



Independent Living Nova Scotia supports consumers (people with disabilities) to:

- Live their lives the way they want;
- Stay in control of decisions that affect them;
- Find the services and contacts they need;
- Get information that is useful and clear;
- Break through barriers that are in the way; and
- Develop their skills.

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Independent-Living-Nova-Scotia



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**independent
living**



NOVA SCOTIA

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Staff

Carrie Ernst	Executive Director
Randy Reede	Information & Outreach Coordinator
Tina Gascon	Bookkeeper
Kaitlyn Phillips	Executive Assistant & RDSP Program Specialist
Michelle Sayers	RISE Program Manager
Heather Baglole	RISE Program Specialist

Board Members

Mike Coady	(2014)
Kyle MacDonald	(2016)
Pat Gates	(2017) Retired 2020
Murray Vandewater	(2017) Retired 2020
Nancy Walker	(2017)
Taylor Coady	(2019)
Andrew Taylor	(2020)
Steven Noel	(2020)
Susan McLearn	(2020)
Jim Arnott	(2020)

Executive Director's Report

April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020

The year 2019/20 was again identified as a time of continued growth, opportunity, and challenge for Independent Living Nova Scotia. We have seen growth, continued development, and the response to a worldwide pandemic.

As reported, ILNS began a successful program called The Next Step, an employment transition program for youth with disabilities. This program would offer 12 youth with disabilities the opportunities to explore career development, essential skills training, and employment opportunities within our community. This program saw the enhancement of skills and employment skills for participants to enhance their future employment opportunities. This program was interrupted by the COVID 19 pandemic, and program activity was suspended in the last eight weeks of delivery. Activity resumed for participants when it was deemed safe to do so and will continue until mid-August 2020.

Once again, December brought forward our opportunity to celebrate the year and connect with peers. The 2019 Gala was a great success and featured many honored guests from Speaker of the House, Kevin Murphy, to many MLA and city councillors. This year's Gala was Attended not only by consumers but by many supporters and businesses. Will Brewer, the HRM Town Crier welcomed guests again this year with his enthusiastic Town Crier address.

ILNS work continues in areas of priority and is happy to announce that we have begun work with the Department of Community Services(DCS) and the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) on a pilot project to launch a model of Shared Attendant Care. The pilot was approved in principle in January 2020, and ILNS became an IL Support Program Service Provider with DCS. We have continued to do the preliminary work needed around the policy and selection process for attendants with both departments. Throughout the pandemic, the work slowed on this initiative. Still, we are currently working towards the creation of community partnerships for the housing component as well as the selection of participants. This work is spearheaded by a task force within both engaged departments - DCS and DHW.

ILNS continued to work on the uptake of the Registered Disability Saving Plan (RDSP) within the province of Nova Scotia with the generous support of one of our donors. This work continued with a formed partnership with the Department of Community Services and the Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotia and the Maple Tree Foundation. This partnership continued with innovative work around delivery and uptake. Many provincial sessions were offered as we continued to share information on this valuable program and its benefits for those that qualify for the Disability Tax Credit.

Executive Director's Report

In March, ILNS and the rest of the world were forced to respond to a worldwide pandemic. This pandemic caused reason for pause and an evaluation of how to best connect and support our consumers during this unprecedented time. We established alternate forms of connectivity for all participants enrolled in our transitional programming. It was during this time we evaluated the need to provide additional support for consumers that focused on food security, food delivery, and supportive measure in conjunction with technology as well. This support is ongoing and continues through the United way Atlantic Compassion Fund, Community Food Centre Canada, and Second Harvest Food Rescue.

As we move forward in uncertain times, we will continue our work in a variety efforts.

We have advanced our efforts in areas of accessibility and awareness and have included employer engagement series in all our more extensive funding proposals. We will continue to work towards information and support for all accessibility and awareness issues within our communities. We will work with other organizations and stakeholders to ensure that the concerns and needs of our consumers are met and addressed. ILNS will also continue to build on its strength of expertise and first voice experience toward the community engagement as we engage ourselves for an inclusive environment throughout the province of Nova Scotia.

"A diverse mix of voices leads to better discussions, decisions, and outcomes for everyone."

— Sundar Pichai

Respectfully submitted,



Carrie Ernst
Executive Director

Chair's Report

Since the last AGM, ILNS has had many changes. Under the direction of Carrie Ernst, we have garnered over \$764,000 in program revenue and have been running nine programs. With this boost in revenue and programming, our staff complement has grown to nine with Michelle Anderson, leaving us for maternity leave.

Until the pandemic forced many changes, the programs were moving along successfully and then office operations had to be changed to remote management. This was a challenge that was met by our staff with resilience and collaboration. Our team was able to offer support in many forms to our member community, such as food insecurity and delivery assistance, technology assistance, online delivery of the Independent Living Across Canada Day events with fellow Independent Living Centre, Empower, the Disability Resource Centre as well as our Art of Disability Festival: The Remix; both events were tremendous feats. The board is proud of the efforts Carrie Ernst and our staff have made to continue to meet our mission and mandate during the challenging circumstances that were imposed on everyone, not only in Nova Scotia, but the world.

As the team transitioned back to the office, we were successful in acquiring more workspace directly next to our existing office. This additional office space was necessary to support the broad programming we are providing and allow sufficient physical distancing. We were fortunate that we did not have to move from our current location, and our staff is working hard to re-establish the on-site work place to be as safe and positive as possible.

One program which ran successfully last summer was the Adolescent/Young Adult Autism Summer Camp Program. This has been a much needed program for the attending group for many years, and this summer, it was suspended due to the stringent regulations imposed on the activities that generally take place. Many of the participants resided in care homes, and these facilities would not allow residents to attend such programming. We are hoping to provide a replacement program later this fall if the COVID-19 status continues to improve as the loss of this program has been difficult for past participants.

Our board has also undergone changes. We were sorry to lose the expertise of Murray Vanderwater and Pat Gates from our ranks. Murray acted as our Treasurer and was a great support in providing us with accurate financial statements and a budget for the year. His expertise was greatly valued, and he will be missed. Pat was also a great asset to us as she offered many insights and was a wealth of information to assist us in making decisions. With the loss of these board members, we are grateful for the addition of Andrew Taylor, Steve Noel, Susan McLearn, Sebastien Clairmont, and Jim Arnott with board approval. They bring a variety of expertise and knowledge that will enhance the growth and diversity of our board and organization.

Respectfully Submitted,
Nancy Walker
Co-Chair
Independent Living Nova Scotia Association

Treasurer's Report 2019

Independent Living Nova Scotia Association Treasurer's Report

In the material for this AGM are the Financial Statements of ILNS for the fiscal year April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020. These statements were prepared by Mr. Mitch Miller, CA, after reviewing our financial books and working with our Executive Director and Bookkeeper. Based on his review, Mr. Miller expresses the opinion that the financial statements present fairly the financial position of ILNS. Mr. Miller's Review Engagement Report is included in the Financial Statement Report on page 2.

Please note that the financial statements are in draft form, for approval by ILNS Membership.

The report presents three financial statements:

1. Statement of Financial Position
2. Statement of Operations and Net Assets
3. Statement of Cash Flows

Noteworthy items from these statements and the rest of the report are as follows:

Page 3:

- Our net assets have increased from about \$204,600 to about \$295,400 over the course of the year;
- We have created a reserve for equipment totaling \$30,000. These funds will be spent to furnish additional space that is required to run our programs while also following social distancing measures.

Page 4:

Our revenues have increased over the past year, as well as the excess in revenues over expenses. This has put us in a good position to continue to operate our programs while also following social distancing measures.

Page 5:

- This page shows how much cash was gained and spent throughout the year and the total account of cash on hand;
- Once again, the amount of cash on hand has increased from the previous year. This puts ILNS in a good position to manage any setbacks that may come from the coronavirus pandemic and social distancing

Treasurer's Report 2019

Page 6,7, and 8:

- These pages provide more detail about ILNS' financial statements, a breakdown of our government contributions, and a breakdown of our deferred revenues.

In summary, the Board notes that the financial position of ILNS continues to be strong and puts us in a good position to address potential cash flow issues related to the coronavirus pandemic and social distancing measures. We will continue to be able to provide services to our community.

The Board recognizes the hard work of our Executive Director and staff as the finances of the organization is to their credit.

Submitted by,
Taylor Coady, Acting Treasurer
July 31, 2020

AGM Agenda 2020

Agenda

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020

September 23, 2020

Independent Living Nova Scotia Association

6:00 p.m. Welcome from Mike Coady, Co-Chair - ILNS

6:05 p.m. **Annual General Meeting**

Call to order and approval of agenda

Approval of minutes from 2019 AGM

Treasurer's Report for 2019-20

Approval of 2019-20 audited financial statements

Appointment of auditor for 2020-21 – Motion to delegate auditor appointment to the Board of Directors

Chair's Report

Executive Director's report – Carrie Ernst

Consumer Outreach and Fundraising Overview - Randy Reede

Programming Overview – Michelle Sayers, Heather Baglole and Kaitlyn Phillips

Report of the Nominating Committee

Election of Directors

7:00 p.m. Adjournment

AGM Meeting Minutes 2019

Draft AGM Minutes – Submitted by Taylor Coady

Board of Directors, Independent Living Nova Scotia Association
Saturday, June 22, 2019, 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Future Inns, Halifax, NS

Opening:

Meeting called to order at 1:31 by Michael Coady. Board members introduced to members in attendance.

- In attendance: Michael Coady, Pat Gates, Taylor Coady, Murray Vandewater, Carrie Ernst, Nancy Walker
- Regrets: Kyle MacDonald, Secretary of the Board
- Quorum established

Approval of Agenda:

- **Motion: Moved by Jen Powley, seconded by Carrie Ernst to approve draft agenda**
- It was noted by Jen Powley that the 2018-19 Statements were reviewed, not audited.
- Lois Miller requested an amendment for any other business, to be added before adjournment.
- **Motion carried.**

Approval of minutes from 2018 AGM:

- **Motion: Moved by Carrie Ernst, seconded by Karla Graves-Smith to approve the minutes**
- Lois Miller notes that it would be better to distribute the minutes and draft financial statements in advance. Lois also noted that persons with vision impairment may have difficulty reading a document with a watermark.
- Lois Miller asks if the *Piece of the Pie* symposium occurred, remarking that it had been noted as a priority.
 - Carrie Ernst responded that the symposium did not occur, but ILNS did participate in the super-clinic's session.
 - Carrie also noted that this decision was made subsequent to a board discussion about priorities, RDSP, and other opportunities.

AGM Meeting Minutes 2019

- Lois Miller asks if the potential for weekly meetups organized by ILNS (e.g. informal coffee groups, walks) were explored as this had been noted by Kendall Worth in the 2018 AGM as a program he would like to see offered.
 - Carrie Ernst responded that such a program was considered by ILNS but had not been implemented.
 - Carrie also noted that the weekly newsletter distributed by ILNS occasionally contains notice of social activities
- **Motion carried**

Treasurer's Report:

- A draft opportunity presented a draft of the Treasurer's Report
 - Murray explained that the board switched from an audit to review for this year, as a full audit is not necessary for ILNS and is costlier than a review
 - Murray explained that the statements are a draft because they belong to the organization, not to the board.
 - Murray highlighted that on the statement of financial position is the improvement in our net assets. This is explained, on statement of operations, by funds that have been received by the organization and expenses made. Murray also noted that excess revenues are strong leading to an increase in net assets and significant improvements have been made over the past year after a significant loss of funding.
 - Murray commented that the reviewed financial statements show that the organization is conducting their financials properly and overall, the organization continues to improve its financial position.
- **Motion: Moved by Murray Vandewater, seconded by Gordie Publicover to approve Treasurer's Reports and financial statements. Motion passed.**

Chair's Report:

- The Chair's report as circulated in the agenda was relayed to members by Nancy Walker
- Lois Miller and Karla Graves-Smith remarked that Karla had not received notice that she was dismissed from the Board and took issue with the Board's behaviour
 - Mike noted that when board members miss more than three consecutive meetings they are automatically dismissed from the board.
 - The comment was acknowledged.

AGM Meeting Minutes 2019

Executive Director's Report:

- Executive Director's report as circulated in agenda was relayed to members by Carrie Ernst.
- Lois Miller asks if there was anything further to report on the shared attendant care model
 - Carrie Ernst responded that work on this subject will be presented to the government later in 2019
- Gus Reid comments that he wanted to formally acknowledge that he believes in the direction of ILNS. Resilience and independence is core to ILNS and believes the team has pursued this well in their activities. Gus commends the board and executive director for their efforts.
- Jen Powley asks how the employment program differs from Teamworx.
 - The board responded that Teamworx offers an individualized service, whereas ILNS offers core programming. Teamworx program is for individuals and ILNS's program is for groups.
- **Motion: Moved by Murray Vandewater, seconded by Lois Miller to approve the Chair's Report and Executive Director's Report. Motion passed.**

Presentation on the RDSP Program:

- RDSP Report as circulated in the agenda was relayed to members by Kaitlyn Phillips.
- Gus Reid asks if there is any attention on communicating the vulnerabilities of the program and the slow uptake.
 - Carrie Ernst responded that a discussion on this topic was held during the development for the second phase of the program. Research into best practices was conducted and the findings have been incorporated into the program.
 - Gus responded with a follow-up question, asking if these changes are having an effect
 - Carrie responded that ILNS has revisited how we are conducting business and ILNS has developed a concrete plan to improve uptake and resolve these issues
- Carrie Ernst highlights that RDSP is a long-term savings plan specifically for people with disabilities. Family and friends can contribute to an RDSP, in addition to the beneficiary. Investment is not necessary to receive funding from government. The amount that individuals are able to receive is dependent on their income.
- Carrie Ernst thanks Gus Reid for his help, knowledge, and interest in helping ILNS with the RDSP initiative
- Lois Miller asks if any sessions have been held outside of Halifax

AGM Meeting Minutes 2019

- Carrie Ernst responded that yes, some sessions have been held in Cape Breton and Truro. The initial pilot was for the HRM and CBRM.
- Lois also commented that in the past, regions like Amherst and Digby have responded well to RDSP Outreach

Presentation on the Shared Attendant Care Project:

- Shared Attendant Care Projects Report as circulated in the agenda was relayed to members by Michelle Anderson. Michelle made some additional comments, as follows:
 - ILNS wants to ask advisory boards to determine statistics of persons with disabilities in institutions and create profiles of these individuals and the institutions. Primary data collection is recommended to understand who is willing to transfer into the community.
 - Primary aims of the program include opening an accessibility outfitting fund, developing a rent subsidy program, and establishing partnerships with developers to provide input on accessibility implementation.
 - Emergency response plans for persons with disabilities in houses and units are being investigated. Small options models disqualify individuals who cannot evacuate on their own.
 - Gus Reid comments that this is ridiculous, and that changes or workarounds should be approved.
 - Development of a shared four-bedroom unit is underway.

Nominating Committee Report:

- **Motion: Moved by Carrie Ernst and seconded by Michelle Anderson to re-elect Mike Coady, Pat Gates, and Nancy Walker to the board. Motion passed**
- **Motion: Moved by Carrie Ernst, seconded by Randy Reede to elect Taylor Coady to the board. Motion passed.**
- The Board thanks Lois Miller and Karla Graves-Smith for their contributions.

Other Business:

- Lois Miller recognizes the priorities of the Board, but wants to propose a starter program.

AGM Meeting Minutes 2019

- This was a program that was previously run by ILNS that organization activities and occasional outings with a staff person, once a week. Staff were typically university students, and worked approximately four paid hours per week and was therefore low cost.
- Lois notes that a person at the beginning of a path to independence would find this program helpful, as it provided a comfortable environment for persons with disabilities, mostly about having fun.
- Nancy Walker commented that the club Comm Access exists that provides a similar service and notes that these types of services are always on the mind of the Board and something we would like to be expanded upon in the future.
- Carrie Ernst noted that Comm Access is a program that ILNS runs which has an age restriction. Carrie also notes that ILNS tries not to duplicate the resources of other organizations.

Closing:

- Meeting adjourned at 2:59 p.m. by Michael Coady with thanks to members for attending the meeting and their engagement.

ILNS Consumer Outreach and Fundraising Overview

In June 2019, ILNS participated for the seventh straight year in the Charity Challenge portion of the Blue Nose Marathon. Several individuals ran, walked and wheeled on our Team Independent and we raised a total of \$4,000. Most notably one of our employees, Michelle Anderson, raised over \$900 in two weeks. Since we began participating in this event, ILNS has raised more than \$32,000 for our organizations' programs and services. Finally, we would like to thank everyone who donated and fund-raised for Team Independent, especially Gus Reed for his continuing support.

We continue to make strides on the social media front. On Facebook, we now have over 1200 followers. We also have an active following on Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube. We engaged our audience by posting ILNS event, program and service information as well as relevant media stories and important information. This became even more important as the COVID-19 pandemic reached Nova Scotia.

Our Weekly Bulletin email subscriber list has also grown and currently has 260 individuals; this number regularly increases. Again, this bulletin provides timely disability-related information from within our organization as well as other community partners. Individuals can become subscribers by signing up on our website.

Finally, The December 2019 Christmas Gala and Dance was again another success with 90 consumers attending the event. Our Gala sponsorship efforts paid off and we raised approximately \$5,000 for the event. Additionally, we sold tickets for prizes, had a 50/50 draw and as always, presented a one-night stay at the Atlantica Hotel door prize. Attendees enjoyed a three course holiday-inspired meal, a few quick remarks from our Executive Director and a dance to end the night with DJ Ace.

ILNS Programming Overview

The Next Step – Employment Transitional Programming

The Next Step Program (TNS) began in September 2019. Independent Living Nova Scotia (ILNS) developed The Next Step employment transition program based on the need for employment programs for persons with disabilities designated by the community and our funding stakeholders. TNS was an eight month paid employment transition program for youth between the ages of 18 - 30 who identified as having a disability. TNS focused on overcoming barriers to employment through employer engagement, accommodation, and targeted training. Twelve young adults from the HRM were chosen to participate in this innovative program, which included essential and employability skills training, employment orientation, career exploration, and job placements in businesses throughout the city.

As ILNS works with persons with cross disabilities, there was a wide range of participants with varying abilities and understanding of what independence meant for them. Since, TNS was a paid program, this allowed participants to learn about wages and finances to support their independence. Many of the participants had no experience with finances, so program staff facilitated financial literacy workshops to ensure participants had support navigating their financial responsibilities. This was a challenge for many of the participants, however, program staff saw many improvements in general knowledge and ability to make smart financial decisions and plan for the future.

Many of the participants struggled with mental health, specifically anxiety, and this proved to pose unique challenges for them with finding consistent paid employment in the past. Our staff worked closely with each participant to find supportive and inclusive employers who could accommodate them. With accommodations in place such as days off in between shifts, shorter shifts and mental health supports, many participants were successfully employed at the end of the program.

Other challenges several participants faced was with public transportation and time management skills. Many of the participants struggled with having consistent schedules and commitments as well as being on time and navigating the public transportation system. Throughout the program, program staff diligently worked to ensure accountability around time management and to give participants the support they needed to participate fully in independent adult life. The expectation was that participants could demonstrate the independence many employers require, including access to transportation to and from work. Students participated in a number of outings to learn more about the community and provide an opportunity to build on their skills in a different environment, as well as open them up to new opportunities through public transportation. By the end of the program all of the participants were travelling independently to their work placements and committing to regular schedules with their employers, demonstrating vast improvements in their employability skills.

ILNS Programming Overview Continued

Community Access Program (CAP)

The Community Access Program (CAP) began in late November 2019 to provide life and employability skills training as well as recreational programming to youth with disabilities ages 18 - 24. CAP participants were involved in a variety of workshops, some of which included team- and resume-building, so participants can see the benefits in employment support and community engagement, which would go a long way in creating an atmosphere of camaraderie and skill building for the duration of CAP.

Additionally, the most well-attended and enjoyable activities for participants involved arts and crafts and games and teamwork. Program staff worked to incorporate more arts-based learning into both group outings and in-house programming. These activities were the most requested and sought after, and participants highly anticipated visits to the Clay Cafe and escape rooms. This group enjoyed board games and group-based challenges, which proved a positive experience for all. Staff also collaborated with the participants to choose the weekly events as a group, and found that their excitement and motivation to attend went up. For example, one participant discovered that he loved escape rooms, and after participating in one kept asking to do more. Others would follow his lead and encourage his enthusiasm, and this provided a great positive spirit during outings.

The program experienced a few challenges, including a lack of referrals from partner organizations. CAP was an unpaid program, and several participants expressed challenges with regards to transportation, finances, food security and substance abuse. While ILNS supported them where possible, many live within the same negative feedback loop: unpaid programs that support employment feel like a misuse of time because they can't afford to attend unpaid programming, which then keeps them from receiving the support they need to find paid work.

ILNS Programming Overview Continued

Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) Pilot Project

As of March 31, 2020 the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) Pilot Project ILNS participated and organized in partnership with the Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians (SDHHNS) and the Department of Community Services (DCS) completed its second phase. By this point, we helped 25 people through the DTC step of the RDSP process and 20 people in opening an RDSP. An additional 16 individuals went through the process on their own.

One notable success during the second phase of this project was a letter that was sent out to DCS Disability Support Program (DSP) clients. This letter included information about RDSP drop-in sessions we hosted throughout the province during February and March 2020 and it also included direct contact information. As a result of this communication, we had 102 individuals attend sessions; this number would have also been higher if it were not for COVID-19, as the last two drop-in sessions had to take place online. Since this was a last minute change that could only be communicated through social media, our website, Weekly Bulletin and by email to other organizations we had initially reached out to about the sessions, direct letters to DSP clients were not mailed out. Apart from the drop-in sessions, we also received 72 calls and emails from individuals, caseworkers and small option home staff asking for information and support. We did not anticipate the amount of correspondence we received from the DSP client community and were happy to support those individuals.

Throughout the second phase of the pilot project, we altered our communication strategy and began reaching out to different organizations including but not limited to: the Brain Injury Association of Nova Scotia (BIANS), the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA), and the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS). As a result, we were able to reach more individuals and have additional referrals from these organizations and agencies. Finally, we also continued to promote this project and our free services through social media, our website and our Weekly Bulletin.

Nomination Committee Report

The Nominating Committee submits this report to the Annual General Meeting of Independent Living Nova Scotia.

First we present the following two motions:

That ILNS re-elect to the board of directors Kyle MacDonald; and

That ILNS elect Andrew Taylor, Steve Noel, Susan McLearn, Sebastien Clairmont, and Jim Arnott to the board of directors.

Kyle MacDonald is entering the first year of his third term.

We thank Mike Coady who is entering the second year of his third term, Nancy Walker who is entering the second year of her second term, and Taylor Coady who is entering the second year of his first term.

(Please see Appendix A for a visual representation)

We also thank Murray Vandewater and Pat Gates for their service on the board and echo the sentiments expressed in the Chair Report.

The Nominating Committee has been quite active this year. In pursuing new candidates, the Committee sought those who had longstanding experience with ILNS and the disability community, and those who could bring a fresh perspective to the board. The Committee is confident that those recommended will be an asset to ILNS and add value to the organization

The board also appoints members during the year to fill vacancies and will continue to consider new nominations.

Respectfully submitted,

The Nominating Committee

Appendix A:

Term:	1		2		3		4		5	
	F	S	F	S	F	S	F	S	F	S
Mike Coady						X				
Nancy Walker				X						
Kyle MacDonald					X					
Taylor Coady		X								
Andrew Taylor	X									
Steve Noel	X									
Susan McLearn	X									
Jim Arnott	X									
Sebastien Clairmont	X									