

# The Public Good

The newsletter of The Public Good Society of Dartmouth

February 2014 \* Vol. 5, No. 1

## Partnerships That Work

By Kevin Little

Tom Clarke is unique as a foodbank volunteer, his role less about taking numbers, bagging groceries, putting out chairs or pouring the coffee and more about helping clients find work. Tom is a retired union man, he knows the value of work, how it can bring dignity and self-confidence, and he is determined to assist anyone who can work, who wants to work, to be happily employed.

At each table in the Stairs United Church Hall there are brochures, cards, pens, paper, all tools to assist a client find an agency that will ultimately lead to work. Also on the table is the Chronicle Herald and in particular the section of the paper with job listings. As clients socialize and sip on warm coffee these opportunities are never far from sight.

Tom Clarke is not shy. As clients at the North Dartmouth Resource Centre await their groceries Tom is moving with ease from table to table, calling out familiar names, asking about family members, passing out the most recent job training opportunities. And for clients who ask there are warm hugs. When Tom is not at the Centre on an early Wednesday morning the north Dartmouth residents miss him and ask if he is OK.

Tom visits the YMCA Career Development Centre on Wyse Road every Tuesday. At the Centre Tom gets copies of job descriptions, employers all over Dartmouth looking for workers asap. Tom brings these listings into the foodbank early Wednesday morning and posts them on a bulletin board. Then he moves around the various tables making sure each one has up to date brochures.



L-R: Kevin Little, The Public Good Society of Dartmouth with Tom Clarke at Stairs United Church

Every Wednesday morning the North Dartmouth Resource Centre begins with a gathering time. Tom reminds the 80+ clients about the jobs available and often gives first hand accounts of clients who have enrolled in programs, benefited from the training and found work.

The Public Good Society of Dartmouth partners with volunteers like Tom Clarke to serve clients. Although I am a part-time outreach navigator with the Connections that Work project I could not serve these clients in north Dartmouth without dedicated, talented and friendly volunteers like Tom. If I am sitting with a client to determine her/his need for services Tom is ready to assist any other clients who might be anxious to hear about employment programs.

When programs like FEED Nova Scotia's Learning Kitchen have pending intakes Tom goes the extra mile, taking the applications in his hand, speaking to every client in the Hall. If he meets a client who needs any program Tom is ready to take that person directly to me wherever I am. Further, Tom has an ample supply of my business cards that he passes out all week to people he feels could benefit from my assistance.

Tom Clarke helps people find jobs in north Dartmouth. Tom Clarke believes in the Connections that Work project. Together, Tom Clarke and The Public Good Society of Dartmouth, make a great team!

**The Public Good Society of Dartmouth  
Annual General Meeting - all welcome**

**February 26, 2014 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm**

**First Baptist Church, Ochterloney St.**

**Light refreshments will be served**

**Guest Speaker: The Honourable Joanne  
Bernard, Minister of Community Services**

Thanks to funding from the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services, The Public Good Society of Dartmouth's "Connections that Work" project will continue helping people in Dartmouth until at least March 2014.

## The Dartmouth North Community Van

The Dartmouth North Community Van program celebrated its second year of operation during the month of January. This program continues to support several of the residents and non-profit groups within our community. It has allowed various community groups the opportunity to provide affordable transportation for its members and, in several instances, it has proved to be the incentive to initiate new programs that better serve our residents. During the second year of operation, the number of passengers transported has increased by forty percent. This increase is a result of the rise in the number of community groups using the van and the services being offered. During the two years that the program has been in place, the community van has traveled approximately thirteen thousand kilometers and transported five thousand residents of the Dartmouth North community.

Thanks to a Nova Scotia Moves grant, we have established a program whereby individuals on social assistance are shuttled to affordable grocery stores at month's end, when they receive their income support. The funds are used to pay a driver to take individuals to Dave's and Gateway and are then driven home. We piloted this shuttle in November and December from Dartmouth Community Mental Health and, although our numbers were low, participants informed us that they saved over 50% on groceries. Our initial hope is to have two grocery runs, providing ten people access to affordable food on a monthly basis. The Family Resource Centre is also



Ralph "Van Man" Mackenzie with Bob Holmes, another Dartmouth North Community Van volunteer driver.

participating and has scheduled the van with their Day-Care program so that mothers can shop, drop off their food and return to the Centre. We are confident that this program will become successful and are assessing to see how we can best expand in order to support more members of our community.

## Coming Soon to a Location Near You

The Public Good Society is working with Metro Non-Profit Housing Association (MNPFA) to open a Dartmouth satellite office for its Halifax Housing Help (HHH) program. Starting in April 2014, United Way is providing sufficient funding to open the Dartmouth office and provide one-half of a support person. The office will be run and managed by HHH with TPGSD providing research and support activities as needed. The opening of this office will allow better, more convenient service for Dartmouth based residents and an improved inventory of Dartmouth housing options.

The search for suitable office space is currently underway. Thanks to friends of TPGSD, we have been able to get many of the furnishings needed for the new office.

TPGSD and MNPFA have worked together on several grant requests for additional staffing and hope to hear within the next couple of months on the results.

"The Public Good" is normally published twice a year by The Public Good Society of Dartmouth.

For more information on the Society see our web site at [www.publicgoodsociety.ca](http://www.publicgoodsociety.ca).

The Society can be reached at:

\* E-mail: [thepublicgoodsociety@gmail.com](mailto:thepublicgoodsociety@gmail.com)

\* Phone: 902-476-0785

\* Mail: P.O. Box 262, Dartmouth, NS  
B2Y 3Y3 Canada

All donations are eligible for a Charitable Tax Receipt.

Check out our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/PublicGoodSocietyofDartmouth>