



Stella's Circle

Creating Community Together

Report: Accountability Report
From: Stella's Circle
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Stella's Circle was honoured this year to receive the Provincial Literacy Award from the Adult Basic Education (ABE) Association of Newfoundland and Labrador. This recognition reflects a core truth of our work: literacy is foundational to dignity, inclusion, and justice.

Across our programs, literacy is embedded in how people rebuild their lives. It shows up in everyday moments, completing housing applications, preparing for employment, managing health, and building the confidence to use one's voice. These skills are essential to stability, independence, and belonging.



From left to right: Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador Tony Wakeham, Jessica Lee-Middleman, Laura Winters, Sarah Mills, and Honourable Minister Paul Dinn.

This work is deeply aligned with the values of The United Church of Canada. Your commitment to justice and supporting those most marginalized is reflected in the impact you help make possible at Stella's Circle. Through your support, individuals facing barriers related to poverty, mental health, homelessness, and justice involvement can access the tools they need to move forward.

This award is not only a milestone, but also a reflection of the collective impact of our community, including The United Church of Canada. It demonstrates what is possible when people are met with compassion, respect, and opportunity.

Housing

- Naomi Centre is Newfoundland and Labrador's only emergency homelessness shelter for young women and gender diverse people ages 18–29. We offer safe, temporary housing within a harm reduction model. Our staff provide person-centered housing services to both current and former residents of Naomi Centre. The past year we have connected 41 residents with Peer Support for additional mental health support and the average length of stay doubled since 2020 (now ~40 days vs. 18 days pre-crisis). Julie said: *“Naomi Centre felt like family when I didn't have one. I'm forever thankful.”*
- The Brian Martin Resource Centre (BMHRC) is a lifeline for those seeking stable housing. Our walk-in housing help connects people experiencing homelessness with housing options to support movement out of shelters and unsafe living conditions. Beyond this, our team offers eviction prevention work to maintain housing stability and safety. BMHRC had 181 new participant intakes, with 96 individuals finding permanent housing, 1,726 housing retention activities, with 133 units of affordable and supportive housing (3rd largest provider in NL). Paul shared: *“I used to sleep on couches or outside when it was warm. I never thought I'd have a place that's mine. Now I got keys in my hand, my own bed, and I cook supper every night. It feels like a real home; and like I matter.”*

Mental Health and Addictions

- Emmanuel House is the only community-based residential program for mental health and addictions in the province. Individual and group counselling is offered through long term residential stays and day treatment, with support to help participants transition back into the community. 90% of participants arrived experiencing addictions and 1/3 of participants are choosing the new day treatment program. Delia expresses: *“I used to think I didn't deserve support. Emmanuel House showed me I do. I got routines, medication that works, and people who check in. That's everything.”*
- Just Us Women's Centre is the only program in the province dedicated to supporting women and gender diverse people with criminal justice experience. We offer a variety of individual and group counselling, release planning, advocacy and support services at the NL Corrections Centre for Women in Clarenville, Her Majesty's Penitentiary, and at our Centre in St. John's. Just Us Women's Centre had 134 groups delivered in prison, 97 groups delivered in community, 97% of incarcerated women voluntarily participated and 31% increase in individuals served. Anita states: *“My head used to be full all the time. I didn't know how to slow it down. Coming here, I learned how to breathe again. The counsellors listened when no one else would. I smile more now. I sleep better. I feel like me again.”*

- Community Support Program provides the highest level of support to enable adults with severe and persistent mental health needs to live in community. Our goals are to help participants avoid hospital admissions and incarcerations, remain stably housed, and improve their quality of life. 93% remained stably housed and 80% had no incarcerations or hospital admissions. Dave expresses “*I used to feel invisible. With CSP, I feel like someone’s finally in my corner. I’m not doing this alone anymore.*”

Employment

- Employment Services helps people overcome barriers to work and build pathways to meaningful, sustainable employment. It’s designed for adults who may face challenges like mental health issues, poverty, justice involvement, or limited work experience. The program is based on the belief that everyone can work and benefit from meaningful employment. Employment Services had 99 participants started jobs or academic programs and 285 total people started/maintained employment or education. Stacey explains: “*I never thought I could work again after everything I been through. But the team helped me step by step. Now I got a job I’m proud of and I wake up excited. I didn’t just get a paycheque; I got my confidence back.*”
- Our Social Enterprises – Stella’s Brasserie, Hungry Heart Café and Home to Stay had 76 training placements completed, 18 participants transitioned from Clean Start to competitive employment, with \$230,000 in wages paid to participants, and 14,342 supported employment hours worked. Charlie states: “*Getting a job changed more than just my income. It gave me a routine, confidence, and something to be proud of. I can see a future now; and it actually looks good.*”

Connectedness with The United Church of Canada

The United Church of Canada’s relationship with Stella’s Circle highlighted at the Board level with the Rev. Faith March-MacCuish, Executive Minister, as member ex-officio.

The ongoing support and generosity of The United Church of Canada is invaluable and vital to the organization. We were honoured to attend The United Church of Canada’s Centennial Celebration in June and to host a group of national United Church volunteers for a garden clean up at one of our employment services locations. Most notably, Gower Street United Church continues to serve as a dedicated community partner, hosting our annual Christmas Service, and performance sharing opportunities for our Inclusion Choir with their rich music ministry. Rev. Pamela Jones-Fitzgerald officiated our Alternative Christmas Service again this year, a non-denominational celebration for our participants and the broader community. During the Christmas season, numerous United Church Men’s and Women’s groups across the province, Sunday Schools and others provided gifts, financial donations and supplies. Each year, the Mission and Service Fund provide funding to Emmanuel House and Naomi Centre.

Thank you for all your support for Stella’s Circle. Please visit www.StellasCircle.ca and our social media channels for more information.