



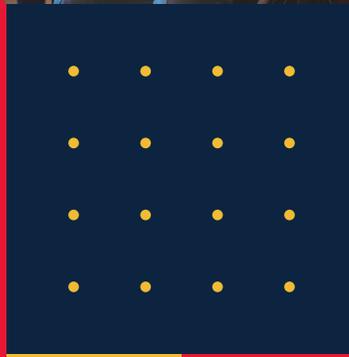
Easter Seals  
**Newfoundland &  
Labrador**

# Gratitude Report 2025



Easter Seals  
Newfoundland and Labrador  
206 Mount Scio Rd  
St. John's, NL

[info@eastersealsnl.ca](mailto:info@eastersealsnl.ca)  
[www.eastersealsnl.ca](http://www.eastersealsnl.ca)  
709.754.1399





Our vision is for a community where all people with disabilities live full, healthy, and active lives. Our mission is to **engage, inspire, and maximize opportunities** for people with disabilities of all ages by providing meaningful programs and services.

Approximately 100,000 people of all ages in our province live with disabilities such as physical, sensory, cognitive or other disabilities which present barriers to full participation in society. It is our objective to tear down these barriers and build an inclusive Newfoundland and Labrador.



# Content



<b>02</b>	A LETTER FROM OUR 2025 AMBASSADOR
<b>04</b>	FROM OUR CEO AND BOARD CHAIR
<b>06</b>	TO YOU, FROM US
<b>07</b>	ENGAGE
<b>16</b>	INSPIRE
<b>22</b>	MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITIES
<b>28</b>	GIVE THE GIFT OF INCLUSION



# Hi! My name is Rhea Stark!

My name is Rhea Stark. I'm 15 years old and in grade 10 at O'Donel High School, and I'm proud to be the 2025 Easter Seals Newfoundland and Labrador Ambassador.

Being the 2025 Easter Seals NL Ambassador has given me a huge confidence boost. I love being the Ambassador because I represent Easter Seals NL and all the amazing programs and services we offer for people with disabilities in our province. Through this opportunity, I've met many amazing people, recorded radio and TV ads, and attended many events. When I was named the Easter Seals NL's

Ambassador, I didn't think the year would go by so fast, but it sure did! As they say, time flies when you're having fun!

Easter Seals NL is such an amazing place; it really feels like it's my second home. Everyone is so kind, and the volunteers are truly so compassionate. They know exactly how to adapt the activities so everyone is included and all of us can have fun together. Although I have low vision, I always feel included at Easter Seals NL anytime I am there. I am grateful for the Staff and Volunteers who help me achieve my goals and truly make me feel like I belong.



I do lots of activities as an Easter Seals NL participant! I take part in **swimming, Dansability, bocchia, and wall climbing.**

I really love swimming! I used to struggle to move up in the levels in regular swimming lessons, and it was hard being one of a big group. I tried lessons at several different pools, but each time was the same. It was hard to think that maybe swimming wasn't for me, because I did love it so much. In 2018, I was able to join the **Easter Seals NL's swimming program.** In the program, there are no levels to pass. It's one on one where you are paired with a volunteer, and we work on my goals for swimming. This makes it so much easier to achieve my goals. It is challenging but most of all, fun.

I love **Dansability** because I love moving around and dancing with my friends. My dance teacher is amazing and really helps me learn while having fun dancing.

I recently joined **bocchia** and I love it! It's fun, and I love getting better each week and improving my skills.

**Wall climbing** is great too! It's really fun, and it helps me be stronger, plan climbing moves, and challenge myself. I like to set goals, which I know I can achieve with the help of the volunteers.

I also love being a part of the **Socials** and celebrating special occasions with the crew at Easter Seals NL. One of my favorite events is **Celebrate The Season with Shanneyanock** because I love singing and performing with my friends.

One of my other favorite things to do in the summer is definitely **Camp BumbleBurry.** It's an **Overnight Camp for Youth Participants of Easter Seals NL.** I love meeting new people and experiencing the freedom of the Camp. The volunteers always make me feel included and comfortable. 2024 was my first time at Overnight Camp. I was nervous, but the volunteers made me feel safe and reassured. **Camp BumbleBurry** ended up being the highlight of my summer! I am glad Easter Seals NL is there to give us opportunities like this, to try new things with the support of the caring volunteers.

I want to say a huge thank you to Fraser Edison for funding the **Fraser Edison Easter Seals Ambassador Trust (FEESAT)** to help Easter Seals NL Ambassadors fund their post-secondary education. My goal for post-secondary education is to go to medical school. This year, I was thrilled because Rachel, one of the volunteers at wall climbing, is currently enrolled in MUN Medical School, and she took me on a tour of the medical school. She had heard I was interested in being a pediatrician in the future, so she offered to take me on a tour. It made me very happy and excited to think that is where I will hopefully attend medical school too. The volunteers truly go above and beyond for the participants, and this is a perfect example, which leads me to my next thank you.

I want to say a huge thank you to **Mark Bradbury, Samantha Parell, and Taylor Higdon,** who are Easter Seals NL Staff and were so supportive to me during my time as Easter Seals NL Ambassador.

I also want to say a big thank you to some very important people who helped me this year. I had two one on one swimming volunteers this year, **Hilary and Kaitlyn,** who were fun, compassionate, and truly so supportive. Easter Seals NL Dansability volunteers **Leah and Sophie,** who are truly incredible and such great, patient teachers. Also, my amazing bocchia coaches **Haley and Eileen.** They help so much by coaching me, they give me tips and tricks, and are the best at making a safe space for me to achieve my goals. I wish I could list all the Volunteers and Staff who helped me this year at Easter Seals NL, but the list would be enormous. All the people at Easter Seals NL are so compassionate.

I have to thank my family also, especially my grandparents, who were able to take me to a lot of events when my parents were working.

Last, but not at all least, I want to truly thank all the donors and supporters of Easter Seals NL. You truly make a huge difference in the lives of so many people, like my friends and me. Your donations ensure no one is ever left behind.

*Written by*  
**Rhea Stark**  
Easter Seals NL 2025 Ambassador





# To our community of supporters



As we reflect on 2025, we are reminded that the impact of Easter Seals Newfoundland and Labrador is made possible through one powerful force, **people who care.**

To every donor, volunteer, sponsor, community partner, and supporter who stood with us this year, thank you. Your generosity, encouragement, and belief in inclusion helped strengthen our programs and services and ensured people with disabilities across Newfoundland and Labrador could access life-changing programs and services.

This year brought growth, momentum, and important progress, made possible not only by strong fund development and partnerships, but by a shared commitment to building a more accessible and inclusive province. From the first program of the year to the final celebrations and milestones, the message was clear: when our community comes together, we can create lasting change.

Your support continues to do more than fund programs and services, it helps remove barriers. It opens doors. It creates connection and confidence. And it supports individuals and families as they navigate life with dignity, independence, and belonging

Through our **2025 Gratitude Report**, we are honoured to recognize the many people and organizations who have played a role in advancing our mission. Thank you for helping Easter Seals NL continue to engage, inspire, and maximize opportunities for people with disabilities in our province.

**Thank you for walking alongside us in 2025.** We hope you enjoy reading our **2025 Gratitude Report** and the stories of impact you helped make possible.

*Sincerely,*

**Mark Bradbury, MBA, CPA, FCMA**  
Chief Executive Officer



When I think back on **2025**, the word that stands out most is **community**.

This past year, Easter Seals Newfoundland and Labrador continued to grow and evolve, strengthening our programs and services, showing up for families, and expanding what accessibility and inclusion can look like across our province. None of that would be possible without the generosity and commitment of the people who stand with us year after year.

To our donors, sponsors, partners, volunteers, and supporters: **thank you**. You are the reason Easter Seals NL can continue delivering meaningful programs and essential services for people with disabilities. Whether you gave through a campaign, attended an event, shared our message, donated online, or contributed behind the scenes, you helped move our vision and mission forward.

What makes Easter Seals NL so important for our province is not only the work being done - it's the people. The participants and families who trust us with their stories and experiences, the staff team who lead with compassion and excellence, and the community members who continuously show what it means to support accessibility and inclusion in action.

As I take on the role of **Board Chair**, I'm honoured to work alongside the Easter Seals NL community at such an exciting time. The Board of Directors remains committed to strong governance, responsible growth, and ensuring the organization is positioned to create even greater impact in the years ahead.

I invite you to read through our **2025 Gratitude Report**, and take pride in what you helped make possible. Thank you for continuing to support a more accessible and inclusive Newfoundland and Labrador.

*With sincere gratitude,*  
**Cortney Green**  
Board Chair





# A Heartfelt Thank You

As we look back on everything **2025** brought, one thing is especially clear: we could not do this work without you.

To every donor, sponsor, community partner, volunteer, advocate, and supporter—thank you. Your generosity and belief in accessibility and inclusion helped Easter Seals Newfoundland and Labrador continue building opportunities, expanding supports, and creating meaningful experiences for people with disabilities across our province.

This year was filled with moments that reminded us why our vision and mission matters—milestones reached, connections formed, and barriers broken down one step at a time. Every gift, every shared message, and every act of encouragement helped strengthen our programs and services that families rely on, and helped us move closer to a Newfoundland and Labrador where inclusion is not optional—it's expected.

We also want to express sincere appreciation to the participants and families who so openly shared their experiences with us. Your stories reflect extraordinary courage, growth, and resilience, and they are at the heart of everything we do.

From all of us at Easter Seals NL, thank you for standing with our community in 2025. We are proud to walk alongside you—and we are deeply grateful that you continue to be part of this journey

**We hope you enjoy our 2025 Gratitude Report, and thank you again for helping create a more inclusive Newfoundland and Labrador for everyone.**



# ENGAGE



# Friendship. Inclusion. Community Impact.

Sometimes the most powerful fundraising campaigns don't begin in a boardroom. They begin in friendship.

In 2025, Seth and Matty reminded all of us what inclusion looks like in action. The two best friends first met at school, but it was through Easter Seals NL programs, like **Sledge Hockey** and **Day Camp**, that their friendship truly grew.

*"Being Matty's friend and working at Easter Seals NL has taught me a lot about life. The participants' happiness is contagious, despite having to face challenges every day. The environment that Easter Seals creates is astounding; it makes everyone who comes through those doors feel welcome."*

Seth Hyde

Together, they wanted to do something meaningful, not just to raise funds, but to help create a future where people with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador have more opportunities to be active, feel connected, and belong.

*"Out of the blue on Oct 21, 2024, I received the following text from Seth.*

*'I know hockey is very important to Matthew and I think it's very important that he gets to play this winter. You mentioned that he needs a new sledge to be able to hit the ice again. I would absolutely love to get involved with making this happen. I have no idea how much a sledge costs, or if you'd even be interested in me getting involved. I sell my Seth Hyde Sport Side merchandise and use 100% of the proceeds to donate towards the causes that I am supporting. Adding Matty's quest to get a new sledge to this year's recipients would be an honour.' Seth"*

Sarah Hendrickson

Matty's Mom

And just like that, **Seth & Matty's Hat Trick For Easter Seals NL** was born.

With one simple idea, selling hats to support **Phase 3 of our Park Project**, Seth and Matty sparked a wave of generosity across the province. Their campaign wasn't only about fundraising. It became a movement filled with pride, momentum, and community spirit. Supporters stepped forward from every corner: purchasing hats, sharing the message through media outlets, donating online, and encouraging others to join in.



In 2025, this incredible initiative raised **\$114,877**, a milestone made possible through hat sales, community donations, and remarkable support from partners who believed in their vision. A special thank you to the **Perlin Family Trust**, who graciously donated **\$100,000** in recognition of Seth and Matty's philanthropy.



*“What began as an incredibly kind and generous offer has grown into something far larger than I think any of us thought. While the obvious benefit is raising funds to support the community, for our family, watching Matthew find purpose, pride and contribute in a meaningful way is priceless. This campaign has provided Matthew with the opportunity to educate others, to experience, planning meetings, marketing, media relations and the satisfaction of seeing their ideas come to fruition. Most importantly, however, he gets to do good for others. Matty has grown so much alongside his best buddy Seth. He beams with pride and lights up when engaging with people and working on his campaign. He appreciates the support of friends and has loved building new friendships along the way!”*

*Sarah Hendrickson  
Matty’s Mom*

Seth and Matty’s story is a reminder of what’s possible when young leaders are empowered and a community rallies behind inclusion. Their “hat trick” wasn’t just about three key players. It was about teamwork at every level: Seth, Matty, Easter Seals NL, and the countless supporters who stood behind them. We are also sincerely grateful to **JAC Digital Marketing**, who helped bring this campaign

concept to life through thoughtful branding that celebrated their friendship and made it easy for everyone to show their support, as well as **Play It Again Sports** for their valued merchandise support.

Behind every campaign like this is a family team working tirelessly. Easter Seals NL is especially grateful for the countless hours and dedication that **Jackie and Darin Hyde, Brad Squires, and Sarah Hendrickson** have poured into supporting their sons. As these boys navigate high school and continue to grow into confident young leaders, we have been honoured to witness the pride and love that surrounds them. Their encouragement, commitment, and belief in inclusion has been an important part of this campaign every step of the way.

*“Darin and I feel incredibly blessed to witness the heartfelt support that Seth and Matty have experienced throughout this fundraising campaign, on all fronts. This support not only feeds their determination to get Phase 3 of the Park project completed, but it also enables them to demonstrate how important accessibility and inclusion is for everyone.”*

*Jackie and Darin Hyde  
Seth’s parents*

As the Fund Development team, **Samantha, Taylor, and Emma** have been proud to support Seth, Matty, and their families through this journey and to help share their story with our wider community.

To Seth and Matty, and to everyone who helped make this campaign such an extraordinary success, **thank you.** Your efforts are helping build spaces where memories can be made, friendships can grow, and inclusion can thrive.

And this is only the beginning. **Stay tuned in 2026**, as Seth and Matty continue their journey and bring even more energy, ideas, and community impact to the mission.

*Written by Samantha Parrell  
Easter Seals NL Fund Development  
and Communications Manager*

# Creativity, Community, and Care in Action

Some supporters give once. Others become part of your community.

For Easter Seals Newfoundland and Labrador, the **Verma family** has been a true example of what long-term community care can look like. Over the years, **Rosie**, **Radhika**, and **Parinita Verma** have supported our vision and mission in ways that go far beyond fundraising. They have shown up with creativity, consistency, and heart, using their talents to bring people together and help create a more accessible and inclusive Newfoundland and Labrador.

From **yoga classes** to **painting classes**, the Verma family has repeatedly created welcoming spaces where community members can connect while supporting a meaningful cause.

*“Volunteering with Easter Seals NL through yoga is meaningful to me because it allows me to support people in slowing down, listening to their bodies, and feeling safe in their movement. Easter Seals NL has been incredibly supportive of our wellness initiatives, and that encouragement makes this work even more special. Seeing participants build confidence, find calm, and leave feeling more grounded is what keeps me coming back.”*

Rosie Verma

*“I love volunteering with Easter Seals NL. The painting sessions create a space for creativity, connection, and confidence. Seeing participants express themselves and take pride in what they create is incredibly rewarding, and it reminds me how powerful art can be in building joy and belonging.”*

Radhika Verma

They have also contributed their time and artistry through thoughtful handmade fundraising initiatives, including **paintings**, **ornaments**, and **cards**, each one created with purpose and generosity. These efforts have helped raise funds for Easter Seals NL programs and services and spread awareness of

the importance of accessibility and inclusion.

Their support has also extended to hosting impactful **third-party events** that combine community-building with charitable giving. Through gatherings at venues like the Delta and The Dwell by Sam Design, the Verma family created opportunities for people to enjoy an afternoon or night out together while supporting local entrepreneurs, celebrating small businesses, and uplifting Easter Seals NL. Their events were more than fundraisers. They were moments of connection, positivity, and shared commitment to doing good in the community.

What makes their support especially meaningful is the spirit in which it has been given. The Verma family’s relationship with Samantha and her team at Easter Seals NL is rooted in a valued friendship, genuine care, and a belief in a province where everyone is included and supported. To **Rosie**, **Radhika**, and **Parinita**, thank you for the years of kindness, creativity, and dedication. Your ongoing support continues to make a difference, and we are deeply grateful to have you as part of the Easter Seals NL family.

Written by Samantha Parrell

Easter Seals NL Fund Development  
and Communications Manager



# More Than a Game



## Annual Jeremy Cross Memorial Softball Weekend

Every year, Easter Seals Newfoundland and Labrador is reminded that the most powerful fundraising efforts are rooted in something deeper than donations. They are rooted in love, community, and the determination to ensure someone's legacy continues to create good in the world.

The Jeremy Cross Memorial Softball Weekend began with that purpose. This annual tournament was created to honour the memory of Jeremy Cross, a cherished member of the Easter Seals NL family, and to bring people together in a way that reflects who Jeremy was: a community-builder, a fighter, and someone whose spirit continues to remind us what true inclusion looks like through belonging, participation, encouragement, and care.

*“Easter Seals NL was always a place of comfort and inclusion for Jeremy, where his spirit of determination was fuelled and energized. As a family, we appreciate the opportunity for his determination to continue to be felt by others.”*

*Eli Cross*

*Jeremy's Father*

## A Weekend Filled With Heart

Now in its sixth year, the tournament takes place at Rainbow Gully Field in Portugal Cove–St. Philip's, bringing together teams, volunteers, sponsors, and supporters in a beautiful celebration of Jeremy's memory. The weekend was filled with sportsmanship, laughter, and moments that reminded us why this event matters so much.

Because of this annual event, Jeremy's legacy continues to create inclusion in real and tangible ways.

Funds raised through the tournament continue to support the Jeremy Cross Memorial Playground at Easter Seals NL, helping ensure we can provide ongoing maintenance and keep this space safe, welcoming, and accessible.

The playground is more than equipment and surface materials. It is a place where barriers are removed. It is where kids can play alongside friends. It is where families can gather. It is where people of all ages and abilities can feel the freedom and joy of recreation.

Each year, the Cross family returns to this tournament not only to honour Jeremy, but also to remember the loved ones who shaped their family and community. Following the passing of Jeremy's grandfather, Grandad George Cross, family and friends donated \$1,300 to the Jeremy Cross Memorial Accessible Playground in his memory. It is a powerful reflection of how this family continues to turn grief into generosity and remembrance into impact.

Easter Seals NL is also deeply grateful to the St. Lawrence Anglican Church Thrift Store in Portugal Cove, which contributed \$1,000 toward this year's tournament. The church redirects 50% of thrift store sales back into the community, and we are honoured that they chose to support Easter Seals NL through the Jeremy Cross Memorial Softball Weekend.





Community sponsors like Banished Brewing are essential to the energy of this event, and we are incredibly thankful for their ongoing partnership.

*“We were thrilled to host another successful tournament this year, thanks to our sponsor Banished Brewery, volunteers, players, and everyone who donated. We’re so pleased to have raised funds for the Jeremy Cross Memorial Playground at Easter Seals NL, an important accessible space in our community in memory of our cousin. We’d like to send a huge thank you to everyone who contributed. We’re already excited for next year!”*

*Aaron, Rory, and Caisie  
Family and Tournament Organizers*

Thank you to every volunteer, team, sponsor, donor, and supporter who made this weekend possible.

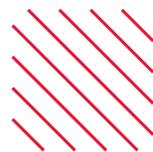
Because of your generosity, this event continues to raise funds that directly support the maintenance and care of the Jeremy Cross Memorial Playground, ensuring it remains accessible and inclusive for the children, youth, and adults who rely on it.

Jeremy is deeply missed and forever remembered. Through this tournament, his spirit continues to strengthen inclusion in Newfoundland and Labrador, one inning at a time.

*Written by Samantha Parrell  
Easter Seals NL Fund Development  
and Communications Manager*

### **With Deepest Gratitude**

Easter Seals NL extends our heartfelt thanks to the Cross family for their incredible leadership and dedication, especially Eli & Jocelyn, Aaron, Caisie, and Rory, for organizing this tournament year after year.



# Movement with Meaning: Ō FEST x Easter Seals NL

In 2025, Easter Seals Newfoundland and Labrador continued to see the power of community in action, and a few moments captured that spirit more beautifully than our partnership with **Studio VERSŌ** and the incredible group of businesses that make **Ō FEST** such a meaningful, high-energy celebration of wellness and inclusion.

As we reflect on the year, we are deeply grateful for the growing movement of local leaders and businesses choosing to stand alongside Easter Seals NL. Partners like these are not only supporting a single event, they are helping build a province where inclusion is celebrated, and where people with disabilities have more opportunities to be included within the health and wellness community.

*“Ō FEST has always been about more than movement for us—it’s about people. Partnering with Easter Seals NL reflects one of the core reasons Studio VERSŌ exists: to make movement accessible and rooted in community. We’ve seen the powerful impact movement can have, mentally and physically, when people feel included and supported. The journey of inclusion is ongoing, and we remain deeply committed to building communities that are happier, healthier, and more connected.”*

*Emily Hickey*  
CEO of Studio VERSŌ

## Spun with Purpose

**Ō FEST** is much more than a wellness festival. It is a celebration of movement, community, and collective impact.

What makes **Ō FEST** so impactful is the atmosphere **Studio VERSŌ** creates: uplifting, welcoming, and driven by purpose. Their team has brought together a community of people who show up for one another and who believe that movement can be a powerful tool for change.



This event also drives a bold goal: 100,000 kilometres, one for every person with a disability living in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is an inspiring reminder that when people come together with shared intention, impact grows quickly.

We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Studio VERSŌ for their continued leadership, creativity, and generosity. Their dedication to community-building and inclusion is felt in every detail of **Ō FEST**.



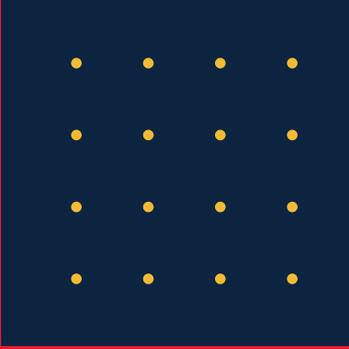
We are also incredibly grateful to the local businesses and creators who contribute their time, energy, and products to make the event unforgettable, including: Cira Nutrition, Lori & Co., Forest & Brooks, Supplement King, Namjim, Alphas, and She Sparkles by the Sea. From wellness activations and hydration support to goodie bags filled with perks, on-site shopping experiences, and shared meals, each contribution plays a role in building a festival that feels vibrant, local, and deeply connected to community care.

We also loved having our Easter Seals NL Ambassador, Rhea Stark, attend the event. Rhea brought so much joy and heart to the day as she made a friendship bracelet and personally thanked so many of the individuals who registered to spin, including our friends from McInnes Cooper.

To **Studio VERSO**, **Emily**, the instructors, **Sam Picco**, and all of the business partners who stepped forward in support of this event: a huge thank you for believing in our Fund Development team, **Samantha and Taylor**, and for partnering with us to create an event that supports the vision and mission of our organization and helps move us toward a more inclusive province. Thank you for showing what it looks like when community and wellness meet purpose.

We're reminded that the best kind of movement is the kind that brings people together. We cannot wait to celebrate alongside you again in 2026!

*Written by Samantha Parrell  
Easter Seals NL Fund Development  
and Communications Manager*



# INSPIRE



# Expanding Gratitude Across the Province

Across Newfoundland and Labrador, more communities are coming together around something powerful: the belief that everyone deserves access to outdoor recreation, adventure, and belonging. In 2025, Easter Seals Newfoundland and Labrador has seen that belief in action through the incredible work of our Community Outreach Officer, Dayna Payne, who has been connecting regions, building relationships, and opening doors for families and individuals who have historically faced barriers to participation.

Because of Dayna's commitment and the generosity of local partners, Easter Seals NL now offers three partnered adaptive Equipment Loan Programs spanning the island and into Labrador. These partnerships are helping create lasting change, and the gratitude from the communities involved continues to grow.

## Partners Help Bridge Accessibility and Inclusion Across The Province

Easter Seals NL is proud to work alongside:  
Gander X Easter Seals NL  
Labrador West X Easter Seals NL  
Western Sno-Riders X Marble Mountain X Easter Seals NL

*"Western Newfoundland is all about the outdoors. We have so much to offer here for all seasons. Easter Seals NL allows everyone the opportunity to enjoy and take advantage of these opportunities by providing top-level equipment for people with disabilities and mobility issues that normally would restrict them from enjoying these outdoor adventures."*

*Written by Glenn Green  
President of Western Sno-Riders*



Each partnership represents far more than a logo on a page. It represents time, trust, shared values, and a collective willingness to say, "Yes, we want accessibility and inclusion rooted in our community wellness and recreation, too."

Access to adaptive equipment is often the difference between watching from the sidelines and truly being part of the experience. Easter Seals NL's Equipment Loan Program supports inclusion and independence by offering adaptive outdoor recreation equipment such as Trailriders, Hippocamps, Sledges, Snowcoachs and more.

## Stronger Communities, One Partnership at a Time

The impact of our outreach efforts is being felt across the province. Families are experiencing the joy of the outdoors together. Individuals are gaining independence and confidence through recreation. Communities are seeing accessibility as something essential.

From the West Coast to Central Newfoundland and into Labrador, these partnerships are building something bigger than equipment access. They are building inclusive communities and for that, we are deeply grateful.

To our partners, supporters, and communities across Newfoundland and Labrador: thank you for helping expand access, inclusion, and opportunity across the entire province.

*Written by Dayna Payne  
Easter Seals NL Community Outreach Officer*

# More Than a Program, It's My Community



“Easter Seals Newfoundland and Labrador truly means the world to me. The majority of my friends are here, people I've known for over 20 years, and they are some of the most important people in my life.

In 2006, becoming an Easter Seals Ambassador gave me the chance to find my voice and take part in public speaking opportunities. Through Easter Seals NL, I was invited by **John Crosbie** to attend his retirement dinner, where I also met **Rick Hansen** and was invited to participate in the Man in Motion relay. Every one of these incredible opportunities happened because of Easter Seals NL.

Through previous programs offered at Easter Seals NL, like karate and downhill skiing, and current programs like boccia and choir, I've had experiences I never imagined. A few months ago, I even had the chance to sing at **Celebrate The Season with Shanneyganock and my Easter Seals NL Friends**. It still blows my mind that it happened! I've also been able to sing at the Veteran's Pavilion. These moments reminded me of the power of my voice and helped me reconnect with it.

Easter Seals NL's **Build Your Skills** program helped me break out of a bubble I had been stuck

in at home for a while. It gave me the opportunity to learn new things and build independence, like folding clothes, cooking, and other useful daily skills.

Most importantly, Easter Seals NL allows me to spend my days with my friends, socialize again, and make new connections with both participants and staff.

I am incredibly grateful for everything Easter Seals NL has given me.”

*Written by Jonathon Pittman*

*Easter Seals NL Past Ambassador and Current Participant*

**In 2025...**

**1418** registrations completed for recreation programs and social events

**45** weekly and Family Social

**67** equipment rentals

In 2025...

## Day Camp

58 campers  
263 weekly registrations

## Family Camp

17 families  
67 family members

## Youth Camp

5 campers

## Adult Camp

16 campers

# Build Your Skills, Build Confidence

“**Kennedy** has attended **Build Your Skills** for the past couple of years and has been an Easter Seals participant for many years. Without a doubt, **Build Your Skills** is her favorite program and the place where we, as a family, have seen the most personal growth. She has shown significant improvement in her ability to engage and fully participate in all activities throughout the program. ■

In the past, instructional programs were a challenge for Kennedy. She struggled with sitting for long periods or engaging in activities. However, with the right support from trained respite staff and the incredible Easter Seals NL team, especially **Olivia and Hayley**, she has come to fully participate and truly love every minute of it. She loves the gym time and the different themes each week. One thing we especially appreciate is that when Kennedy becomes overstimulated or isn't interested in a specific activity, such as a craft, there is always another fun option available for her.

She absolutely loves her instructors and looks forward to each day spent with her friends. **Build Your Skills** is a place where she feels accepted, without judgment, and free to be herself.”

*Written for Kennedy MacDonald by Tina MacDonald  
Easter Seals NL Participant*



# Feel Fulfilled with Build Your Skills



The success of **Build Your Skills** is rooted in both the growth of our participants and the growing need within our community. Over the past two years, our program has doubled in size, clear evidence of its impact and the strong desire for inclusive, skill-building opportunities.

What began in 2021 as a dream to provide meaningful life and educational skill development started modestly: two-hour sessions, twice a week, serving just six participants. Today, **Build Your Skills** has evolved into a full-day social and recreation development program, running twice weekly and supporting more than 25 participants. This growth reflects not only increased participation, but also the trust families and participants place in the program.

To better meet individual needs and preferences, we expanded our registration options to include both full-day and part-time attendance. This flexibility allows participants to engage in a way that works best for them. The program now runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., offering a balanced mix of structured learning and recreational choice.

Participants take part in educational and personal development activities focused on practical life skills such as emotional regulation, cooking, personal hygiene, and communication. Activities are completed at each participant's own pace, encouraging self-reflection, confidence-building, and recognition of existing strengths while developing new skills that transfer into daily life.

Afternoons are dedicated to themed recreational activities, including **basketball, hockey, boccia,** and **other participant favourites**, giving individuals the opportunity to choose activities that spark their interest and promote physical activity and social connection.

**Build Your Skills** continues to be a rewarding and inspiring experience for both participants and staff. Participants are building friendships, supporting one another, and confidently stepping outside their comfort zones. Program facilitators **Olivia and Hayley** bring passion and care to their roles, fostering meaningful, lasting relationships with participants and their families. As the program has grown, additional part-time staff have joined the team, strengthening our ability to support participants and enhance programming.



Looking ahead, our goal is to continue expanding and enhancing **Build Your Skills** while maintaining a welcoming, inclusive environment where participants can learn, grow, and thrive as individuals.

*Written by Olivia Connors  
Easter Seals NL Recreation Program Coordinator -  
Adult Leisure*

# Finding Their Voice at Camp

“

Alex has loved Easter Seals NL for many years because it is a place where he feels comfortable and included. Alex attended **Let's Get Active** and **Summer Camp** for a number of years. He always had fun and loved it, but was often a quiet kiddo.

This summer, we met a new Alex.

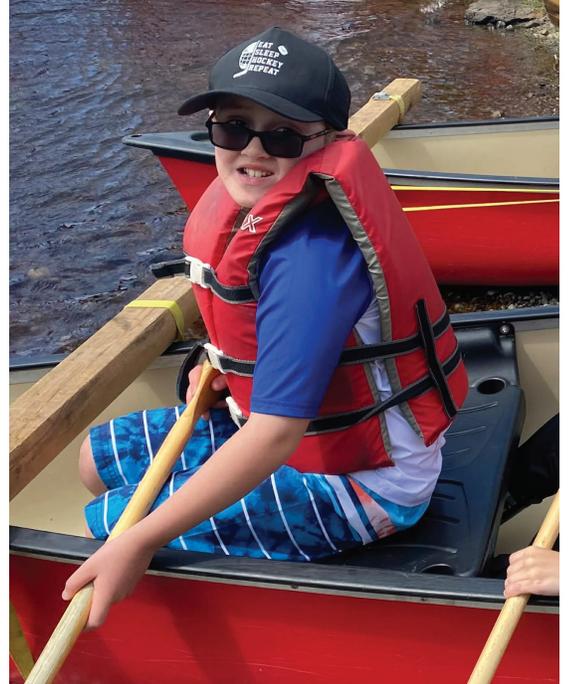
We attended **Family Camp** this summer for the first time. Alex gained confidence having us close by and quickly broke out of his shell, singing karaoke, participating in the activities, and even exploring with other campers and counselors without Mom or Dad.

Following **Family Camp**, Alex attended 3 weeks of **Day Camp** throughout the summer. He was up early every morning, anxiously waiting to get to camp as soon as the door would open. He craved an accepting environment where he could thrive, and his differences didn't matter.

Our big moment, when we realized the impact of camp, was during the end-of-camp talent show, where he got up with multiple groups and independently to show his talents and confidence. His energy filled the stage and his confidence was beaming through.

Alex is anxiously awaiting **Summer Camp** again this year and hopes to try more programs like **Music or Dansability** in the future.”

*Written by Melissa and Paul Cantwell  
Alex Cantwell's Parents*



## In 2025...

102

new Participants

• 20

• programs

• 54

• hours weekly delivering programs

81

new volunteers in 2025

215

total volunteers



# We Can't Imagine Life Without You



When I think of everything I have to be grateful for in this life, I truly count my blessings when it comes to Easter Seals Newfoundland and Labrador and the way it has changed our lives. I say “our” because I am Ryan’s Mom, and as the saying goes, “You are only as happy as your saddest child,” and I can assure you that Ryan’s involvement with Easter Seals NL has made him the happiest “boy” in the world! Ryan says he will always be a boy, never a “man,” and let’s face it, growing up does come with more than we ever expect sometimes, so “boy” it is!

Ryan participates in many Easter Seals NL programs and has done so consistently for the past 8 years: **Build Your Skills, Wheelchair Basketball, Sledge Hockey, Boccia, Dansability, Music, Choir, Camps, and Socials.** These programs keep Ryan physically active and engaged; he has so many friends whom he adores; and Easter Seals NL Program Staff and Volunteers whom he looks up to and has learned so much from over these years.

Social events, particularly “**Meet Us There**” is a relatively new program at Easter Seals NL, and it’s such a great addition. This program gives participants the opportunity to meet at local places that are of interest to them. The great thing about this is that they get to do this with their Easter Seals NL friends, and that gives them such a different experience than just visiting these places with an attendant or parent. Of course, it’s much more fun! Over the past year or so, “**Meet Us There**” gave Ryan the opportunity to go to The Dinosaur Park, The Rec Room, Bowling, Lester’s Farm, The Train Station, The Rooms, Government House, and Gatheralls Boat Tour. What wonderful memories they created with the best of friends, because that is what they have become thanks to the consistent programming at Easter Seals NL.

A big highlight during winter for Ryan is participating in **Sledge Hockey**. What a fantastic opportunity: accessible and inclusive ice hockey!

This is a dream come true for Ryan, as he loves playing hockey and would not be able to do so without this program, the Easter Seals NL Program Staff, and very dedicated volunteers that take time to make this program a huge success!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Easter Seals NL and all its amazing staff and volunteers for the fulfilling life it affords to Ryan. We can’t imagine life without you!”

*Written by Tracy Chafe  
Ryan Quilty's Mom*





# MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITIES



# Jorja's Canvas



## **My Journey at Sassytuna Studio**

“When I first began my work at Sassytuna Studio, I didn’t fully realize how much I would learn or how deeply I would fall in love with the intersection of art, business, and community. Serving as both Studio Assistant and Class Assistant, I discovered that running a creative space requires equal parts organization, creativity, and genuine care for people.”

## **Finding My Place in Studio Operations**

“Every morning, I arrived ready to help maintain the heart of our creative workspace. I learned that a studio isn’t just a place where art happens; it’s an environment that needs to inspire. Keeping our space clean, organized, and welcoming became something I took real pride in. I developed systems for tracking art supplies and coordinating orders, discovering that I genuinely enjoyed the puzzle of inventory management and operational efficiency.

Managing the studio calendar, handling client communications, and maintaining project files taught me that organization isn’t just about keeping things tidy; it’s about creating smooth experiences for everyone who walks through our doors. My previous retail experience prepared me to greet visitors warmly and professionally, but here I learned to translate that into something deeper: building relationships and sharing my growing passion for artistic processes through studio tours.”

## **Growing as a Creative Support**

“I learned to prepare canvases, mix mediums, and document artwork with precision. Each task taught me that technical skills matter, but so does understanding the “why” behind each step. During client consultations, I discovered the importance of active listening and detailed note-taking. Coordinating project timelines helped me see how creative work needs structure to flourish. Working on artwork installation and exhibition

# In 2025...

## 300

presentations were delivered to schools, community groups, and summer camps across the province.

## 9859

students learned more about disability and inclusion in a fun, interactive way!

## 35

different communities across the province received Presentations

## 313

Hours spent in employment skills training

## 18

Participants gained the skills, confidence, and opportunity to be successful in the workplace

## 14

Employers become a partner of Easter Seals NL



preparation opened my eyes to how art extends beyond the studio walls into community engagement. Every piece I helped hang, every display I helped arrange, reinforced that presentation matters as much as creation.”

### Discovering My Teaching Voice

“Perhaps the most rewarding part of my experience was working with children in art classes. Drawing on my volunteer experience, I learned to balance structure with creative freedom, to manage group dynamics while providing individualized support, and to encourage both technical skill-building and imaginative expression.

I found joy in helping young artists troubleshoot challenges: whether they were struggling with a technique or searching for creative inspiration. Adapting activities for different skill levels taught me flexibility and the importance of meeting people where they are.”

### What This Experience Taught Me

“This continued mentorship and work experience, supported by **Easter Seals NL’s Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities** program, showed me that professional growth happens when you’re willing to seek feedback, take initiative, and bring your whole self to your work. I learned that reliability matters, that details count, and that genuine enthusiasm for what you do makes everything better.

Most importantly, I discovered that when you combine technical competence with care for people, whether they’re clients, colleagues, or children in a classroom, you don’t just do a job well. You create something meaningful.

I’m grateful for every lesson learned and excited to bring this foundation of skills, accountability, and genuine passion into whatever comes next in my journey.”

*Written by Jorja Druken*

*Easter Seals NL Opportunities Fund Participant*



# A Ca\$h Course in Confidence

## Strong Foundations, Secure Futures

“Being part of the Easter Seals NL’s **Secure Futures** program has helped me grow in many ways. It gave me confidence and a better understanding of my strengths. One of the most helpful parts of the program was learning practical financial skills, like budgeting, managing money responsibly, and planning for the future. These skills have made me feel more prepared and confident about handling my finances.

The program also helped me with my shyness and feel more comfortable communicating with others, speaking up, and participating. Engaging with others has boosted my confidence and positively influenced both my personal growth and work experiences. Overall, **Secure Futures** has helped me feel ready and excited for my future financial and employment goals.”

*Written by Ashley Reid*

*Easter Seals NL Secure Futures Participant*

“**Easter Seals NL’s Secure Futures** program has taught me lots of qualities and skills that help with money management. We learned the importance of knowing the realities of our financial world and how we can best use this new financial knowledge as a background for the future. Things such as budgeting, money management, and smart spending are all methods that are great for the real world. This has really boosted my confidence in my financial skills. I hope to see more of these types of programs in the future; it was a great success for me.”

*Written by Mike Bell*

*Easter Seals NL Secure Futures Participant*



## In 2025...

**28** individuals participated in the program

**22** individuals participated in caregiver sessions

**2** students awarded **\$2000** each for Sunlife scholarship program

# A Journey Of Growth, Resilience, And Achievement



“Easter Seals NL has helped me through so much in my life. They helped me gain knowledge and experience new opportunities that I will always be grateful for. They helped me overcome some of my social anxiety through meeting new people and obtaining employment. I will always be grateful for their conversations during difficult times. They are amazing, wonderful people who go beyond for you, help you understand things, and answer any questions you have. They are always there to help you in every possible way they can.”

*Written by Sydney Young  
Easter Seals NL Horizons Work Experience Participant*

“Watching Sydney grow throughout our Easter Seals NL’s Horizons Work Experience program and build confidence in both herself and her skills has been truly inspiring. Her dedication and strong work ethic have been evident every step of the way, and her journey serves as a powerful reminder of what is possible when the right support is in place. Sydney is not only a diligent worker but also a dependable team player who contributes significantly to the store’s success and the strength of our team. Her dedication does not go unnoticed, and her presence makes a meaningful difference in our workplace.

At Pipers, we pride ourselves on being a people store- servicing the community while striving to offer the best price in an atmosphere of harmony, fun, and mutual respect. Sydney represents each of

these pillars with consistency and care. Her positive attitude, strong work ethic, and genuine respect for both customers and teammates help create a welcoming environment we aim to provide every day. We are incredibly proud that Sydney chose to be a part of Pipers Elizabeth Avenue, and we are grateful for the commitment, energy, and heart she brings each day.”

*Written by Mary Butt and the Pipers Team*

We extend our sincere thanks to RBC and Service Canada for their continued support of our Easter Seals NL’s Horizons Work Experience Program. Their funding plays a critical role in making this program possible and allows us to provide meaningful, individualized support to participants like Sydney. Through this support, participants can build skills, confidence, and real-world work experience that support their long-term employment goals. This investment is instrumental in empowering individuals to grow, learn, and move toward sustainable employment. We would also like to sincerely thank Pipers for being a valued partner and for supporting youth in gaining meaningful work experience and building confidence. Partnerships with inclusive employers like Pipers are vital to the success of our program and our participants.

*Written by Sarah Crummey  
Easter Seals NL Employment Services Coordinator*

## In 2025...

**55** people with disabilities across the province secured employment through our wage subsidy program.

Our career advancement stream provided funding for **8** different professional development and training opportunities to help people with disabilities advance in their careers.

# An A+ Year in Accessibility and Inclusion



“Easter Seals NL’s “I Can Too!®” Disability Education program is an interactive and engaging presentation. Students explored a range of diverse abilities and adaptive equipment using age-appropriate materials such as books and dolls. This helped deepen their understanding and awareness of the importance of accessibility and inclusion in an impactful way. For many students, it was their first time seeing or learning about adaptive equipment. In contrast, for others, it was a validating experience to see the tools they use daily represented and discussed in such a positive light.

Easter Seals NL’s “I Can Too!®” Disability Education program brings numerous benefits to the school system. It encourages empathy, inclusion, and awareness of different abilities, helping to break down stigma, prevent bullying, and reduce the social isolation that students with varying needs may encounter. The program supports the province’s commitment to inclusive education by preparing students and staff to thrive in diverse learning environments. It reinforces the message that everyone has strengths and can contribute to society - regardless of ability.

At our school, this program has had a noticeable impact. We’ve seen students become more compassionate, aware of adaptive equipment, and

accepting of individual differences. Importantly, students who are differently abled have expressed feeling more seen, valued, and included. Programs like this help foster a lifelong attitude of equity and inclusion. It was a valuable experience that we would highly recommend to other schools/community groups.”

*Written by Jennier Hatcher  
Principal at St. Joseph’s Elementary, Harbour Breton*

“Easter Seals NL’s “I Can Too!®” Disability Education program is an exceptional resource that is both informative and deeply engaging. My Kindergarten students were captivated by the diverse range of dolls, which provided a wonderful hands-on way to learn about different disabilities. Starting with a familiar storybook was the perfect way to anchor the lesson, and the students were eager to participate throughout the session. The presenter was incredibly knowledgeable and patient, keeping the children focused and excited to learn. We are so happy for the opportunity to participate in the program, and it was a meaningful experience for both students and staff. I highly recommend this program!”

*Written by Denise Broderick  
Kindergarten Teacher at St. Edwards, Conception Bay South*

# Give The Gift Of Inclusion



At Easter Seals Newfoundland and Labrador, our vision is a community where people of all ages with disabilities can lead full, healthy, and active lives. Our mission is to engage, inspire, and maximize opportunities through meaningful programs and services for people with disabilities — many of which are featured in this report.

Your donation to Easter Seals NL helps us make a lasting impact, supporting over 1,000 participants and growing as we expand our reach and capacity. With your generosity, we can continue to break down barriers and build a more inclusive future for all.

**Your support makes a difference right here in our province — thank you for helping us create an inclusive tomorrow!**

To give, please visit our website at [www.eastersealsnl.ca/donate](http://www.eastersealsnl.ca/donate) or mail in the slip below to:  
Fund Development Department  
Easter Seals Newfoundland and Labrador  
206 Mount Scio Road  
St. John's, NL  
A1B 4L5



## ONE TIME DONATION

**YES! I would like to support Easter Seals Newfoundland and Labrador's programs and services for people with disabilities by making a donation of:**

\$25     \$50     \$100    **Other \$** \_\_\_\_\_

Donations of \$15 or more received by December 31, 2026 will be sent a 2026 tax receipt.

- I have enclosed my cheque payable to: Easter Seals Newfoundland and Labrador  
 Please charge my donation to my credit card:  VISA     MASTERCARD

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name On Card: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ (help us save on postage)

**SCAN TO  
DONATE ONLINE,  
TODAY!**



**Easter Seals Newfoundland & Labrador:  
206 Mount Scio Road, St. John's, NL A1B 4L5**

P: 709.754.1399 | F: 709.754.1398  
TF: 1.888.601.6767 | [info@eastersealsnl.ca](mailto:info@eastersealsnl.ca)  
[www.eastersealsnl.ca](http://www.eastersealsnl.ca)

**Charitable Registration No. 11905 5085 RR0001**

You can change or cancel your contribution at any time, simply by contacting us at 1.709.754.1399.



# Luxury CabinLottery

## The 2025 Luxury Cabin Lottery: A Remarkable Success

The **2025 Luxury Cabin Lottery** was a tremendous success, and we are incredibly grateful to all the Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who purchased tickets in support of our programs and services for people with disabilities across the province!

Thanks to your generosity, this lottery is making a real difference, enabling us to continue breaking down barriers and offering vital programs in an accessible and inclusive building, park, and playground.

### A special thank you to our sponsors and partners for your unwavering support:

Blue Water Marine, [www.bluewatermarine.ca](http://www.bluewatermarine.ca)

CAA, [www.caa.ca](http://www.caa.ca)

Can-Am, [www.can-am.brp.com](http://www.can-am.brp.com)

Cohen's Home Furnishings, [www.cohens.ca](http://www.cohens.ca)

Core Contracting, [www.corecontracting.ca](http://www.corecontracting.ca)

Crown Cabinets Fireplaces and Flooring, [www.crowncf.ca](http://www.crowncf.ca)

Your Style Kitchens, [www.yourstylekitchens.com](http://www.yourstylekitchens.com)

North Atlantic, [www.northatlantic.ca](http://www.northatlantic.ca)

NTV, [www.ntv.ca](http://www.ntv.ca)

OZFM, [www.ozfm.com](http://www.ozfm.com)

Outdoor Pros, [www.outdoorpros.ca](http://www.outdoorpros.ca)

Post Media, [www.postmedia.com](http://www.postmedia.com)

Steele Honda, [www.steelehonda.com](http://www.steelehonda.com)

Stingray, [www.stingray.com](http://www.stingray.com)

Our Cabin Lottery will be launching on **April 27, 2026!**

To stay up-to-date about announcements, please visit [www.cabinlottery.ca](http://www.cabinlottery.ca) and subscribe to our newsletter.



Easter Seals  
Newfoundland and Labrador  
206 Mount Scio Rd  
St. John's, NL

[info@eastersealsnl.ca](mailto:info@eastersealsnl.ca)  
[www.eastersealsnl.ca](http://www.eastersealsnl.ca)  
709.754.1399

If you would like to tell your story about how Easter Seals NL has impacted you, please contact our Fund Development and Communications Manager, Samantha Parrell, at [samantha@eastersealsnl.ca](mailto:samantha@eastersealsnl.ca).

Follow us on social media @[EasterSealsNL](https://www.instagram.com/EasterSealsNL)