

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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# Staff

**Carrie Ernst**  
Executive Director

**Tina Gascon**  
Bookkeeper

**Brad Gabriel**  
Peer Outreach Coordinator

**Kaitlyn Phillips**  
Executive Assistant &  
Program Specialist

**Meaghan Ernst**  
Administrative &  
Social Media Support

**Kathleen Odell**  
Program Manager

**Michelle Sayers**  
RISE Program Manager

**Heather Baglole**  
Program Specialist

**Pierre Gascon**  
Job Developer

# Board of Directors

**Mike Coady** (2014) Retired 2021

**Kyle MacDonald** (2016) Retired 2020

**Nancy Walker** (2017)

**Taylor Coady** (2019)

**Andrew Taylor** (2020)

**Steven Noel** (2020)

**Susan McLearn** (2020)

**Jim Arnott** (2020)

**Ginny Sweet** (2021)

**Jennifer MacNeil** (2021)

# Executive Director's Report

April 1, 2020– March 31, 2021

2020/21 was an unprecedented year as we adapted to a new normal and remained steadfast to best support our consumers through what continued to be an uncertain time.

ILNS like other non-profit entities had to pivot to ongoing virtual work and provide supportive virtual programming. Although we faced new challenges, we rallied to support operational growth and development through a number of initiatives, the onboarding of new team members, as well as, an expansion into a larger office space.

Throughout the initial months of the pandemic, ILNS received funding through the United Way Atlantic Compassion Fund as well as the Good Food Access Fund (Government of Canada and Community Food Centres Canada) to support consumers and their families by providing food hampers and gift cards. We also received further technological-related funding through the Atlantic Compassion Fund in order to provide technological support to our consumers by providing laptops and tablets. Through these initiatives we improved food security and reduced the isolating effects of the pandemic for our consumers and their families. In total we received \$38,000. As we pivoted and sought out new opportunities for growth and areas of identified need, we were also successful in receiving \$85,000 in funding to support Self Managers throughout Nova Scotia and we also secured \$25,300 from the Investment Readiness Program (IRP).

ILNS also completed our youth transition to employment program, The Next Step (TNS) after a brief intermission due to the pandemic. TNS participants completed their job placements by mid-August of 2020, after it was deemed safe to return to work. ILNS then transitioned to the first phase in a multi-year funding contract through the Youth Employment Skills Strategy (YESS) fund called Reaching for Inclusive, Successful Education and Employment (RISE) Program, which saw eight participants complete 24 weeks of career development, essential skills training and employment opportunities within the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). There was a slight pause for our RISE program participants due to the second wave of the pandemic, however in the new year, RISE resumed and our participants completed the program by March 2021.

We also expanded our pre-employment program offering by delivering our second Community Access Program (CAP) for youth with disabilities, as well as, introducing a new program called In Motion and Momentum Plus (IM&M+) for adults with disabilities. Although initially offered in person, CAP successfully shifted to a hybrid delivery model where participants completed two days a week of virtual workshop delivery and then practiced the skills they learned by completing collaborative tasks in the video game, Stardew Valley; then they came together each Friday for in person career development workshops as well as recreational activities they chose as a group. IM&M+ saw participants complete three different modules in order to realize and gain confidence in their own strengths, abilities, interests, and supports; practice short- and long-term goal setting and action plan creation, so they could reach their preferred future; and also organize and implement their own Community Project, so they could fill a need within their community.

# Executive Director's Report

The operational requirements of creating the new Shared Services Pilot (SSP) to support adults with physical disabilities who require assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) highlighted the need for a dedicated staff person to help lead the process. The pilot, which began as an idea, has morphed into a large undertaking requiring collaboration from multiple stakeholders, team and community members.

ILNS continued to offer free information and navigation support to Nova Scotians with disabilities and their families through the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) Project. We solidified a partnership with Dr. Wayne MacLeod, who specializes in filling out Form T2201 (the Disability Tax Credit Certificate) and have referred ILNS consumers to him while covering the cost of getting this form filled out. We would also like to thank the Maple Tree Fund for their continued financial support of this project.

Due to the pandemic, we swiftly pivoted to offer peer support through virtual event delivery. This began through a partnership with one of our sister organizations based in Newfoundland and Labrador, Empower, the Disability Resource Centre, to offer special guest speaker presentations on Independent Living Across Canada Day (ILACD). We then continued with more virtual deliveries through our annual Art of Disability Festival and finally with our first ever holiday edition of the 12 Holiday of 2020.

As an organization that is both consumer controlled and driven, we incorporate first voice in every aspect of our service delivery. We will continue to work with our community to identify gaps and use a holistic approach to achieve the full participation and inclusion of Nova Scotians with disabilities through new programs and collaboration with stakeholders. Now more than ever we must continue to ensure that our voices are heard.

I am extremely proud of our community, resilience and caring for one another. It is my hope that throughout this next year we will continue to display our collective strength.

“On the other side of a storm is the strength that comes from having navigated through it. Raise your sail and begin.” -Gregory S. Williams

Respectfully submitted,



Carrie Ernst - Executive Director

# Chair's Report

## **ILNS champions the right to live independently and supports individuals in their pursuit of independence.**

The past year has been one of continued growth and change for Independent Living Nova Scotia (ILNS). Throughout the summer of 2020, we expanded and renovated our office to accommodate new staff, programs, and services. ILNS was also rebranded this year, with a new logo to better match our mission and vision for the future. This logo was created by local artist Connor Hirtle and we thank him for his creativity and effort.

New staff members over the past year include Kathleen Odell and Pierre Gascon, and we are also excited to have Ginny Sweet and Jennifer MacNeil join the Board as a Director. Our team will surely continue to grow over the next year as we explore new ways to serve and support Nova Scotians with disabilities.

This year has not been without setbacks. Lockdowns imposed as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic unfortunately meant we had to pause some programs and services. Our team met this challenge with grace and flexibility, adapting their work flows and program delivery to ensure we could continue to serve our members and stay open. These restrictions also prevented us from hosting our much-loved Christmas Gala and Dance. While it was sorely missed, our team worked hard to stay in the holiday spirit with our first ever Holidayze celebration. This 12-day series of events brought together members across the province for fun and laughter during the holiday season.

Despite all the changes and challenges, our team's commitment to our mission has not wavered. We have worked hard to stay focused on our top priorities for the organization and the community, which includes improvements in attendant care and housing, transitional programming, and advocacy. The board commends our Executive Director, Carrie Ernst and the entire ILNS team for the dedication, compassion, and professionalism with which they serve the community.

ILNS said goodbye to our Board Chair, Mike Coady this year. Mike first joined the board in 2014 and his steady presence, sense of humor, and constant professionalism will be greatly missed. We were also sorry to lose Randy Reede, an important member of the ILNS team whose dedication to the disability community was always appreciated. We thank Mike and Randy for their service and wish them all the best in the future.

With Mike's departure, I have stepped into the role of Chair and could not be more excited to serve the organization and the community. I have personally enjoyed the first three years as a member of the Board. ILNS has changed dramatically in this time and every success, no matter how great or small, has opened up new possibilities for what we can do.

Respectfully submitted,  
Taylor Coady  
Chair  
Independent Living Nova Scotia Association

# Treasurer's Report 2020

## 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, 2020 to March 31, 2021. 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:

- Statement of Financial Position
- Statement of Operations and Net Assets
- 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 \$295,369 to \$329,005 over the course of the year

### **Page 4:**

- Our revenues have decreased over the past year, and the restrictions put in place during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic certainly had an impact over delivering programs in person; however, switching to online delivery where possible certainly helped ILNS to continue to bring in revenue. An increase in Government grants also helped during this year.
- ILNS realized a net revenue over expenses of \$10,596. This was an excellent result due to the unpredictability caused by COVID-19 over our program revenue, related expenses and fixed costs.

### **Page 5:**

- This page shows how cash was utilized throughout the year in terms of income and expenses of operation.
- The issuance of \$60,000 of long term is further explained in Note 5

# Treasurer's Report 2020

## Independent Living Nova Scotia Association Treasurer's Report

### Page 6, 7, and 8:

- These pages provide more detail about ILNS's 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 is strong and puts us in a good position to address potential cash flow issues related to the coronavirus pandemic and social distancing measures as well. We are encouraged that we were able to stay strong financially throughout the pandemic and that we will be able to continue 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,  
Susan McLearn, Treasurer  
October 21, 2021

# AGM Agenda 2021

## Agenda

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

October 27, 2021

Independent Living Nova Scotia Association

- 7:00 p.m. Welcome from Taylor Coady, Chair - ILNS
- 7:05 p.m. **Annual General Meeting**
- Call to order and approval of agenda
  - Approval of minutes from 2020 AGM
  - Treasurer's Report for 2020-21
  - Approval of 2020-21 audited financial statements
  - Appointment of auditor for 2021-22 - Motion to delegate auditor appointment to the Board of Directors
  - Chair's Report
  - Executive Director's Report
  - Election of Directors
  - Peer Support Overview - Kaitlyn Phillips
  - Programming Overview - Michelle Sayers, Heather Baglole, Kaitlyn Phillips and Kathleen Odell
- 7:55 p.m. Adjournment
- 8:00 p.m. Community Presentation - Social Model of Disability with guest speaker Samantha Walsh

# AGM Meeting Minutes 2020

## Draft AGM Minutes - Submitted by Taylor Coady

Board of Directors, Independent Living Nova Scotia Association  
**Wednesday, September 23, 2020, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.**  
Zoom Videoconference, Halifax, NS

### Opening:

- Meeting called to order at 6:05 by Michael Coady. Board members introduced to members in attendance.
  - In attendance, Michael Coady, Taylor Coady, Nancy Walker, Carrie Ernst, Susan McLearn, Jim Arnott, Andrew Taylor, Steve Noel
  - Regrets: Sebastian Clairmont
- Quorum established

### Approval of Agenda:

- **Motion: moved by Nancy Walker, seconded by Andrew Taylor to approve agenda.**
- No comments on agenda as circulated.
- **Motion carried.**

### Approval of minutes from 2019 AGM:

- **Motion: moved by Nancy Walker, seconded by Taylor Coady to approve the minutes.**
- No comments on agenda as circulated.
- **Motion carried.**

### Treasurer's Report:

- **Motion: Moved by Andrew Taylor, seconded by Nancy Walker to approve Treasurer's Report and financial statements.**
- No comments on Treasurer's Report as circulated
- **Motion passed.**
  
- **Motion: Moved by Taylor Coady, seconded by Jim Arnott to delegate auditor appointment to the Board of Directors.**
- No comments on motion to delegate auditor appointment to the Board of Directors.
- **Motion passed.**

### Chair's Report:

- Nancy Walker acknowledged the contributions of Kyle MacDonald.

# AGM Meeting Minutes 2020

## Executive Director's Report:

- Carrie Ernst noted that we have continued our growth for this year.
- She also commented on the continued work on the shared attendant care model and are now working on the selection and policy process for the model.
- As a response to the coronavirus pandemic, ILNS expanded support to areas that became high priority due to the pandemic, including in the areas of food security, etc.
  - ILNS worked with United Way on some of these initiatives.

## Consumer Outreach and Fundraising Overview:

- Presented by Randy Reede, ILNS raised approximately \$4,000 as part of the Bluenose Marathon. Throughout the entirety of ILNS' involvement with this fundraising initiative, over \$32,000 was raised.
  - A special thank you to Gus Reede who contributed over the years.
- In terms of social media updates, ILNS' Facebook page has over 1,200 followers. ILNS' Weekly Bulletin continues to grow with new subscribers as well.
- ILNS pulled off another successful Christmas Gala and Dance, with around 90 participants. Approximately \$5,000 was also raised from sponsors. ILNS thanks them for their contribution.

## Programming Overview Presentations:

- The Next Step (TNS) Program Report as circulated in the agenda was relayed to members by Michelle Sayers. TNS started in September 2019 and is a six month employment program focused on overcoming barriers to employment. In 2019-20, 12 individuals participated in the program, with varying abilities. The fact that ILNS could pay the participants helped participants to understand their finances and live independently. Students participated in a number of outings into the community, to learn how to travel independently to attend work. The positive outcomes of this program show that the Next Step is strongly aligned with ILNS' mission and vision.
- The Community Access Program (CAP) Report as circulated in the agenda was relayed to members by Heather Baglole. CAP began in 2019 and worked on life and employability skills as well as access to the community with youth with disabilities, ages 18 to 24. The most well-attended and participated activities often involved the arts, teamwork, and group-based challenges. CAP experienced some challenges including recruitment and participation from community organizations. Participants also expressed challenges such as food insecurity and an ability to attend the program since it was not a paid program. CAP was halted as a result of the coronavirus pandemic but ILNS is optimistic that the program will resume in the future.
- The Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) Pilot Project Report as circulated in the agenda was relayed to members by Kaitlyn Phillips. ILNS participated in the project along with the Society for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians (SDHHNS) and the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services (DCS) and completed its second phase. ILNS was able to assist 25 people to successfully go through successfully applying for the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) and 20 people in opening an RDSP. An additional 16 people opened an RDSP on their

# AGM Meeting Minutes 2020

own. One success of the second phase within this pilot was a letter circulated that included information on the RDSP to Disability Support Program (DSP) clients through DCS about drop-in sessions on the RDSP. As a result of this communication, ILNS had 102 individuals attend the drop in sessions. Then due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the last two sessions were changed to virtual sessions. ILNS also received 72 calls and emails from individuals looking for information about the RDSP. Finally, ILNS began to take a more targeted approach to communication, which has shown positive results.

## Report of the Nominating Committee:

- Michael Coady echoed Nancy Walker's sentiments thanking retired Board Member, Kyle MacDonald for his many years on the ILNSA Board of Directors. Michael also thanked Nancy for her role as a Board Co-Chair. Michael also thanked retired Board Members Murray VandeWater and Pat Gates for their contributions to the Board
- The ILNSA Board was very active this year, and looked to bring in people who could bring a fresh perspective to the Board and ILNS. Michael also noted that the Board was actively accepting Board Members.

## Election of Directors:

- **Motion: Moved by Michael Coady and seconded by Taylor Coady to elect Andrew Taylor, Steve Noel, Susan McLearn, Sebastian Clairmont, and Jim Arnott to the Board of Directors.**
- No concerns were put forth on electing all of the members to the board at the same time.
- **Motion passed.**

## Logo Announcement:

- Carrie Ernst provided a special announcement regarding ILNS' new logo. Originally, this work started back when ILNS had a logo contest as part of the Art of Disability Festival, where artists with disabilities could submit original logos. Carrie also thanked all who participated and the winner of that contest was Connor Hertle. ILNS then commissioned Connor to re-design the main organizational logo. Carrie also provided a statement from Connor in terms of the logo redesign: "When creating the new Independent Living Nova Scotia (ILNS) logo, I wanted to create an image that was going to show how inclusive ILNS really is. I am a disabled person living as a quadriplegic who has had the opportunity to work for ILNS and I got to see firsthand just how beneficial they are to the disabled community. This logo shows one person who is easily seen as being disabled and another person who isn't so easily seen as being disabled, which can be frustrating for those persons in those situations. That's where ILNS comes in to lend a helping hand to make our lives a little bit easier!"
  - Andrew Taylor commented on the choice of color, and how it could be challenging for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.
- Carrie also thanked all ILNS staff members for their hard work and dedication to the organization, its mission, and vision.

# AGM Meeting Minutes 2020

- Michael echoed Carrie's sentiments and thanked staff for their efforts and positive impact they have had on the community.

## **Adjournment:**

- Michael extended an offer to all AGM participants to reach out to Carrie or the Board, where appropriate, about any ideas, suggestions, or concerns they may have.
- Michael also thanked the attendees for taking the time to attend ILNSA's AGM, and extended his hope that next year we can have an in person AGM.
  - Gillian Grant extended a sincere thank you to the board on behalf of herself and Julia White.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

# ILNS Peer Support Overview

Throughout the pandemic, ILNS successfully pivoted to a virtual peer support delivery through a variety of special event offerings. Initially, we partnered with one of our fellow Independent Living Centres, Empower, the Disability Resource Centre on June 3 in honour of Independent Living Across Canada Day (ILACD); we celebrated together via Zoom and Facebook Live as we completed a special skills showcase as our opening event and then transitioned to a few special guest speaker engagements.

Our annual Art of Disability Festival had a few alterations as well. Instead of the traditional one day in person event, our Festival Co-Coordinator scheduled a weeklong offering that included a virtual Artist Catalogue, where artists could submit a professional biography, include samples of their work as well as contact information so interested buyers could directly connect with them. Our Artist Catalogue featured 15 Nova Scotian Artists with Disabilities. Additionally, our Festival Co-Coordinator also hosted some interactive virtual events, including a Paint-A-Long with Kimberley Csihas, a Dance-A-Thon with DJ ACE, an artist panel called "Creating as an Artist with Disabilities," and a meditation session put on by Flo Meditation & Wellness. 20 individuals attended these events with an additional 800 views on Facebook Live. Additionally, our Festival outreach initially began when we hosted a logo contest in order to develop an official Art of Disability Festival logo. Nova Scotian artists with disabilities were encouraged to submit their logo designs and the successful applicant of this contest was Connor Hirtle. A total of 10 artists submitted original designs for this contest.

Finally, we finished off the year with our 12 Holiday of 2020. This offering included virtual events, giveaways, and other holiday treats to our consumers. Virtual events included a Fireside Chat with Connor Hirtle, Jennifer MacNeil, Kevin Penny and Dee Osmand; Turkey Bingo with extra prizes for bingo winners; a Dance-A-Thon with DJ Ace and more. A total of 32 individuals attended these virtual events and as a special bonus all event attendees won door prizes, some of which included day passes to the Canada Games Centre, jewelry from Autism Nova Scotia's The Pearl, cookie treat bags, and more. We also shared video offerings from the Maritime Bhangra Group, Stadacona Military Band, as well as our own virtual office tour as we expanded our office space in 2020. At the end of this offering, we also announced that Kendal Worth was the successful recipient of our 2020 Lois Miller Tulip Award. Furthermore, a special virtual presentation took place in early 2021 to recognize Kendall's valuable contributions to the disability community.

Finally, these peer support offerings could not have been accomplished without the ongoing support of our sponsors, in-kind donors as well as the MPs, MLAs, and HRM City Councillors who purchased advertising space within our Bulletin in support of the initiatives we put on for our consumers.

# ILNS Programming Overview

## **The Next Step (TNS) - Employment Transitional Programming**

ILNS ran The Next Step (TNS) employment program from September 2019 to the Spring of 2020. Due to COVID-19, the program was moved online and then eventually suspended until lockdowns ended in early summer of 2020. Participants were given an opportunity to finish the program by returning to their job placements when it was safe to do so, however some were not able to due to their work place remaining closed or having significant Covid-19 restrictions in place.

Unfortunately, mostly due to the pandemic, no participants were offered employment at the end of the program. Program staff have followed up with them and found that two have since found employment based on the referrals to other agencies that ILNS staff orchestrated at the end of TNS.

The Next Step program followed a similar structure to the RISE program, which is our current transition program.

## **Reaching for Inclusive, Successful Education and Employment (RISE) Employment Transition Program:**

RISE is a 24 week paid employment transition program for youth with disabilities between the ages of 18-30 and is funded through the Department of Employment and Social Development under the Youth Employment Skills Strategy (YESS.) RISE focuses on overcoming barriers to employment through employer engagement, accommodation, and targeted training and support. The program also focuses on personal growth and development through workshops, activities, team building, group and individual assignments and work experience. Finally, participants also enhance their employability skills by completing a variety of certifications, including but not limited to: First Aid, WHMIS and Occupational Health and Safety.

There are three main parts to RISE: four weeks of group-based essential skills workshops and activities; 12 weeks of essential work experience activities; and an eight week job placement. Throughout the group-based essential skills portion of RISE, ILNS staff along with community partners (i.e.: Job Junction, ISANS, etc.) lead participants through a variety of workshops and activities, some of which included: resume and cover letter writing, accountability, teamwork, confidence, stress management, mental health awareness, nutrition and racial and cultural sensitivity. Participants then completed the second portion of RISE-essential work experience- where they developed essential and employability skills through work experience training. Participants worked at a variety of locations and completed tasks based on their interests and aptitudes. Additionally, staff provided on the job support to participants as they completed this portion of the program. Finally, during the last 8 weeks of RISE, participants were placed in an individual job placement specifically tailored to their interests, skills, and accommodations. Participants were also offered ongoing support and coaching from ILNS staff, but were also given the opportunity to show their growth and development, with the end goal being permanent employment.

Through the multi-year YESS funding, the first phase of RISE ran from September 2020 to March

# ILNS Programming Overview

2021 and initially began with eight participants. Participants completed between 20-25 hours of RISE activities each week. Additionally, throughout phase one, participants completed Employability Skills Assessment Tool (ESAT) self-assessments with staff also completing ESAT assessments for each participant to identify strengths and areas for improvement. As a follow-up to this exercise, program staff also assisted participants in developing an individualized plan to support their own personal goals and ideas of independence. At the end of this phase, three participants were offered employment from their job placement, two accepted and one declined. Two participants signed up for additional education and one participant had plans to travel. As a final note for phase one, staff also prepared four employer engagement sessions to advocate for the hiring of persons with disabilities and facilitate discussions with local employers on how to adopt diverse and inclusive hiring practices. These sessions were delivered virtually to a group of approximately 15 employers in March 2021.

## **The Community Access Program (CAP):**

The Community Access Program re-started in mid February as an 8-week pre-employment program that supports youth in the development of life and employment skills. Youth ages 18-24 were invited to apply for the program in order to build their skills and meet other community members.

The program was modified significantly in response to the coronavirus pandemic, with workshops and recreation transitioning to online delivery for two days a week. Classes have focused on soft skills such as teamwork, motivation, and confidence as well as emotional literacy and healthy relationships. Participants met with staff virtually twice a week via the video game Stardew Valley, where they practiced their skills and created a strong team atmosphere.

CAP participants also met once a week on Fridays in person to complete a career development workshop and to participate in a community recreation event. The program specialist coordinated with the participants to choose community rec events that everyone will enjoy, and this collaborative spirit added to the excitement of gathering in person. Participants completed an escape room, painted at Clay Cafe, went bowling at the Bowlarama, and played board and video games together at the office.

One of the advantages of the current CAP program schedule is that the program ends just before the beginning of RISE-- participants have the opportunity to transition from CAP into RISE to continue developing their skills and gaining work experience. Moving forward, CAP will continue with the combined virtual/in-person delivery, and will be lengthened by about 4 weeks to stimulate greater development of skills and community.

## **In Motion and Momentum Plus (IM&M+) Program:**

In Motion and Momentum Plus (IM&M+) was funded through the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF), with ILNS first offering it in February 2021. IM&M+ is for those who feel stuck or are moving down a path that does not feel right to them and it helps individuals get unstuck, move in a way that feels good, and harness their considerable potential so they can create the life they want to live. There are three modules to the program, with the first two modules being completed by March

# ILNS Programming Overview

31, 2021. With this initial offering, ILNS started with eight (8) participants living in the HRM who were 18 years of age or older and completed the first two modules with six (6) individuals. Throughout the first module, In Motion, participants completed activities that helped them better understand what's most important to them; get to know the skills, strengths and supports they already had and then build upon these items and this module also helped them build a vision for their life that feels exciting, right, and possible. Then within module 2, Momentum, participants continued to build their vision as well as a concrete action plan towards achieving their goals. Participants also organized and implemented their own community project. Our initial IM&M+ group initially brainstormed a few different needs that they saw within their community and then through group consensus decided their project was going to help Alice House, a local non-profit charity, in collecting donations for Alice House's clients. At the end of the project, it was estimated that our participants received about \$2,000 in donations and gift cards from local pharmacies and grocery stores.

## **Shared Services Pilot (SSP) Project:**

We continued to make headway with our Shared Services Pilot. In combining these supports, participants will be able to access services on a 24/7 basis with a combination of pre-scheduled and on-call bookings to meet unanticipated needs. The Pilot offers a combination of personal support services, essential homemaking, and accommodation in a community setting for four adults with physical disabilities. By having two units in the same building, services are able to be effectively shared while ensuring there is not a segregated approach to housing. By combining funding through the Nova Scotia Departments of Community Services and Health and Wellness, ILNS can support individuals who require levels of assistance with activities of daily living (ADL) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) currently unable to be met in the community.

Throughout the summer of 2020, ILNS staff began reaching out to local developers to discuss a partnership between ILNS, DCS and Health and Wellness. The goal of this partnership was to locate suitable accommodation that was either already accessible or suitable for retrofitting. In October of 2020, the Program Manager was hired to provide operational policy development and to move the Pilot forward in a way that supports autonomy, choice, control, and the dignity of risk. ILNS was able to finalize participant selection in Spring 2021 in consultation with our stakeholders. ILNS continues to move this Pilot forward and is grateful to expand it's program offerings to better support our community.

# ILNS Programming Overview

## **Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) Pilot Project:**

Although the original joint Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) project in conjunction with the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services and the Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians (SDHHNS) ended March 31, 2020, ILNS continued to offer free information and navigational support to Nova Scotians with disabilities and their families in successfully moving through the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) and RDSP processes. Initially, we conducted follow-up communications of support with individuals who attended the drop-in sessions we orchestrated in February and March of 2020. Furthermore, we continued to receive referrals from partner agencies such as the Brain Injury Association of Nova Scotia (BIANS), the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA), Teamwork Cooperative, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) as well as self-referrals from individuals looking for information and support.

We were also happy to partner with Dr. Wayne MacLeod, a family doctor who specializes in filling out Form T2201, the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) Certificate application. Through this partnership, ILNS refers clients who require a medical professional to complete Part B of this application form so as to qualify for the DTC. With financial support from the Maple Tree Fund, we are able to cover the cost of getting this form completed by Dr. MacLeod.

Furthermore, during the summer of 2020, ILNS worked with a Harvard University student to develop a semi-automated email system to assist individuals with successfully navigating the RDSP process. This system was launched in the fall of 2020, however due to a slow uptake (with a total of 5 individuals registering) it was determined that individuals preferred communicating one-on-one with RDSP staff. Overall, we provided RDSP information to 20 individuals, assisted 10 individuals with DTC support, and also provided assistance to 5 individuals in actually opening the RDSP. Finally, ILNS is still accepting referrals for these services.