2022-23

South Shore Sexual Health

Annual Report

SOUTH SHORE SEXUAL HEALTH

Introduction

This was our first year operating with $60,000 of core funds from Sexual Health Nova Scotia! We are delighted to be focusing on growth now, not outright survival. This marks the first time since I988 that we didn't have to panic about having enough money to pay staff or rent. We are by no means rich (we still need to supplement our budget with grants), but we have a solid foundation to ensure we can leverage other funding to complement our core revenue. (Ironically, you need funding to pay for staff time devoted to find more funding.)

As recently as last fiscal year, we received $35,000 annually via SHNS, which ultimately comes from the Department of Health and Wellness. From that amount, we had to pay staff and payroll taxes, rent, internet, office supplies, insurance, gas, and condoms (and more). Needless to say, it wasn't enough. Sometimes project-based grants were the only things keeping us open. We're happy that's changing.

A shoutout to Chair Kendra Ritcey who has volunteered with us for over a decade, an incredible amount of time and devotion. Thanks for your service Kendra! We also welcomed Leigh Heide as our new Vice Chair and Chair-Elect. Leigh has been a part of youth services & sexual health for many years through Second Story Women's Centre, The Youth Project, and SHNS. We also have many other volunteers who offer their time on the Board as well as the many folks who helped at our Inclusive Winter Formal in December.

A special mention to Kaitlin Richard who volunteered with us for almost a decade and also did our bookkeeping for many years. We're going to miss you, but we are happy to watch your career grow. Kaitlin, and former volunteer Rhonda Haines, have done our accounting for free for a decade!

Finally, we are thankful for the supporters who validate our work. We liaise with an incredible group of professionals here on the South Shore. A lot of partnering goes on behind the scenes thanks to our connections through local Hubs and Interagencies, often facilitated by SchoolsPlus.

We look forward to promoting healthy sexuality here on the South Shore, even as we enter a time when sexuality education isn't always considered the life-saving work that it is. It's a steady rain that soaks. And we're here to keep the showers coming.

Board of Directors & Staff

Kendra Ritcey, Outgoing Chair
Leigh Heide, Vice-Chair and Incoming Chair
Erin Carr, Secretary and SHNS Member Centre Representative
Amanda Williams, Outgoing Treasurer
Nicole Byers
Louise Hopper, Incoming Treasurer
Nicole Whynot
BriAnna Simons
Grace Holwell, Incoming Vice-Chair
Amy Dobbin, NSCC Practicum student

Supporters & donors

- Sexual Health Nova Scotia (distributes revenue from the Department of Health and Wellness)
- United Way of Lunenburg County
- Municipality of the District of Lunenburg County
- Town of Bridgewater
- Town of Mahone Bay
- Town of Lunenburg
- Queens Community Health Board
- Lunenburg County Community Health Board
- Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia
- Canadian Women's Foundation
- The Red Cross
- Bridgewater Police Service Fund
- Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia
- Community-Based Research Centre

Message From Our ED

Hi, I'm Julie, the face of South Shore Sexual Health! I've been in this position almost a decade and I'm so proud of how far we've come from a little $500 grant program of Second Story Women's Centre in I988.

But, like everyone, I'm concerned by the current disinformation that has redirected its anger about the Covid-I9 pandemic to gender inclusion and comprehensive sexuality education.

In the past six months, we've been fielding complaints from people in a moral panic over gender. This includes the work that we do in schools, and our new program The Transformation Closet, which won us the Bentley Award from Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights. Sadly, we get calls and social media comments from people who are against trans inclusion. It's sad to see how many people are against human rights.

We hope that allies and supporters will see how important it is that we stand up for the human rights of all folks to live in peace here on the South Shore, as well as the right of youth to learn comprehensive sexuality education in a safe, inclusive, evidence-based environment.

Where, after all, do
universal human
rights begin?
In small places,
close to home.

- Eleanor Roosevelt

Highlights

Here are some of our favourite moments from the past fiscal year! A lot of wonderful things have happened and we appreciate you doing them with us.

Highlight 1 — The expansion of the Transformation Closet

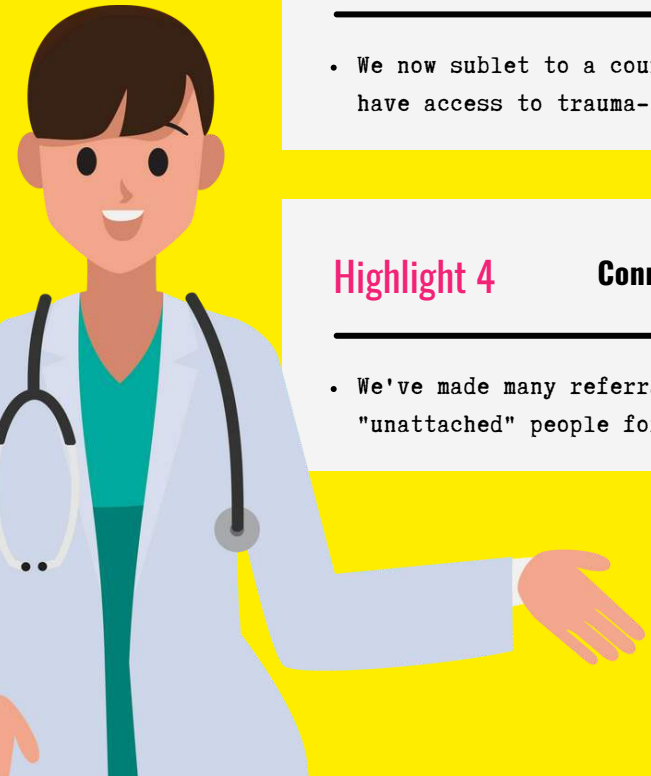
- We helped SHNS take the Closet provincial and assisted in giving out 400 pieces of gender-affirming gear for FREE.

Highlight 2 — Our first ever Inclusive Winter Formal

- Thanks to help from our friends at Lunenburg Pride and the Mahone Bay Centre, we held our first post-Covid fundraiser.

Highlight 3 — Partnering with Avalon Sexual Assault Centre

- We now sublet to a counsellor for Avalon so folks on the South Shore have access to trauma-informed counselling right here.



Highlight 4 — Connecting folks with local nurse practitioners

- We've made many referrals to nurse practitioners who are able to see "unattached" people for sexual health needs. Thanks to the NSHA!

Impact

The number of people accessing our services has climbed since our Covid shutdowns. Part of this is the amazing success of The Transformation Closet, which has become our most popular program. We also support a lot of folks in accessing health care at a time of crisis, when over I50,000 folks don't have a family care provider.

48 workshops delivered

We continue to do many workshops at our local schools in Lunenburg and Queens, for non-profit organizations serving a multitude of folks, and for corporations interested in learning more about gender diversity.

351 client interactions

While our services are available for all ages, there's no doubt that many folks accessing our programs are youth under 30. We support many folks in learning everything from masturbation to consent, chlamydia to safe binding.

114 gender-affirming items distributed locally

Anyone is welcome to use our free gender-affirming gear program without any application process, and in complete anonymity. We give out binders primarily, but we also stock trans tape, packers, and more.

We keep non-identifying information of all the folks we connect with through the year. We never ask age, gender, or name, but write down things like "I youth dropped in for a binder" or "56 Grade 8s attended consent presentations". This allows us to track trends and apply for more funding without keeping personal records.

21
folks supported to find a Pap test

43
folks supported to find infection testing

25
pregnancy tests distributed

127
visits or requests for the Transformation Closet locally

5
folks supported around abortion, adoption, or parenting

55
hours of programming delivered

31
menstrual packages distributed including menstrual cups

50
copies of Uncensored distributed through donation, purchase, or loan

730
program participants in schools or community groups or corporations

1757
kilometres logged doing outreach and presentations

7300
safer sex supplies distributed including dams, lube, and internal condoms

Thanks

to Diva Cares for the donation of menstrual cups, as well as thanks for the special pricing on gender-affirming gear from Trans Tape, GC2B, and Underworks.

HIV self-testing

We were pretty dang excited when INSTI launched its HIV cutting edge self-test, which folks can use to screen themselves for HIV.

We want everyone to know their status. Regular treatment leads to low viral loads, which mean HIV cannot be spread to partners, or their children if they become pregnant.

We have been thrilled to partner with Reach Nexus and the Community- Based Research Centre to distribute free tests here on the South Shore. This is quite a committment, as each test costs approximately $40.

We've been able to distribute many tests through these programs, including I5 in 2022-23. Not only this, but we can chat with folks about pre-exposure and post-exposure prophylaxis, which further reduces their risk of contracting HIV.

This has been much appreciated on the South Shore, where there are no devoted clinics for tests. Plus, many folks share that they've very relieved by the peace of mind these tests can provide.

The INSTI tests are almost always accurate, unless not enough time has passed since exposure; some people take up to three months to show signs of antibodies, and sometimes the test won't be positive until then.

People are welcome to come to our office to pick up a test kit or two, as well as some for their friends or partners. Sadly, we never get them all given out before they expire.

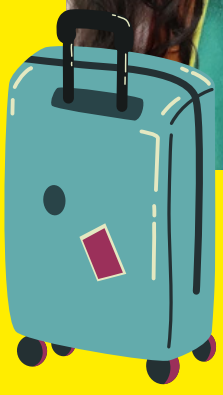
cbrc
Community-Based Research Centre

reachnexus

Pop up sexual health centre

We partner with South Shore Public Libraries to bring sexual health education and supplies right to people in their communities. We began with outreach at the Thomas Raddall Library in Liverpool and have recently expanded to do this at the Margaret Hennigar Library and at Lunenburg during Pride.

We take condoms, pregnancy tests, HIV self tests, and gender-affirming gear so people can access them all in a safe public space. Thanks for having us!



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PROGRESS REPORT 2020

Merry menses & inclusive formal

We had a great time at our Inclusive Winter Formal at the Mahone Bay Centre in December. Not only did we get to give out tons of great door prizes (which included a stay at Salt and Vine Properties), but we collected a lot of menstrual products donations to help alleviate period poverty in our community. Plus, it's safe to say a good time was had by all!

Workshops & programming

We log a lot of kilometres travelling all over Queens and Lunenburg with a car full of condoms and gender-affirming gear. We popped up at Our Health Centre to display our wares in the spring in addition to our regular stops at the libraries. We also thank folks for all the workshop gifts. Thanks!

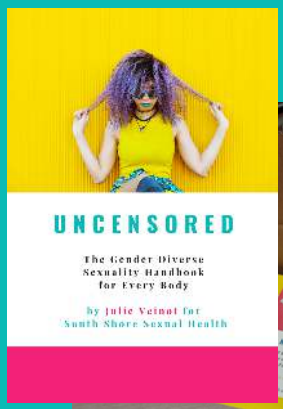
OUR HEALTH CENTRE
Healthier People – Healthier Communities

The Transformation Closet & KIA

With a partnership headed by Sexual Health Nova Scotia, KIA, and the Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia, we took the Transformation Closet provincial! It resulted in a lot of media attention, including an interview with CTV and a few hours spent with amazing photographer Justin Wu who flew to Nova Scotia for a photoshoot at our office with Leigh Heide and Stella Samuels, the new ED of Sexual Health Nova Scotia. Please note the two photos on this page are courtesy of Justin Wu and KIA.

In partnership, we distributed 400 pieces of gear through in person booths and a Google Form online. Recently, SHNS committed to funding the program for another year with a potential employee taking the reins!

Photo Album



Our gender diverse youth resource is now available through purchase in our office or through Amazon. Thanks to Awesome South Shore for the grant to publish copies to give away! And thanks to our local Community Health Boards for the time to research & write it.

A personal highlight of Social Media Day Halifax was meeting body positive influencer Alicia Mccarvell (@aliciamccarvell). Alicia posts a lot of sex positive content and is actually from little ol' Halifax.

Drag Queen Zara Matrix read to a huge audience of families for the first ever Drag Queen story time on the South Shore in July 2022. It was well received and a lot of positive messaging was shared.

Pride is becoming popular here on the South Shore! We attended lots of flag raisings. These pictures are from Petite Pride in West Dublin where we set up at the Farmer's Market.

We provided a booth at the Town of Bridgewater Community Connection Event, which ended up being held at the LCLC due to rain. We met a lot of great people and got to hang out next to our friends from the Better Together Family Resource Centre.

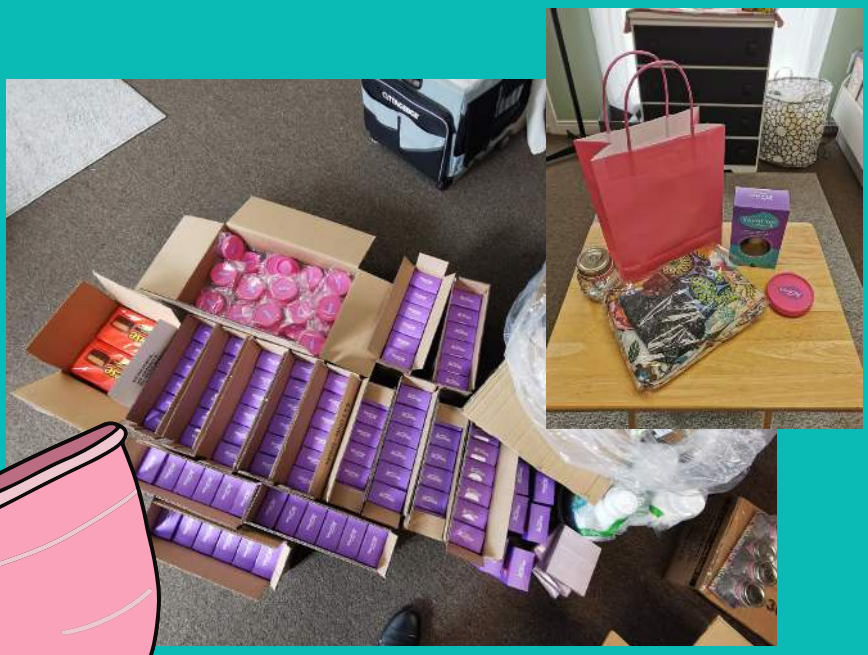
Our friends at Second Story Women's Centre faced challenges in early 2023 and we were there to support the continuation of this important organization.

We are thankful that things are moving in a positive direction so we can collaborate once more.

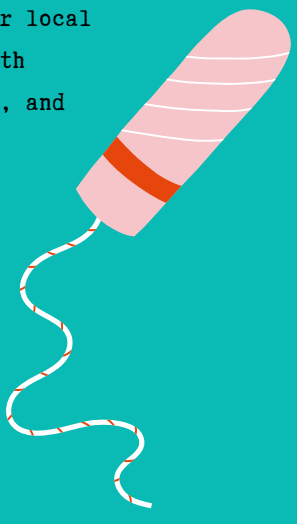
Supplying the South Shore

We try our best to keep the South Shore in condoms! We distrbute through the schools, food banks, and the Department of Community Services to ensure those who need them have unrestricted access to them.

We distribute Diva cups thanks to an amazing contribution from Diva Cares, part of the Diva Corporation. They go out to foodbanks and schools as well.



Our menstrual products go out everywhere depending on our capacity, including our local YMCA, organizations with housing insecure folks, and more!



The more donations we receive, the more we can give out!

The $ that makes it all happen

REVENUE	
SHNS Core Allocation	60,000.00
SHNS Surplus	5,060.00
United Way of Lunenburg County	3,000.00
Other Grants	6,3I2.50
Fundraising	2,307.I6
Other	55.96
Donation Income	4,223.79
TOTAL REVENUE	80,959.4I

EXPENSES	
Payroll, Benefits, and EI/CPP	50,893.50
Accounting & Legal	329.23
Advertising & Promotions	632.76
Rent	8385.00
Rent - Charged	I,300
Insurance	I,638.00
Phone	397.29
Internet	I,226.7I
Website	324.I7
Shipping/Handling	9.95
Interest & Bank Charges	262.06
Square Fees	I4.03
Office Supplies	I,850.I8
Office - R & M	0.00
Clinical Supplies	I40.94
Transformation Closet	I,636.05
Miscellaneous	594.3I
Mileage	942.I9
Staff & Board Development	6I7.76
Membership Fees & Dues	3I.I5
Presentation Material	II5.70
Programs/Special Events	826.39
Other Grants	0.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	69,567.27

TOTAL REVENUE

80,959.4I

TOTAL EXPENSES

69,567.27.00

NET INCOME

II,392.I4

Three wishes for the future

As great as this year has been, we're always searching for ways to improve our service to the community. Everyone has dreams, and we do too. Here are some of the things we'd like to work on in the future.

01. Stand alone sexual health clinic

We get a ton of requests for Pap tests, IUD services, and more. We'd love to offer a clinic right here.

02. Expanded staff

Doing education is a full-time job, not to mention we'd love to have youth working for youth.

03. Counselling & therapy

It would be great to have free mental health services that could provide couples therapy, 2SLGBTQ* services, and more.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to our volunteers who help us achieve our mission! And many thanks to our supporters including funders, folks who offer us discounts on our gender-affirming products (Trans Tape, GC2B, Underworks), and people who simply share the love on social media!

We'd like to give a shout out to Sexual Health Nova Scotia and the amazing team there, including our fellow member-centre staff. And thanks to Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights. We all collaborate on a regular basis, which makes this unique work feel a lot less isolating.

Contact

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Thanks to our supporters

Sexual Health Nova Scotia

Action Canada for Sexual Health & Rights

Nova Scotia Health and Wellness

District of Lunenburg Inc. 1879

United Way of Lunenburg County INVESTS HERE

Town of Mahone Bay

town of Bridgewater

Town of Lunenburg

Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia

Canadian Women's Foundation

Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia

Community Foundations of Canada

Community Services Recovery Fund

Canadian Red Cross

Community Foundations of Canada

United Way Centraide Canada

Underworks

gc2b