rural Nova Scotia were provided with access to gender-affirming items ranging from binders to strap-on harnesses thanks to South Shore Sexual Health's TRANSformation Closet.

"I wear the binder every single day as the Underworks binder I received is one of the best binders I have had in a very long time," says one 17-year-old recipient. "I also wear packing boxers whenever they're clean because they make me so much more confident with myself. I have helped many friends also access the closet and they all have very good things to say!"

Due to COVID, an "on the road" closet was created to increase access to those outside the Bridgewater area. Through a simple drop-off or delivery service, these gender-affirming items aided youth

in their transition while improving confidence and self-worth.

"We actually took items from the closet to Queens County so youth could shop out of our travel suitcase and take items they needed right out of their guidance counsellor's office," says Julie Venoit, South Shore Sexual Health Executive Director. "This space seemed to feel safe to this youth, along with the guidance counsellor."

The TRANSformation Closet helped create awareness and educate the general public about the importance of gender-affirming items. In some cases, youth were provided with additional supports thanks to community support surrounding the program.

"One service provider contacted us for a binder originally but had a client that would benefit from

other services such as a haircut, underwear, and clothing to match their gender. The youth did not have family resources to purchase any of these. We put out the call on social media and within hours we had a free hair style lined up, clothing, gift cards and underwear for the youth."



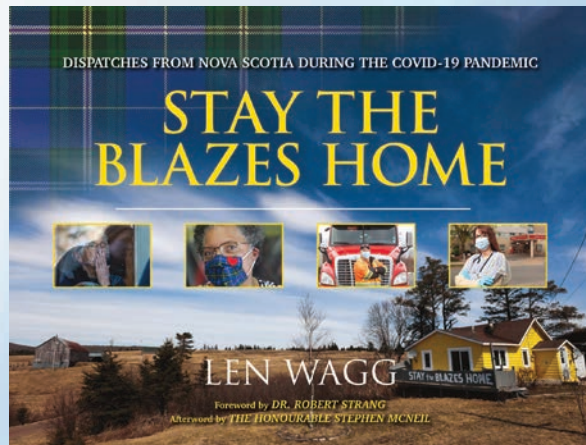


# SUPPORTING TRAUMATIC RECOVERY

The Scotiabank Resilience Fund was established in December 2020 to ensure continued support is available to Nova Scotians and those affected by tragedies in Colchester and East Hants. This grant reduces barriers to support by enhancing existing programs and creating new mental health initiatives in communities throughout the region.

That same month, the Foundation responded to the immediate need of the Fisheries Safety Association of Nova Scotia providing funding for crisis counselling for family members of the fishers aboard the Chief William Saulis.

Author Len Wagg selected the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia as his charity of choice to receive a portion of the proceeds from his *Stay the Blazes Home* book covering the pandemic.



## EMPOWERING COPING SKILLS AND RESILIENCE

During COVID-19, inpatients within the Adult Neurodevelopmental Stabilization Unit (ANSU) at the Nova Scotia Hospital experienced a heightened sense of anxiety and fear of the unknown. Staff began wearing face masks, clients were restricted from accessing the community and could no longer welcome visitors. Many felt unsettled which led to yelling, and aggression towards themselves or others. The Mindfulness Station funded by the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia offered tools and strategies to counteract these feelings of anxiety, focus on the present, breathe deeply, and calm the senses. Even though ANSU clients have communication difficulties, they were able to interact with the tools and activities of the Mindfulness Station. As a result, these individuals developed adaptive coping skills reducing aggression and other concerning behaviour. One client still quotes from a book in the Mindfulness Station saying, “I will be ok” and “I can handle it.”





# A BRIGHT LIGHT IN THE SECOND WAVE

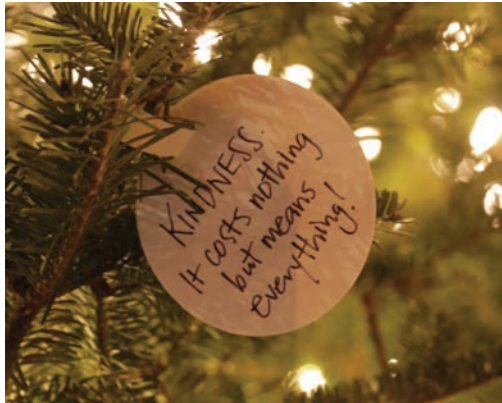
Develop Nova Scotia's Evergreen Festival provided the Foundation the opportunity to enact its value of hope through the Tunnel of Hope and Messages of Kindness campaign on the Halifax waterfront.

The Tunnel of Hope sponsored by Emera and Nova Scotia Power created an Instagram frenzy, as people flocked to take pictures and selfies with the beautiful 150 ft light installation. With accompanying audio recording featuring stories of hope, and T. Thomason's song *Bliss*, the Foundation furthered a message of courage, and the resilience of people living with mental illness and addiction.

Through new partnerships with Killam Apartment REIT and Southwest Properties, Messages of Kindness, an online-matching campaign was born. The initiative raised more than \$25,000 while promoting a true sense of kindness among Nova Scotians.



Musician T. Thomason lends his support to the Tunnel of Hope.





# FUNDRAISING GOES VIRTUAL

With the new reality of social distancing, the Foundation team shifted fundraising to an entirely new realm. Shubie 5K hit the ground running as the first race to go virtual. Livestream concerts fit the bill including Adam Baldwin, Matt Mays and the Ultimate Online NS Kitchen Party. It was a community effort with businesses donating proceeds from online sales of Buffs, dog collars, masks, songs, and books. Others joined in the adventure through the NS Staycation Scavenger Crawl, 24-hour gaming fundraiser Hal-Conquer, and the Foundation's 50-50 Raffles. Signature galas and luncheons became virtual events with gourmet food delivery, and online auctions all in an effort to meet the rise in demand for mental health and addiction support.



# RBC FESTIVAL OF TREES HYBRID-EDITION

The Advocate Forest of Trees opened to the public for the first time in 15 years. For the next nine days guests were delighted by the beautifully decorated trees. The second wave of COVID-19 hit quickly, forcing the closure of the Forest on November 23rd. Fortunately, the 360-degree glass rotunda meant passers-by could still safely enjoy the trees from the outside. As well, our partners at Henry's Foundation created a virtual tour of the Forest that was quickly added to our website.

The online auction was a tremendous success raising more than \$60,000. Steele the Spotlight for Mental Health featuring Chantal Kreviazuk raised a quarter million dollars. Huge thanks to event sponsors RBC, Shannex, Steele Auto Group, and St. John Ambulance for their steadfast support.





# VISION AWARDS

The Vision Awards acknowledge individuals and organizations who share the Foundation's vision of mental wellness for all Nova Scotians.

Each year, the Foundation honours recipients who have made a significant contribution to the work of the Foundation.



## OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER NANCY REGAN

Professional speaker, author and longtime supporter, Nancy Regan, consistently shares her time and talent with the Foundation. You see her as the proficient emcee at our signature events, Festival of Trees and A Different Stage of Mind. We see her as a dedicated volunteer who generates contagious enthusiasm, goes above and beyond with behind-the-scenes preparations, and so perfectly conveys our message of hope to Nova Scotians.



## PARTNERS IN OUR VISION KILLAM APARTMENT REIT

At the height of the second wave, Killam Apartment REIT provided hope to thousands of Nova Scotians with its innovative Messages of Kindness campaign. The passion and hard work of the Killam team motivated others to get involved, write inspirational messages of kindness for public viewing, and give generously at a time of year when so many Nova Scotians were turning to the Foundation for help. This matching campaign bolstered the Foundation's fundraising while evoking a feeling of belonging for all.



## OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT ANA & ZAC

Despite the financial challenges of the pandemic, local retailers Anna Gilkerson and Zac Barkhouse made the mental health of Black Nova Scotians a priority. Through creative fundraisers, the duo raised significant funds to help launch the Foundation's Nova Scotia Brotherhood Fund to support the mental health of men of African descent and their families. Bravo to Ana & Zac for exemplifying the true spirit of giving at a time when so many small businesses were struggling.



# THE GIFT OF HOPE



A world without stigma. It's a vision Frank Almeda shares with the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia. He believes it could save the lives of others like his son.

“Considering the many organizations and programs the Foundation supports, and the wide impact those programs have in addressing mental illness across Nova Scotia, I feel the [Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia] is definitely an appropriate choice to provide a donation in memory of Jamie. Given Jamie grew up and received his education in Nova Scotia, I truly believe he would agree, knowing the donation is contributing in some small way to help others in the province dealing with mental illness.”

On January 29, 2020, the Almeda family lost Jamie to mental illness at the age of 51. Jamie was described by his friends as a ‘kind, friendly, and intelligent’ man. He graduated from Lunenburg High School in 1986 receiving the Queen Elizabeth II medal and three scholarships. He then obtained his Engineering Degree from Dalhousie University and TUNS and went on to become a successful engineer - managing major, multimillion-dollar projects at Vancouver, Winnipeg, Edmonton, and Toronto airports, and in South America.

He was incredibly well-respected in his industry with one colleague touting ‘most if not all of his peers would rank him as one of the smartest engineers they’ve ever worked with.’

Mental illness does not discriminate. Despite his accomplishments, generosity, and hard work, Jamie struggled with his mental health and kept it hidden his entire life.

“Family members would get together on numerous occasions with Jamie throughout the year and he never displayed any signs of mental illness,” says his father. “Had it not been for the stigma I know that Jamie would have made family aware of his illness so that we could have helped him in getting the appropriate treatment.”

The stigma surrounding mental illness and addiction is enormous, but it's starting to change. Thanks to increasing conversations around mental disorders, and general public awareness, mental health literacy rates are improving. By changing the way people think, in partnership with donors like Frank, together, we can save lives and improve mental health outcomes for Nova Scotians like Jamie.

# THANKS TO OUR DONORS

**The Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia extends its gratitude to all donors, including those who choose to remain anonymous.**

## VISIONARY

Frank Almeda  
Astra Zeneca Canada Inc.  
Scott Balfour  
Bell Aliant  
Bell Canada  
BMO Bank of Montreal  
BUFF Canada/BUFF retailers of Nova Scotia  
Canadian National Railway  
CTV Atlantic  
Emera Inc.  
Estate of Edwin Urquhart  
Government Of Canada  
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IBM Canada Ltd.  
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Colin MacDonald, Sr.  
Makenew | Ana + Zac  
Manulife Financial  
Medavie  
Nova Scotia Power  
Nova Scotia Spirit Co.  
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Melissa Berry  
Blue Nose Marathon  
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Sherri Topple  
Twin City Management Ltd.  
Jack Whittle  
Rod D. Wilson  
Deborah & Howard Windsor





# SUMMARIZED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia consistently works to ensure our donors' investment in our mission makes a meaningful difference in the lives of Nova Scotians living with mental illness and addiction, and their loved ones.

In 2020, the Foundation saw a significant increase in the number of Nova Scotians impacted with overall fundraising increasing by 91%.

## STATEMENTS OF OPERATIONS AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

Year ended March 31

	2021	2020
Revenue		
Donations	\$ 2,045,278	\$ 904,785
Special events	393,054	1,032,106
Government wage subsidy	98,524	-
Miscellaneous	38,373	3,269
Interest income	14,487	21,232
Services	2,471	31,144
	<u>2,592,187</u>	<u>1,992,536</u>
Expenses		
Special events	88,128	342,844
General and administrative	615,050	591,341
	<u>703,178</u>	<u>934,185</u>
Net revenues available for community funding	1,889,009	1,058,351
Community funding	<u>1,818,278</u>	<u>1,030,089</u>
Excess of revenue over expenses	<u>\$ 70,731</u>	<u>\$ 28,262</u>
Net assets, beginning of year	\$ 1,015,374	\$ 987,112
Excess of revenue over expenses	<u>70,731</u>	<u>28,262</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 1,086,105</u>	<u>\$ 1,015,374</u>

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

March 31

	2021	2020
<b>Assets</b>		
Current		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,480,208	\$ 372,096
Cash held for custodial funds payable	14,818	13,963
Receivables	128,495	184,824
Short term investments	1,156,806	1,143,777
Prepaids	12,629	7,826
	<u>2,792,956</u>	<u>1,722,486</u>
Capital assets (note 6)	<u>2,674</u>	<u>8,511</u>
	<u>\$ 2,795,630</u>	<u>\$ 1,730,997</u>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Current		
Custodial funds payable	\$ 14,818	\$ 13,963
Payables and accruals	132,221	124,403
Unearned revenue	5,300	35,730
Deferred contributions	1,517,186	541,527
	<u>1,669,525</u>	<u>715,623</u>
Long-term debt	40,000	-
Net assets	<u>1,086,105</u>	<u>1,015,374</u>
	<u>\$ 2,795,630</u>	<u>\$ 1,730,997</u>

The audited financial statements of the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia for the year ended March 31, 2021, as audited by Grant Thornton, LLP are available upon request. Copies of the complete statements may be obtained from the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia, 1120-300 Pleasant Street, Mount Hope Centre, Dartmouth, NS, B2Y 3Z9 or by calling (902) 464-6000.



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Foundation team members and Henry's Halifax Store Leader Marco Gallo celebrate the launch of a new partnership with Henry's Foundation.

# PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

Blankets of Love  
Bright Smiles  
Camp BELIEVE  
Landing Strong Named Grant  
Mental Health Above All  
Music Therapy in Long Term Care  
Northwood Seeds of Success  
Nova Scotia Brotherhood Fund

Pathways to Hope  
Pringle-Wilson IBCOC Grant  
Scotiabank Resilience Fund  
St. John Ambulance  
Mental Health Literacy Grant  
Swany's Challenge  
TEMA Named Grant

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The Advocate Forest of Trees opened to the public for the first time in 15 years at the Doyle thanks to the generosity of Westwood.



Changing The Way People Think

# Mental & Health Foundation

of Nova Scotia

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Mount Hope Centre  
1120-300 Pleasant Street  
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B2Y 3S3

**PHONE:** 902.464.6000  
**TOLL FREE:** 1.866.CARING.2  
**EMAIL:** [info@mentalhealthns.ca](mailto:info@mentalhealthns.ca)

Charitable registration number:  
8586 35675 RR0001  
**[mentalhealthns.ca](http://mentalhealthns.ca)**

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