

Service Learning

St. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY • ANTIGONISH, NS

Issue 16 May 2015

New Health Studies Colloquium

New in the Fall of 2015, StFX is offering first year students the opportunity to focus their studies on issues of health.

A partnership between Psychology, Sociology and Biology, classroom learning will be enriched with meaningful Service Learning experiences in the Antigonish community. Students will work in all areas of health care: physical, mental, social, emotional, environmental and recreational.

With this newsletter we celebrate another year of community-university partnerships between StFX Service Learning and 98 community partners in Antigonish and the surrounding area. Thanks to these meaningful collaborations, almost 900 students participated in experiential learning beyond the borders of the classroom. In this issue we highlight some of the exciting work that students, faculty and community partners have been doing this year.

On this page we describe the new **Social Justice Colloquium** and **Health Studies Colloquium** that are offering Service Learning for first year students. On **page 2** discover our community partners as we recognize their important contributions to student learning. Turn to **page 3** to learn about new partners and projects and for an overview of Service Learning participation this year. We also offer thanks to community partners who attended the **Community Partnership Celebration** in October 2014.

On **page 4** we celebrate **Breaking the Silence (BTS)** for the **Community Partner Recognition Award**, and our 2015 recipients of the **Excellence as a Community Engaged Scholar Award** and **Student Prize for Research with the Community** and bid farewell to our former student leaders. Finally, **page 5** introduces our **Service Learning Advisory Committee** community representatives and offers comments from students, faculty and community partners. Stay tuned for more in our new August newsletter!

Social Justice Colloquium

This year marks the successful completion of the first cohort of the **Social Justice Colloquium (SJC)** at StFX, a first year program designed for students who care deeply about the inequities that exist in the world and are passionate about making a difference.

Through coursework and Service Learning, students gained a valuable introduction to community which they can build on throughout their next three years of university. They were also confronted with issues of equity, social justice, and charity and were encouraged to challenge pre-conceived notions of volunteering and service to community.

Some community partners who hosted students from the SJC this year were **L'Arche, RK MacDonald Nursing Home, Bethany, VON Day Program, Breaking the Silence, Kids First, Black Educators Association, Teermann House, CACL, Antigonish Community Food Bank, and AEC Breakfast Program.**

This program will continue again next year. Please contact us if you would like to host a student from the SJC in second term. These are first year students who are participating in Service Learning for the first time as a way to become involved in community.



The StFX Service Learning Program would like to thank the following community organizations who partnered with us in providing service and learning opportunities for students in 2014-2015:

A Partnership in Caring
Active Kids, Active Minds
Addiction Services
Adult Friendship Corner
Antigonish Badminton Club
Antigonish Brain Injury Support Group
Antigonish Community Energy
Antigonish Community Food Bank
Antigonish Community Transit Society
Antigonish County Adult Learning Association
Antigonish County Recreation
Antigonish Culture Alive
Antigonish Education Centre
Antigonish Emergency Fuel Fund
Antigonish Food Security Coalition
Ant/Guys Early Child Intervention Program
Antigonish International Potluck
Antigonish Manor
Antigonish Minor Basketball Association
Antigonish Parkinson's Support Group
Antigonish Poverty Reduction Coalition
Antigonish Public Library
Antigonish Skating Club
Antigonish Therapeutic Riding Association
Antigonish Women's Resource Centre
Black Educators Association
Breaking the Silence Solidarity Network
Building a Breastfeeding Environment
CACL
CFXU Radio
Children's Place Day Care
Children's Place Learning Centre
Coady International Institute
Dietitians of Canada
Dr. JH Gillis Regional High School
Early Years Committee
East Antigonish Education Centre/Academy
Fit 4 Life & Fit 4 Tots
GASHA
Heatherton Activity Centre
Heatherton Group Home
Highland Crest Home
Kids First, Antigonish Family Resource Centre
L'Arche Antigonish Houses and Day Programs

Leeside Transition House
MAX Program
Men's Health Centre
NS Department of Health
Our Food Store
Outreach Social Care Project
Positive Action for Keppoch
Red Apple Children's Centre
Responsible Energy Action
RK MacDonald Nursing Home
Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program
Sisters of St. Martha, Bethany House
Social Justice Radio
SODARA
Special Olympics, Antigonish
St. Andrew Junior High School
St. Andrews Consolidated School
St. James United Church
St. Martha's Regional Hospital
St. Ninian's Parish
StFX Campus Food Strategy Group
StFX Development Studies Student Society
StFX Faculty of Education
StFX Football Team
StFX Health & Counseling Centre
StFX Human Rights and Equity Office
StFX International Student Advising Office
StFX Mental Health Society
StFX Nutrition Department
StFX Office for Students of African Descent
StFX Residence Life Office
StFX Schwartz School of Business
StFX Student Food Resource Centre
Tearmann House
The Park Bench Players
Theater Antigonish
X-Project Society
Xaverian Newspaper
VOICES
VON Antigonish
Wheelchair Basketball
Wishing Wells Society

Who was involved in Service Learning in 2014-2015?

- 98 community partners
- 901 student experiences, with 14% of the students doing service learning in more than one course
- 81% female
19% male students
- 16% 1st year
15% 2nd year
26% 3rd year
43% 4th year
- 40% Arts
6% Business
7% BEd
47% Science
- 49 courses
56 sections
- 35 professors
- 49% optional
51% mandatory
- 29% group
71% individual experiences



New Experiences

We are pleased to feature below a few of the new projects and partners this year. Anthropology students provided support to **Antigonish Culture Alive's Antigonight: Art After Dark Festival**. A Biology student (shown here) worked on a new **Citizen Science** project presenting at the **St. Andrews Junior School** and **People's Place Library**.

Development Studies students worked with **Antigonish Community Energy** investigating renewable energy projects, with **A Partnership in Caring** developing advocacy materials, and exploring micro-finance options for partners in Rwanda, and developing advocacy and fundraising to support **Wishing Wells** water projects abroad.

Human Nutrition students worked with **Building a Breastfeeding Environment (BaBE)** on a Bracelet Awareness Program and Action Support Kits, the **Public Health Healthy Communities Team** on their Municipal/Band Council Strategic Plan Matrix and with **Our Food Store** on a Local Food Newsletter. Business students also worked with **BaBE**. Meanwhile, students from Psychology, Sociology, Human Nutrition, and Human Kinetics worked with the **Parkinson's Support Group** on exercise programs, digestive challenges, and motor skills.



Community Partnership Celebration

In October 2014, a **Community Partnership Celebration** welcomed our community partners and highlighted some of the unique and long-term partnerships between StFX faculty, students and so many community organizations in Antigonish. Community partners, faculty and students offered their perspectives including **Darlene Cameron** and **Mary Partridge** from the **RK MacDonald Nursing Home** and **Angie Kolen** of **Fit for Tots/Life**.

Thanks to all who presented on their experience and all who attended the event. Stay tuned for other opportunities to share stories and increase collaborations in the months to come!

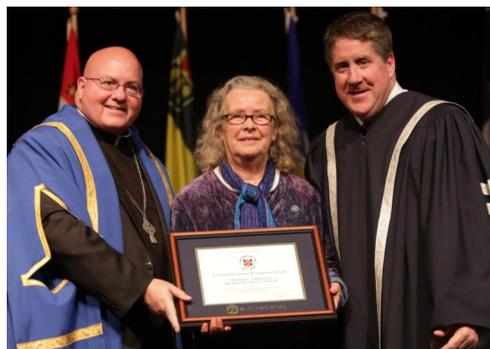
In the photo: **Ann Bigleow** (StFX Faculty Coordinator), **Ted Cogan** (**Antigonish Community Food Bank**).



We welcome your input! The next issue of the SL Community Newsletter will be out in August 2015. Please send us your stories or comments for this issue.

Community Partner Recognition Award, December 2014

We are very proud to announce that **Breaking the Silence (BTS)** is the recipient of the Community Partner Recognition Award for 2014. This award recognizes a local, regional, national, or international community partner who has made a significant and sustained contribution to the growth and development of educational opportunities in the StFX University community. The following is an excerpt from the December 2014 convocation citation.

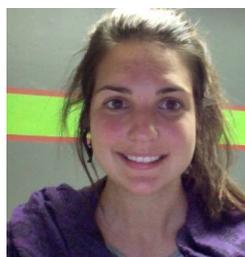


BTS is a voluntary network of people in the Maritimes who began to organize in 1989 to support the efforts of Guatemalans struggling for political, social, and economic justice. Since its inception, **BTS** has partnered with StFX to enhance educational experiences of thousands of students and staff by facilitating numerous events and guest speakers. **BTS** has been a critical partner for the Immersion Service Learning (ISL) Program experience in Guatemala. **BTS** has also engaged students by employing them as interns and as volunteers, encouraging them to advocate for change locally and abroad. Almost without exception, students and faculty describe their interactions with **BTS** as life changing, be that through the immersion experience or through professional engagement. The **BTS** Antigonish Committee also partners with Service Learning through course based.

Excellence as a Community Engaged Scholar 2015

This prize recognizes a student who has completed one or more service learning experiences and has demonstrated a personal commitment to community development. This year's recipient of the **Prize for Excellence as Community Engaged Scholar** is **Audrey Michaud** who participated in Course-based Service Learning throughout her four years at StFX in the following agencies:

Antigonish Community Food Bank, Antigonish Public Library, GASHA, and ACALA Friendship Café. She also participated in Immersion Service Learning in **Mexico** in 2012 and in **Guatemala** in 2014.



Student Prize for Research with the Community 2015

This prize is awarded annually to the best community-engaged research project presented at Student Research Day. This year's recipients are **Victoria Bernard, Alyson Woods, Kelsie Moore and Natalie Rosedale** for their research project entitled ***Breaking trail with CACL: a snowshoeing intervention for adults with intellectual disabilities.***



The future for our 2014-2015 Service Learning Student Leaders

We would like to wish our 2014-15 Service Learning Student Leaders the best of luck in their future endeavors.

Kristine Johnston plans to work as a Human Rights Accompanier with **Breaking the Silence** and deepen her knowledge of strength-based and community-led approaches to development.

Asia van Buuren will return to Antigonish in the fall for an OceanPath Fellowship in partnership with **L'Arche Hearts and Hands**. She also hopes to remain involved with local organizations such as **Breaking the Silence** and the **Antigonish Women's Resource Centre**.

Laura Sandre will return to study in the elementary stream of the StFX **BEd** program in the fall, continuing to work with children in the community and in leadership development initiatives.

It has been a pleasure to work with such inspiring and engaged students!

Student Feedback

"I really enjoyed my placement and feel as though I learned a lot through this opportunity."

"I have enjoyed the whole experience of service learning; it has opened my eyes up a lot."

"One thing that has stood out to me during my placement is how different circumstances can completely change the way you live."

"I was able to integrate class material into my placement."

"I found this to be quite an enriching and eye-opening experience."

We are very pleased to welcome **Jodi van Dompeler** to Immersion Service

Learning as the Program Assistant.

Jodi is a StFX graduate and brings many years of experience in various departments on campus. Most recently, she worked with the Master of Education program as a Program Assistant.



Service Learning (SL) Advisory Committee

The SL Advisory Committee assists with the development of policies and program changes and advises the Coordinator of Service Learning and the academic administration as to the implementation of such policies. The committee also facilitates discussion between the many partners.

Members are made up of the Academic Vice-President, Faculty Coordinator of SL, and representatives from faculty, Student's Union, Coady Institute and community. The Program Manager is staff to the committee. Each committee member brings their own experience and knowledge to the committee. The community partners, in particular, bring the unique perspective of community and speak to their role within the service learning partnership.



Current community representatives are **Terry MacIntyre** from the **RK MacDonald Nursing Home** and **Elizabeth Glinz** from the **Antigonish Public Library**, two long-term partner organizations. They have been integral to the program this year and will continue to provide valuable contributions that shape the future of the work.

Community partners are encouraged to contact the community representatives with any questions or issues they would like to have brought to the Advisory Committee: Terry, tmacintyre@rkmacdonald.ca or Elizabeth eglinz@nsngp.library.ns.ca

Community partners offered the following comments:

"Service Learning is playing an invaluable role in this community. I know it is appreciated widely. Thanks."

"We have been connected with Service Learning for many years and hope this relationships continues."

Faculty members offered the following comments:

"The students who are involved in service learning have a better grasp of the course concepts; you can really see the difference."

"The quality of work the students produce for the service learning assignments is incomparable to the other research assignments."

Contact Us: www.mystfx.ca/academic/servicelearning/ or like us on Facebook

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