




A DEFINING MOMENT IN OUR TIME

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



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Harman Singh
Harman Singh
CEO, Breton Ability Centre

A Year to Remember

As we reflect on Breton Ability Centre's journey during 2020, I reflect on what a trying but ultimately resilient year it was. Despite the ongoing challenges that we faced, we also created many opportunities, as always! Day after day our courageous team demonstrated their unwavering commitment to our clients and their fellow colleagues.

In this historic and transformative year that was dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic, never has our vision of inclusion, independence, support, and acceptance of all persons with varying disabilities been stronger and clearer.

This pandemic will be remembered as one of the greatest challenges that we collectively faced as a society, but also as an era of incredible resilience and unprecedented collaboration.

We had our goals clearly defined, and we were surrounded by the support of the best – our dedicated staff, clients and their families, our wonderful community, our dedicated board and our stakeholders. Throughout the year, we kept our clients and staff safety and wellness at the centre of every decision that was made. Our staff stayed focused and flexible on delivering unique, new, innovative programs and support despite the restrictions and ongoing changes.



This was certainly a year that will be remembered as the year where the world changed, and the way of working changed. The Covid-19 pandemic also propelled us to innovate at lightning speed. We expanded our virtual communications with new technology, implemented new safety and cleaning protocols, and we created new and innovative programming to meet the needs of our clients.

In a year marked by lockdowns, restrictions, and uncertainties, we are where we are because we had a dedicated, committed, and passionate team. We established new partnerships, expanded our operations, and strengthened our presence in the community.

As we move forward, we will keep empowering the change that is needed as we work collaboratively with our partners to transform supports and programs for individuals with varying abilities. We will keep brainstorming and launching new solutions that will allow our residents to enjoy inclusive opportunities of living and learning in our community. We will continue to invest in our staff and their learning and growth as we grow with the best in 2021.

At the heart of this report lies the commitment and dedication of our staff and the tireless effort and care they have shown to Breton Ability Centre. Despite the adversity and uncertainty that we faced in 2020, we can be proud of what we have achieved as an organization. I would like to wholeheartedly thank the entire community of Breton Ability Centre for your perseverance and commitment to keeping everyone safe and protected, throughout these uncharted times. We can be very proud of what we have achieved together.

Together, I am confident that we will come out of this pandemic stronger and will continue to make positive strides towards our vision of inclusion, independence, support and acceptance of all persons with varying disabilities.





Norman Connors
Board Chair
Breton Ability Centre

Board/Chairperson Message

The 2020/21 year was another dominated by the presence of Covid-19. The restrictions put in place for last year's pandemic planning gave us a head start to control the second and now the third wave of Covid-19. Again, the Board wishes to thank all employees for their dedication to the health and safety of our residents. The residents themselves learned how to adapt to the new way of life they experienced, and I must say they did admirably well.

Breton Ability Centre continues to implement its new strategic directions. Programs have been expanded and the needs of all residents are being addressed. I am sure that parents and relatives will be pleased with the emphasis being put forth by staff to help each resident to attain his/her personal best. Unfortunately, visitation to the Centre has been curtailed by Covid-19 and as a result, the progress being made by staff to implement some changes will only be noticed when our normal visitation times can be reinstated.

The new residence, for which we had the sod turning last July 15th, is now completed. This residence will have the capacity to house four young people that fall under the autism umbrella. This is not only a first for Cape Breton but as well a first for Nova Scotia and was proposed to the Department of Community Services by our CEO, Harman Singh. The official opening of this new addition to our programming has been delayed by Covid-19. Therefore, on behalf of the Board, I would like to thank the Department of Community Services for their interest and financial backing in bringing this project to fruition. Staff members who will be working with these new residents have been preparing for their new assignments. Hopefully this summer will see the official opening of this much needed service.

BOARD MEMBERS



Adrian White
Vice Chairperson



Jayne Burke
Secretary/Treasurer



Colleen Tobin
Board Member



Heather Grant
Board Member



Ron Williams
Board Member



Sharon Murchison
Board Member



Brenda MacKinnon
Board Member



Hilary Fitzgerald
Board Member

Meanwhile, Breton Ability Centre has been working very closely with the Department of Community Services to prepare communities across Nova Scotia to enhance the lives of people with varying abilities by having them included in regular community living. The need for inclusion is paramount in helping each person to attain their full potential. Let us all be advocates for this.

My term for service to BAC will be completed when this year's AGM is completed. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Harman Singh, our CEO, and Senior Managers, Karen Lewis and Steve Lewis, for their dedicated service to BAC. To all members of the management team, as well as the entire staff, thank you for a job well done, especially under these trying times. To my fellow board members thank you for your service. It has been a pleasure to know all of you and I wish you continued success in your service to the residents of BAC. Well done!



2020-2023 Strategic Plan Summary

In 2020, we started along the exciting journey of launching our new strategic plan which is set to conclude in 2023. Our strategic plan focuses on four critical areas that will help to improve the lives of the individuals we support, along with providing better outcomes and fully inclusive opportunities.

THESE IMPORTANT STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS ARE:



**Community
Inclusion**



**People
Development**



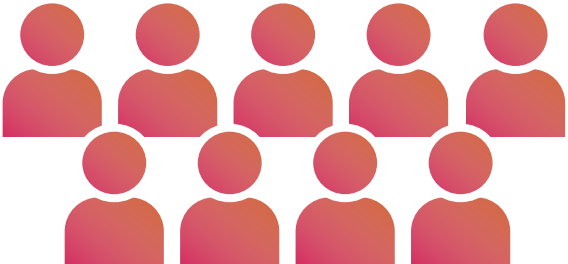
**Social Enterprise
and Funding
Development**



**Finance and
Operations**

Our strategic plan will be reviewed periodically along with progress reports and adjustments made to ensure all goals are achieved by the end of this strategic planning cycle. In order to achieve the desired strategic directions and related goals, SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound) objectives will be included in our implementation plan.

2019-2020 by the Numbers



9

Number of residents who moved out of Breton Ability Centre into community homes!

COMMUNITY HOMES

2013



3 Homes

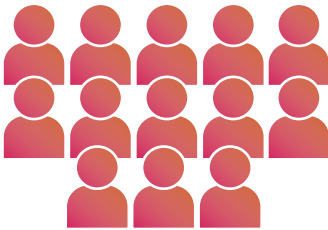


8 Residents

2017



5 Homes



13 Residents

2021



Child & Youth Home to Open March 2021



15 Residents +2 March 2021



COMMUNITY INCLUSION

Building and strengthening community inclusion is pivotal to BAC's strategic directions and as well, aligning with future transformation with the Department of Community Services. We continue to sit on lead provincial tables, and work collaboratively with the Department of Community Services to generate creative and innovative solutions to support individuals of all ages with unique and diverse needs with a goal to stabilize, and support inclusion, and independence. The organization will open its first specialized home this Spring that was built keeping in mind the needs of children and youth with Autism Spectrum disorder. For many months, staff have worked incredibly hard in creating a transition plan. This new home features unique, customized, architectural layout, and building materials that will safely support children and youth, and will be a first of its kind in the province of Nova Scotia.

Another example of solution focused support needs is our collaboration with the Department of Community Services to address the needs of individuals requiring intensive, individualized, stabilization placements with the goal of re-integrating them in inclusive settings. In January 2021, BAC accepted its first temporary shelter arrangement at our Bentinck community apartments which is located in the Sydney area. The participant has transitioned successfully and is thoroughly enjoying the new placement opportunity. Another individual residing at the community apartment continues to broaden his skillset at the Learning and Employment Centre and will transition into a part-time community supported employment opportunity with a local business this upcoming year. In the future, it is anticipated that BAC will work directly with the Department of Community Services to identify additional solutions for providing support to individuals with varying abilities as evident above.

Along with launching the temporary shelter arrangement at the Bentinck community apartment space, a new stabilization apartment space has also been established. Staff will assist individuals who may be experiencing a crisis with the goal to help the individual gain more stability. The ultimate goal of this new space is to avoid a placement breakdown or discharge and to assist the individual helping to return home over a specific short time frame.

YOUTH DAY PILOT PROGRAM

Our Youth Day Pilot Program in collaboration with the Department of Community Services, was renewed for 2020-2021 due to its previous great success. The ongoing pandemic has required the organization to make changes to our regular scheduled programming and programming has shifted to being delivered virtually. Participants meet online 3 days a week coinciding with staff delivering a door drop off containing weekly learning activities. Activities include baking supplies, art supplies, and gardening supplies. Participants regularly express their desire to work either full or part-time in the community. In preparation for this, resume building and practice interviews are incorporated to develop skills and confidence for success.





PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

Throughout 2020-2021, the Human Resources department at BAC worked extensively to develop a recruitment strategy which will be finalized in June 2021. BAC has continued its partnership with NSCC to hire new graduates and as well continued internal RCW training programs. BAC provides a culture of safety and wellness within the workplace and there has been a renewed strategic focus on both our JOHS and Wellness committees. Two crucial sub-committees will concentrate on incident investigation and facility inspections. As well, the JOHS committee is currently working with Jenna Brookfield, CUPE National OHS Representative, to create a working group partnership looking to address topics such as trust, harassment and bullying in the workplace.

The Human Resources department developed specialized training this past year to support the opening of our Child & Youth Home. Programs were also facilitated related to Mental Health First Aid and Non-Violent Crisis Intervention. BAC also partnered with NSCC to create a new program called Positive Approaches to Behaviour. To date, this program has trained four graduating classes, including 52 BAC employees and 8 external staff from the Department of Community Services. Our renowned Low Arousal training program continues to be offered internally to BAC staff. And finally, as we move into the future and away from the current pandemic, BAC will look to partner with outside facilities and service providers to help implement Low Arousal in their work settings.



Message to my Family:

I miss you!

Stay Safe & I'll see you soon!

Love, Sandra ♥



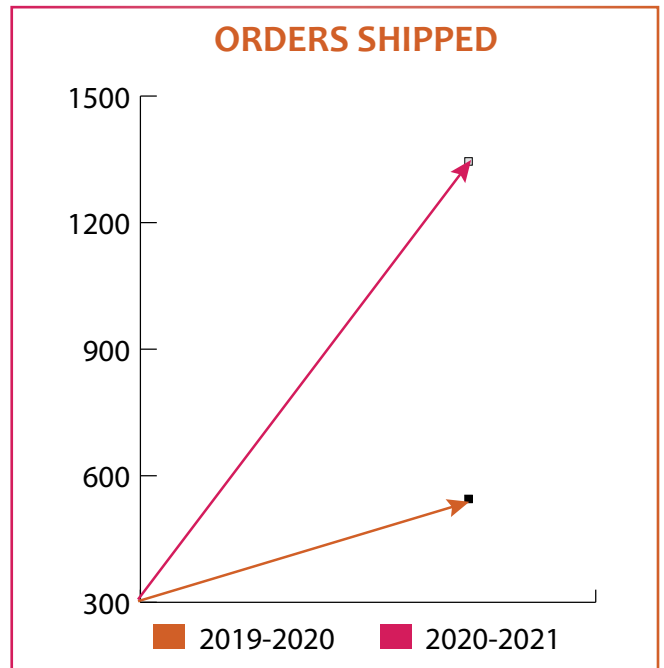
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

There was less traffic coming into the Best of Cape Breton Gift Shop this year due to Covid-19, however, the online store saw a significant increase of 143%! This substantial increase was the result of a variety of diverse employment tasks for residents working at our social enterprise and for residents working at our Learning and Employment Centre. The Best of CB partnered with the Cape Breton Partnership this past year on the newly redeveloped #CapeBretonFirst campaign, selling t-shirts and assorted merchandise. We raised over \$1,600 in sales and this was donated back to our Charitable Foundation. Once again, the store partnered with Caleb's Courage and raised over \$8,000 through the sale of t-shirts and merchandise both in-store and online. These vital funds go towards pediatric care at the Cape Breton Regional Hospital. All of this incredible work couldn't happen without our dedicated staff who work within our social enterprises. Because of this hard work, BAC continues to build upon its current social enterprise strategy.



CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

2020-2021 was an incredible fundraising year for our Charitable Foundation. Our annual Holiday Letter Campaign set an original fundraising target of \$15,000 to help with the construction of a "Grillzebo" and outdoor equipment for our new children's home. **Our generous community definitely stepped up and we raised over \$40,000!** The organization is very excited to begin work this Spring on these projects as they will truly help enrich the lives of the individuals we support. In addition, the Charitable Foundation funded a portion of the purchase cost of three vans this past year. For 2021 – 2022, BAC's Charitable Foundation will continue to work towards solidifying its place as a deserving charity of choice in Cape Breton.



(TOP LEFT) Robert Beaton showcasing his hard work. Robert was instrumental in helping the Print Shop print over 2 million 50/50 tickets!)

(BOTTOM LEFT) We raised over \$40,000 from our Charitable Holiday Letter Campaign in support of our Children's Home and Grillzebo.

(TOP RIGHT) Dr Strang proudly wearing a tie from the Best of CB specifically for him with the embroidery on the back of the tie "Thank you for keeping us safe".

(BOTTOM RIGHT) Online orders were way up for our Best of Cape Breton Gift Shop. We shipped 1345 parcels in 2020-2021 compared to 545 in 2019-2020.



FINANCE

Throughout 2020-2021, Finance guided the organization towards financial sustainability through extensive financial planning and alignment to our desired future state (post transformation) in collaboration with the Department of Community Services. Financial reporting to BAC's Board of Directors was broadened to include a more detailed narrative and variance reporting to allow the Board to be well informed of all financial aspects of the organization. This past year, Finance was actively involved in helping to facilitate the overall expansion of services at BAC to include financial proposals and oversight related to the Bentinck Street Community Home, the Children/Youth Home, major renovation on Birchdale neighbourhood, future use of Braemar Drive Community Home, CUPW project, Cornerstone Community Home acquisition, and further land/property development at Breton Ability Centre.

Finance continues to adhere to professional accounting standards and facilitated the annual audit with our independent auditors from MNP, who perform audits of four different General Ledger data sets.

In relation to the society, this past year we had a substantial increase in funding due to settlement of two union contracts including retroactive wages back several years, COVID funding, early retirement payouts, essential worker bonuses, extensive extra staffing and special needs requests. Even after accounting for all of these increases in funding and related expenditures, the organization was still able to come within a .03% of our targeted breakdown position.

Lastly, Finance manages the Resident Trust ledger and has revised the Resident Trust Account Policy to include participant choice and independence as it relates to trust fund administration. Portions of this policy have been adopted by the Department of Community Services as best practice. Finance has also helped modify the banking program and cash disbursements to residents in order to better suit the needs of the residents involved.





OPERATIONS

The Building Services and Support division includes Nutrition Services, Housekeeping and Maintenance and provides significant support for our residents, ensuring they live comfortably.

This division celebrated Mental Health Week this year by having staff write positive words and affirmations about their fellow colleagues. The staff responses to this act of kindness were overwhelming and it goes to show that small acts like this have an impactful effect.

Nutrition & Food Services celebrated throughout the year with theme meals, holiday and birthday celebrations, these celebrations always bring lots of smiles to residents faces. As well as food services/housekeeping departments focusing on contingency plans regarding the pandemic.

PROJECTS COMPLETED THIS PAST YEAR:

- Greenspace completed for staff and resident use
- New children's home construction completed
- With discussions around safety and accessibility with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, the Roundabout was completed with a new driveway access and an accessible sidewalk into our property for our residents to safely access the community
- Ongoing renovations to BAC resident areas bedrooms/bathrooms and renovations to our community homes
- Major infrastructure upgrade (sprinkler system)
- Preparing Birchdale major renovation plan to create a more private, brighter living space, including converting double bedrooms to single bedrooms
- Architectural drawing for Outdoor BBQ Space – Grillzebo

Covid/Pandemic Management/Go Forward

The last year has been all about resilience, and riding the wave of the pandemic and adjusting our operations and pandemic planning consistent with the direction from the Chief Medical Officer of Health. Our organization is being guided by the following core principles:

- Supporting the needs of residents and clients
- Prioritizing the health and safety of our residents and staff
- Following the advice of Dr. Robert Strang, and Public Health
- Leading with compassion and flexibility
- Learning from each other

Throughout this crisis, our staff have never stopped working for our residents. They have demonstrated incredible compassion and support for one another. Our Infection Control Team has been hard at work, monitoring the waves, and updating processes, and practices as needed. We advocated hard for quality supports for residents and equity for our staff through our provincial association - Diverse Abilities NS.

When the State of Emergency was declared in March 2020, we were in a panic. It was uncharted territory for everyone. Thanks to the collaboration at all levels, both internally and externally, we were able to weather the storm of wave 1. In the last year, we managed the second and third wave of the pandemic, and thankfully were able to keep the virus out of our facility and community homes.



A year later we have set a “new normal”. Infection Control practices have become a norm for our staff and our residents. Masking, maintaining a distance, and hand washing is second nature in our organization. Zoom Meetings, and remote work is the new workstyle. We have been very well supported by the Department of Community Services to ensure that safety of our residents and staff remains a top priority.

In keeping with the Public Health Directives, we remained closed to the public in the last year. We recognize that this remains a challenging time for everyone, especially our residents and families who are not able to take their loved one’s home. We recognize the importance of family and relationships, and keeping that in mind, we were able to have families/friends (according to PH guidelines) come for visits. We used technology to keep families connected with their loved ones. Designated outdoor and indoor visiting spaces were set up. Our staff came up with creative recreation and leisure ideas so residents could enjoy somewhat of a “normal” summer with socially distanced indoor and outdoor activities.

Our staff, residents, and designated family members were thankful to be included in the priority groups for vaccinations. To date all eligible residents have received both their doses of the vaccine, and approximately 72% of staff have received both doses of vaccine.

We’re extremely proud at how everyone at Breton ability Centre and the families of our residents and clients have handled the pandemic and the challenges that it has presented. It is hard to express the appreciation to our staff, families, colleagues at Diverse Abilities NS, the Cape Breton community, the Department of Community Services and, Public Health. The pandemic has reminded us once again, what an incredible support network we have. We have been driven by a common purpose of supporting each other, caring for, and supporting our residents and clients. Everyone has come together, further strengthening the common threads that tie us together.



Organizational Departments

Administration, Finance and IT
Human Resources and People Development
Resident Supports and Services

Building Supports & Services
Social Enterprise and Charitable Foundation

Our talented, committed, and dedicated staff include:

Social Support Team
Housekeeping
Food Services
Teachers

Independent Living Coaches
Recreation Therapist
Recreation Therapy Assistant
Maintenance

Resident Care Workers
Licensed Practical Nurses
Registered Nurses
Behaviour Interventionalist

We also have a dedicated group of professionals that provide consultative services. This includes:

Dr. Archibald, GP
Dr. M. Yavari, GP
Dr. Brian Foley, Psychiatrist (Adult)
Dr. Pippa Moss, Psychiatrist (Children)
Louise Smith, Speech Language Pathologist

Cabot Physiotherapy, Physiotherapist,
Kinesiologist, and OT Services
Dr. Andrew McDonnell, Psychologist
Foot care Nurse

Our staff work in various roles within different departments, while focusing on the same goal - supporting each of our residents/clients to achieve self-determination, independence and growth using a person -directed philosophy.



Success Stories



Bryan preparing online orders for our Best of Cape Breton Gift Shop.

BRYAN THORPE

Bryan is a former resident of BAC and is now living in the community. Bryan is an integral asset to the Best of Cape Breton Gift Shop. When working at the Gift Shop, he fills a variety of duties including processing online orders from start to finish, updating products into the point of sale and online store, and conducting annual inventory spot checks. This past year, Bryan was instrumental in helping to assist and implement a bar code scanning process at Abilitea's Café, located in the Learning and Employment Centre. With this new initiative, more participants will be given the opportunity to develop their skills in the café, as this software is very inclusive to all levels and abilities. As a former graduate of programing at the LEC, this project allowed Bryan to implement and teach staff

who in turn supported him for many years previous. It was very evident that Bryan took ownership of this project and projected a great sense of confidence in the broad variety of skills he has learned over the past number of years. Next time when shopping at the Best of CB, make sure to say hello to Bryan and congratulate him on his success!



(Top) Janice Addicott and Barbara Martin working the counter at Janice's Boutique.

JANICE'S BOUTIQUE

Janice's Boutique has grown leaps and bounds over the past two years as a small social enterprise located in the Learning and Employment Centre at BAC. This boutique is named after Janice Addicott, a resident at BAC, who shows immense pride in operating this enterprise. Janice is responsible for tagging and pricing all items, taking orders related to BAC branded clothing, helping residents choose appropriate clothing based on their needs, operating a small mobile boutique that visits neighbourhoods at BAC, completing quality control, money management and end of sales totals daily.

We would like to encourage the community to drop off their clothing donations to our clothing donation box located on site. Keep up the tremendous work Janice!

CHILDREN'S HOME

In collaboration with the Department of Community Services, we will proudly begin offering support and services in late Spring to children with intellectual disabilities at our new Child & Youth Home, Budding Oaks, designed to support a diverse spectrum of needs. In consultation with Bo Elven, a world-renowned Psychologist who specializes in design layouts in housing needs for individuals with varying abilities, every detail of this new home from the colours to the lighting has been chosen with the children's needs in mind.

TRIFOS DESIGN CONSULTANTS

The opportunity to design supportive environments for children and adolescents with autism is a privilege afforded to few architects.

It has been an honour and a pleasure to collaboratively design this special-purpose home, with the design intent of enhancing residents' quality of life, facilitating the fostering of their independence, and helping to ensure their safety.

Breton Ability Centre continues to provide an innovative and inclusive environment that enriches the lives of those that they support, and we are proud to have been a part of the Team that delivered this vital and meaningful project.

Regards,

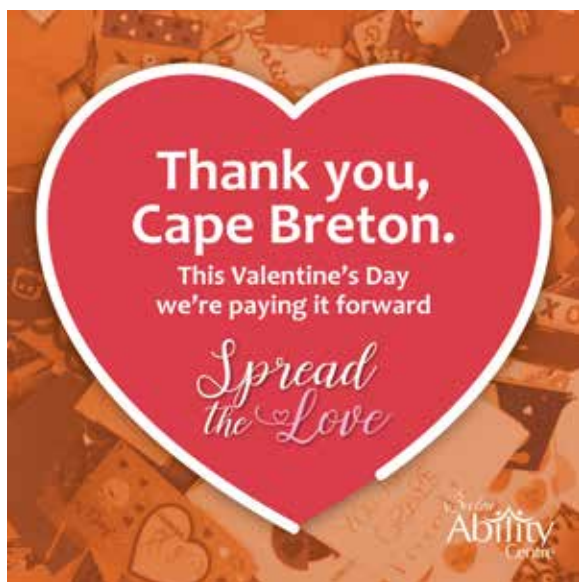
Spyro Trifos

Principal Architect
NSAA NLAA FRAIC LEED® AP BD+C
Trifos Design Consultants, Architecture & Interiors





Highlights



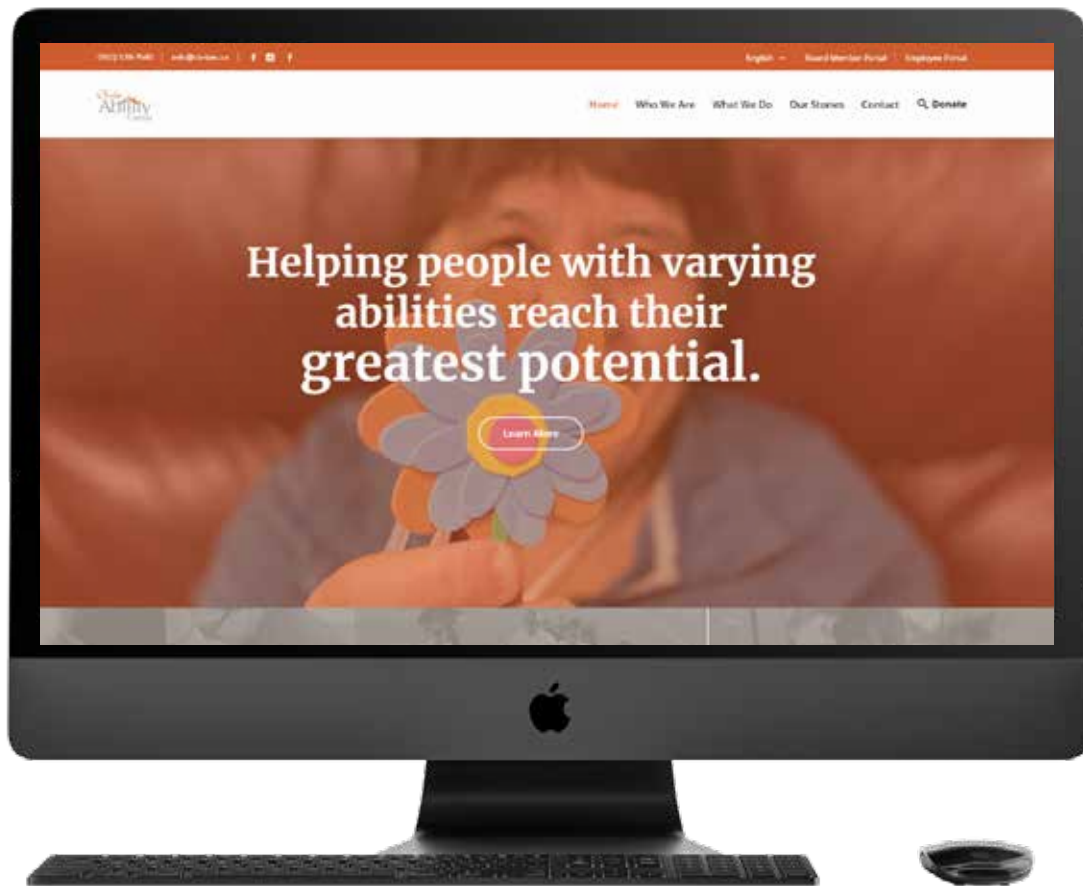
SPREAD THE LOVE

For the second straight year, our now annual “Spread the Love” campaign, brought countless smiles to all of the residents at BAC. As an added gesture and to show our appreciation to our community, residents at BAC prepared Valentine’s cards which were delivered throughout CBRM to many residents of long-term care homes. The residents at BAC would like to send a sincere thank you to everyone who kindly sent in a Valentine’s card, and we look forward to continuing this tradition in 2022.



RETIREMENT

Brenda McNeil	June 2020	40 years
Cathy Penny	May 2020	16 years
Janet MacDonald	January 2021	28 years
Jenny Buckland	October 2020	24 years
William Mullins	April 2021	12 years



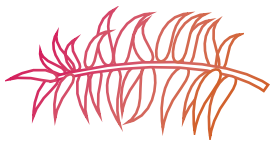
NEW WEBSITE

In January 2021, the organization officially launched the redesign of our website to staff and the general public. One major change was to simplify searching for our site. A change was made to the domain name which is now www.bretonability.ca. Other key enhancements to the site include quick access to donate to our Charitable Foundation, concentration on visually appealing graphics and photos, along with an ease-of-use navigation for the user.

Our goal for the redesign was to boost activity by engaging users with creative content focusing on news about our facility, staff, and residents. There has been a significant boost in activity since the launch. Stats from early May 2021, show that users are spending just under three minutes on our website, with our pageviews and sessions going up each month. A committee is tasked to manage the website and meets bi-weekly, in order to control content and ensure that the material stays current. To increase visits to our website we recently held a contest that awarded the winner a \$50.00 gift card from our social enterprise, The Best of Cape Breton Gift Shop. This contest served a double purpose as it was used as a tool to register new emails for future announcements and events. Stay tuned to www.bretonability.ca as the excitement has just begun!

BRANDING

BAC recently created imaging branding to identify each neighborhood. The new neighborhood branding and signage will symbolize inclusion, friendships, and communities. The new branding and its graphics can be used for things such as- internal communications from each neighbourhood, t-shirts for residents, social media post, and so much more.



WILLOW LANE



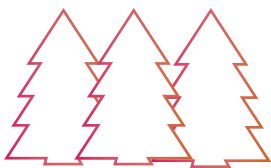
BIRCHDALE



MAPLEVIEW



PINE RIDGE



**WHISTLING
PINES**
(DINING ROOM)







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