

Quest - A Society for Adult Support and Rehabilitation



**Annual General Report
1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022**

22 September 2022

This annual report to the stakeholders, participants and members of the Society, once again I believe, will relate and testify to an organization which has since the last report, continued to stand against the impact of the pandemic undertaken a process to define and identify the goals and objectives that fit with a restated Vision and Mission Statements. The statement that I just voiced has room in it to bring impacts that will positively affect the lives of our residents as they are guided to the Community Services directions of community living and involvement.

The preceding paragraph makes reference to a process undertaken by the Board with the involvement of staff, the Board and Stylus Consulting who provided coordination and interpretation of foundational information. This process resulted in a new Strategic Direction document. I wish we had the time to go into depth with the document at this time but that is not possible because there so much there we probably would run out of time. You will find the detailing information with the main body of my report and an appendix. However, I will supply eight words because there are four distinct directions:

- 1 - Client focus*
- 2 - Workforce focus*
- 3 - Community partnerships*
- 4 - Neighbourhood building*

The people involved, both internal and external who were part of the strategic direction initiative are to be congratulated on their accomplishment to date. Also, my thanks to the Board for their enthusiastic participation.

There are other aspects to my report. In particular, I must mention the human element involved in our operations has been outstanding as we continue to deal with the pandemic. Those on the front lines aided by the administrative and operational people working together to ensure careful care of our residents.

A part of the Boards' effort to evolve and improve is an initiative to become more familiar with our clients and staff. An opportunity to interact is being provided at some Board meetings with staff and clients present in order for the Board to better appreciate and understand needs. I believe from personal experience that the more we have an understanding of client interactions the better we can serve them.

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Board of Directors

Ronald Cooper, Chairperson

David Carrigan, Vice-Chairperson

Cheryl Newcombe, Treasurer

Chloé Gagnon, Secretary

Angela Cooper, Member at Large

Laura Holdright, Member at Large

Corrinna “Dolly” Mosher, Member at Large

Lisa Poirier, Member at Large

Patti Snow, Member at Large

I'm reminded by a written statement made by MJ Hampton as she worked to help the Department of Community Services frame its path to full community inclusion for persons living in congregate settings. She noted that community is not about the bricks and mortar; it's about the arrangements for community participation. What I take from this is even though the eventual closure of our RRC program is on the horizon, we can continue to improve on creating community for our RRC residents. This means doing our best to have all residents active, involved and feeling a part of a community.

The four strategic directions detailed in this report's appendix are more than worthy for mention in my report as they do capture what our Board and the full Quest team will focus on today, tomorrow and years ahead.

The first strategic direction focuses on work where "every resident is set for success." We will work to accomplish this by making sure every resident has a plan to achieve his or her greatest level of independent living. Ultimately, this priority is designed to equip our residents with skills to make their transition to a fuller community life successful. We will know we are getting there when more of our residents are participating in meaningful work, increasing time at work and transitioning to small option homes when they are ready.

Our second strategic direction priority is creating "a workforce that is a magnet for recruitment." This sounds easy and, in some manner, it should be. Most importantly this is about a strong commitment by the Quest organization to create a work environment where staff feel valued and continue to develop a deep sense of belonging. We can improve on what has been underway for the last few years by developing a recruitment strategy, continue improve on workplace safety, focus on retention, gather feedback from staff, celebrate staff and continue to develop a strong management team and Board. Some of the ways we'll know we're getting there is experiencing lower staff vacancy, reduced sick time, reduced WCB claims, greater staff retention, greater employee satisfaction and succession plans for management and Board members.

As I noted at the outset of my report much has been accomplished in 2021/2022. In addition to our strategic directions the following are other highlights:

- Completion of the 2 Lynnett small option home build.
- Three young men moving into their new home late summer and fall of 2021.
- Successful management of COVID 19 infection control and outbreaks among residents and staff.....this was huge for Quest and its success centered on how staff remained committed to infection safety throughout the year.
- Completion of the Joint Workforce Initiative (JWI) with Labour and WCB where plans and steps are now in place to reduce workplace injury. We're seeing significant decrease in injuries and associated costs.
- Re-establishment of a staff social committee.....much needed as we continue to be impacted by COVID 19.

On a final note I want to thank my fellow Board members and the full Quest team for their commitment to the residents we have the privilege to serve.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ronald Cooper, Chairperson
Board of Directors

Throughout this year staffing remained a challenge with COVID impacting our staffing levels coupled with typical staff attrition. During the year there were approximately 65 new hires with approximately the same number leaving Quest for various reasons. Staffing highlights included the arrival of a new Occupational Therapist (Alee Wickins) following the departure of Erin Zinc from the Multidisciplinary Team. We also said good bye to John MacMillan who left as Manager of HR but remained part-time to assist Chelsy Flemming in her new role. Chelsy's experience and abilities made John's tutoring an easy task. By the end of the year John's assistance dwindled as Chelsy had proven she had the task well in hand. To assist Chelsy we welcomed Joanna MacIntyre in a HR supporting role. This support has enabled Chelsy to focus on specific HR challenges including staff recruitment and retention. The final highlight was the retirement and return of Cindy White. Cindy had retired by late summer and returned to assist our accounting function when a maternity leave occurred in the unit. It was an incredibly smooth transition as Cindy had significant experience in the role.

By March of 2022 Quest had completed its obligation under the Joint Workforce Initiative (JWI). This was a joint effort involving Quest, WCB and the Department of Labour. Its goal was to improve safety in the organization and as a result, reduce the financial burden of worker time loss as a result of workplace injury. By the end of March there were a few indicators of success. The number of WCB claims were much lower and significant effort was made to manage long standing WCB files. All of this considerable work is expected to result in the elimination of the current WCB surcharge and a significantly reduced rate when the three-year rolling average says goodbye to 2018 and 2019 (years of high WCB time loss and costs).

As in 2020/21 staff were incredibly vigilant through this past year as proven by the absence of any significant impact felt by Quest residents as a result of the ongoing pandemic and a significant decrease in community socialization. As I did last year, I applaud Quest staff's effort and the residents who understood and embraced the need to stay safe by reducing exposure risks as much as possible. Special thanks go out to our Manager of HR, Chelsy Flemming, Manager of Policy and Education, Karen Strangward, our Nurse Manager, Paulette MacMullin, our Manager of Accounting and Finance, John MacPherson, our Manager of Resident Supports, Tim McFarland, our Manager

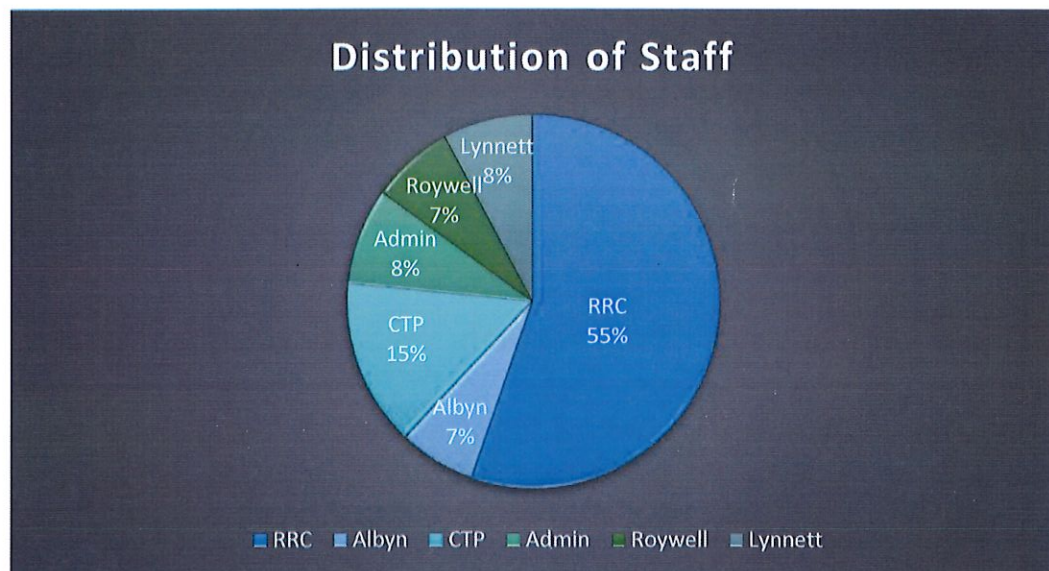
Human Resources

INTRODUCTION

Throughout this fiscal year, our main goal was to support the professional growth and well-being of the employee's during such a time when everyone was faced with unique challenges, added stressors and unknowns from the ongoing pandemic and yet - never failing to provide exceptional services to the residents of Quest. Our goal this year was focused on keeping employees successful and safe at work and ensuring they were enjoying what they were doing.

PERSONNEL

As of the close of the fiscal year, Quest had 180 active employees, an increase of 1.07% from the previous fiscal year in which Quest had 168 employees. Employees are located at our Residential Rehabilitation Centre (RRC), Community Transition Program (CTP) and our two small options homes; Roywell and Albyn. In June, 2021, Quest opened an additional Small Option Home, Lynnett, located in Spryfield, Nova Scotia. With the opening of this home, a new staff base was developed to support the residents moving in. This new staff base accounts for the increase in number of employee's this past fiscal year.



SAFETY

Workplace safety is a thoroughly involved process that takes many hands to protect Quest's most valuable asset; it's people that work and live here. Human Resources works diligently with the Worker's Compensation Board of Nova Scotia and our Health and Safety Officer, Lisa Hurst to ensure the highest safety standards and policies are being applied at Quest. This year, Quest enlisted the help of Lindsay Schroeder through Dallas Mercer Consulting to help assist in the management of our Worker's Compensation Claims. With Lindsay's help, we have been able to provide more support and quick treatment to employees when they become injured, prevent injuries from occurring and aid in quicker returns after a workplace injury occurred.

LOOKING AHEAD

As we move forward the Department of Human Resources looks forward to welcoming new challenges that arise through Strategic Planning and Transformation processes. We are consistently engaging with community resources to better our working environment, including welcoming immigrants to our workforce, continued partnerships with Dallas Mercer Consulting and maintaining our strong Labour Relations with our Local CUPE 1028 as we soon enter into Contract Negotiations.

As always, we remain proud of the work of our employees do.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chelsy Flemming, Manager
Human Resources Department

Quest RRC

NURSING

This past year has continued with similar challenges and changes as we continued to adjust to ongoing restrictions and life style changes secondary to Covid-19. All Quest staff continue to rise to the occasion, supporting these challenges with our residents.

Our daily routine, for periods of time, remained contingent on the daily update from the Medical Officer of Health, as we were directed and supported by Public Health, in regards to restrictions.

Unfortunately, despite all efforts, we were not impervious to this virus as we had an outbreak within our facility.

With direction and continuous follow-up between Public Health and our Management team, we worked through some difficult times, with isolations and restrictions. Fortunately, all residents and staff infected, recovered without any serious issues.

This can be attributed to the diligent effort of all staff.

Restrictions temporarily limited access to some programs. Quest continued to work toward implementing new programs and services, going forward.

Current Policies and practices were regularly updated to ensure that we were well equipped with sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE) and that all staff and residents were screened for COVID-19 symptoms.

We are pleased to report that all of our residents will be receiving a second booster dose for Covid-19. These will be administered between April and June 2022.

RESIDENT SUPPORTS

As with all of our team members, my role as Manager of Resident Supports includes a variety of tasks. Since assuming this role in September of 2020, it has been a rewarding experience to be involved in the lives of our RRC residents and my co-staff.

Managing RRWs, RRW Mentors, Social Worker, Behavioural Interventionist and Liaison with Psychologist – I have been active in engaging ongoing supports for our RRC RRWs. When performance issues arise, I have met with individuals and sometimes with groups to seek improvement in what we do in our service to the residents. I strive to be a listening ear for any RRWs who have concerns, questions or merely wish to chat. I conduct RRW meetings once every five weeks.

The mentor team is of huge benefit to the Quest personnel. They are responsible for ongoing training and workshopping in many areas of Quest life; from policy updates to developing lunch and learns to orientation of new staff. In addition to daily informal meetings, we meet together as a group once a month. Over the past year we have had a few staffing changes among the mentors. The regular complement of Mentors number five in total.

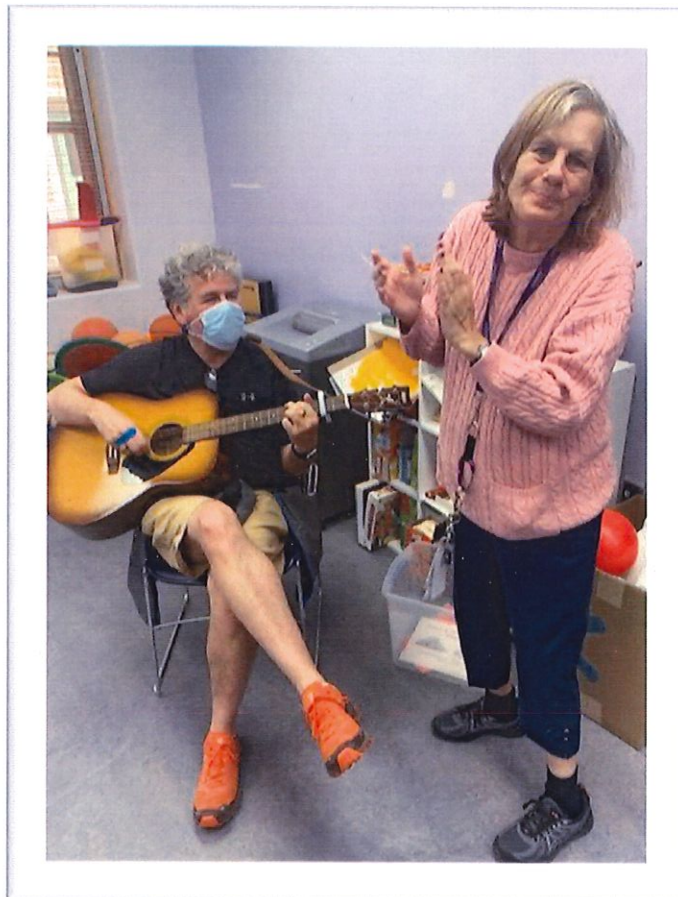
The Quest social worker and behavioural interventionist report to me. We also share the same office and are able to effectively collaborate on a regular basis. The Quest psychologist is currently on contract for four to six hours per week. She directly liaisons with me and is a great addition to our team.

Multidisciplinary Team – I serve on the Multidisciplinary Team with the nurse manager, occupational therapist, dietician, social worker, recreation therapist, behavioural interventionist and our contracted psychologist. We meet formally four times a week in rounds and for resident support plans. We consistently and regularly meet and work together every day with ongoing opportunities and challenges.

The past year has been a challenging one in many respects. Our organization has weathered many Covid-19 related lockdowns. Our staffing has been a challenge from time to time with staff illness due to the pandemic. Throughout, I have been impressed with the residents as they endure a lot of trials with lockdowns and with the staff who have worked very hard in providing supports and flexibility with regard to engaging meaningfully all the residents.

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy J. McFarland
Manager Resident Supports



BEHAVIOURAL INTERVENTION

During the past year with various stages of Covid 19 restrictions the focus was to provide a more person-centered approach to our residents at QRCC, we have been giving more attention to how to respond to the triggers and precursor behaviors in order to decrease the likelihood of escalations or crisis situations. We continue to work collaboratively with the COAST team. As the COAST team identified Skyview Unit environment is not well suited for one of our residents' sensory needs, Quest created a new space to ensure the safety of the resident and others. I had been working with the BCBA from ANSU to support staff and the resident to make the transition easier.

I continue to do functional behavioral assessment to identify the function of the behaviour with direct observations and interviews with staff. This information is used to understand the pattern of a person's behavior and the events or incidents that increase the likelihood of challenging behaviors. The desired or alternate behaviour is always an important part of the positive behavioral support plan. With the help of mentors, social stories and visuals were used to teach the desired or alternate behaviour to two of our residents. I continue to collect data, monitor, record, and review our residents' progress with the team members, as well as with the help of staff, continue to teach the appropriate behaviour to our residents instead of performing the problem behaviour.

The psychologist and I held an educational session about positive behaviour support plan for our mentors and trained one of the mentors to provide PBS training to all the staff who work at QRCC. The goal of this training is to provide education about the supports and strategies to be implemented for reducing problem behavior and for teaching positive skills designed to replace the behavior. During the past year, I was also able to provide both in person and online training for staff who work at the small option homes and continue offering training when needed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessy Arackal
Behavioural Interventionist

RECREATION THERAPY

Recreation Therapy focuses on 5 domains that include cognitive, emotional, physical, social, spiritual and vocational. Recreation and leisure is used to improve the overall health and wellbeing for the residents at Quest. Individuals have their own person-centered goals in relation to recreation therapy. These goals are supported in their individual program plans along with overall programs offered for everyone on the unit monthly calendar.

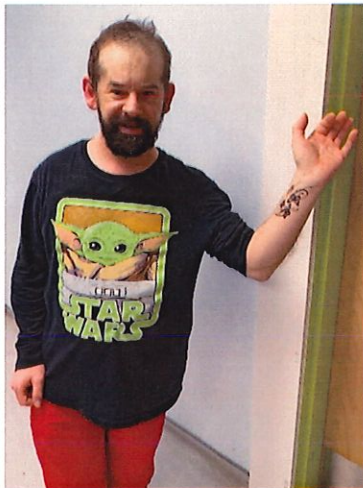
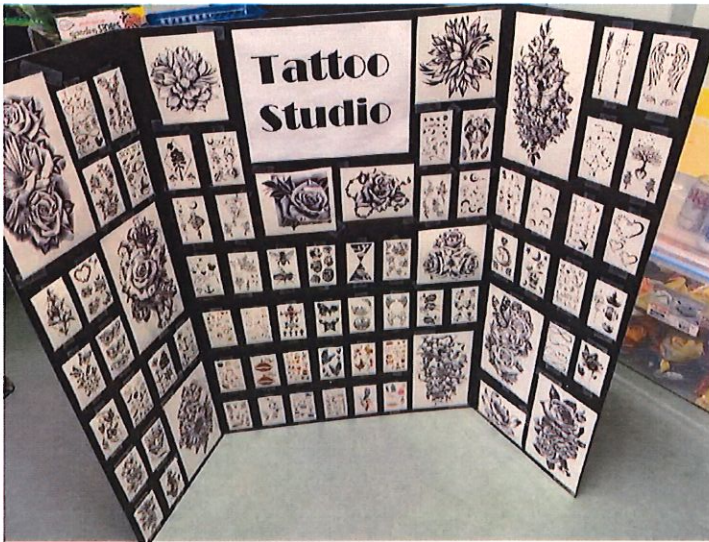
Most common goals for residents include but are not limited to:

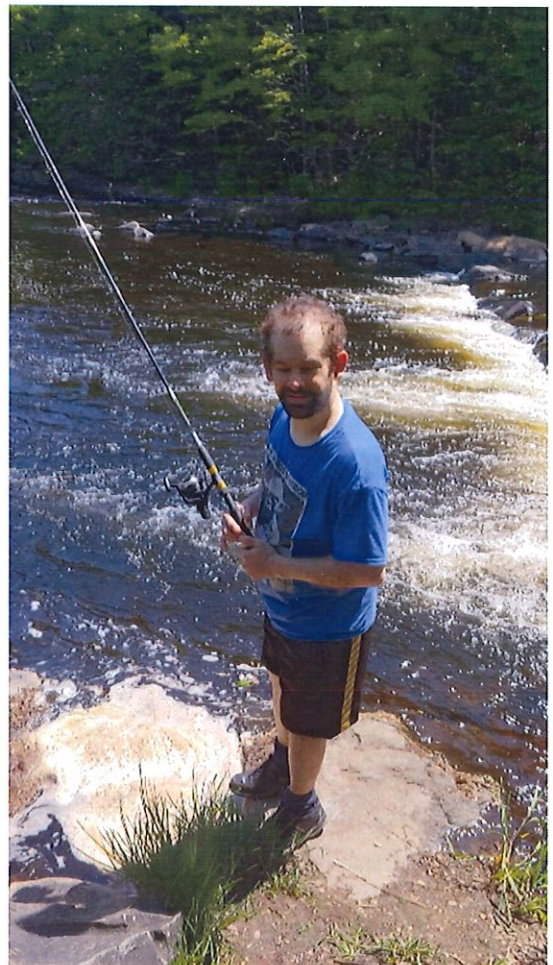
- Provide opportunity for community engagement
- Increase social opportunities with peers
- Increase physical activity
- Support emotional regulation
- Promote and increase independence
- Overall quality of life and enjoyment

Each month there are many opportunities for community engagement on the monthly program calendar. These outings include but are not limited to Horse Therapy, SPCA volunteering, library outings, swimming, Canadian Games Center, Museums, Therapeutic farms, and many seasonal activities such as apple picking, corn mazes, local farms, sleigh rides, Holiday fairs, etc. There is also a Monday-Friday walk to either Tim Hortons or Petro Canada to promote physical activity. A sample of the monthly program calendar is located at the end of my written report.

In house programs are offered daily as well that include movie nights, art nights, Karaoke Parties, Bingo, dance parties, spa nights, cookie decorating, Memory Lane clean up, basketball, air hockey, gardening, coffee talk, holiday celebrations, scavenger hunts, Xbox games, science experiments and many more fun activities. Students from the Canadian College of Massage & Hydrotherapy volunteer to give massages to the residents during spa nights on occasion.

At the end of my report, several pages of photographs have been included capturing residents and staff alike enjoying some of the many events and outings mentioned above.

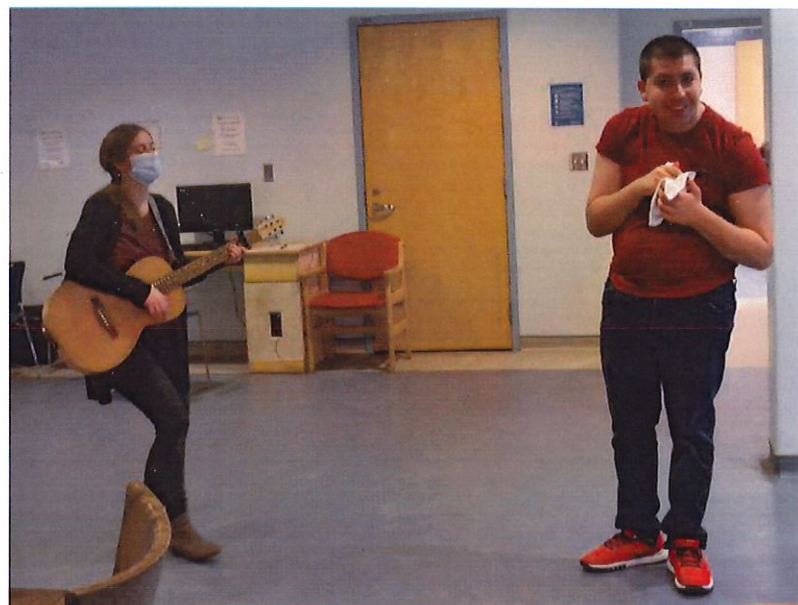






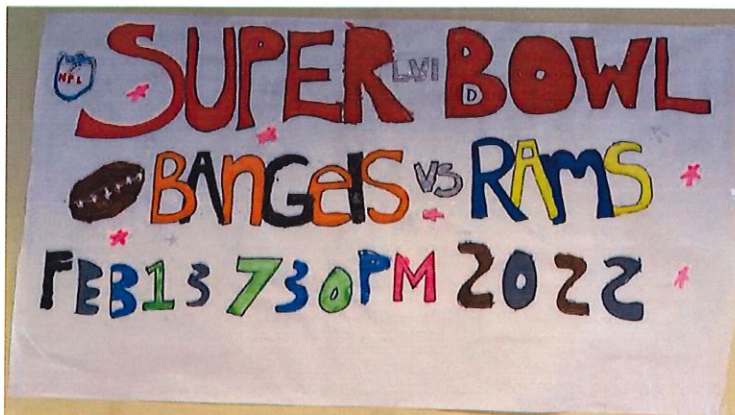
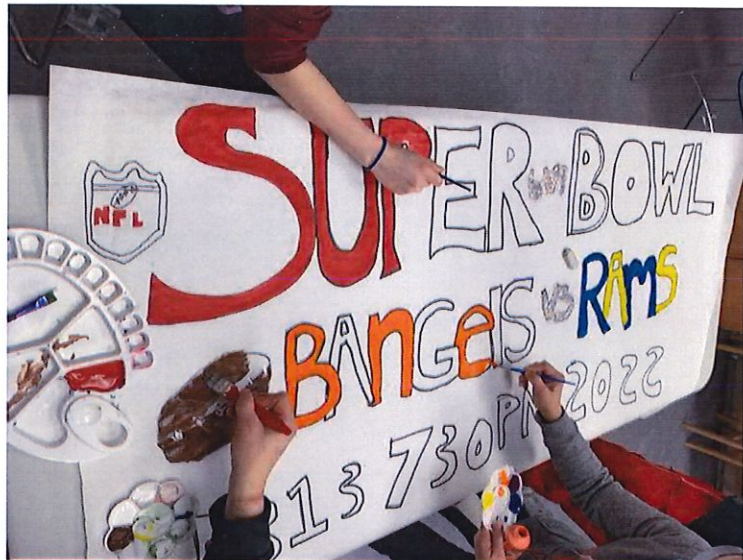
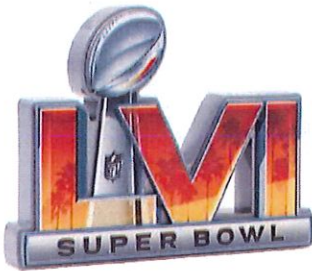
A perfect day for a walk along
the Halifax Waterfront

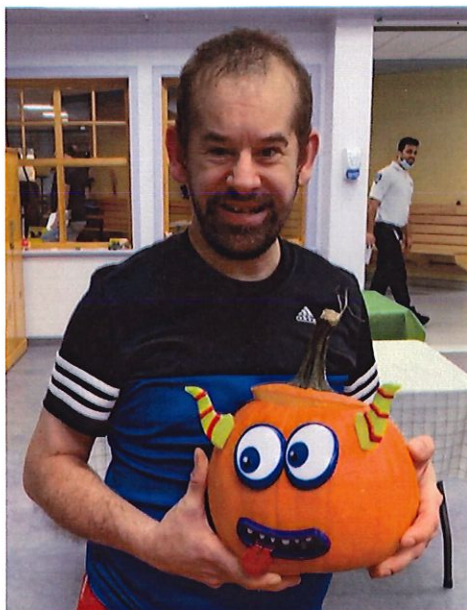
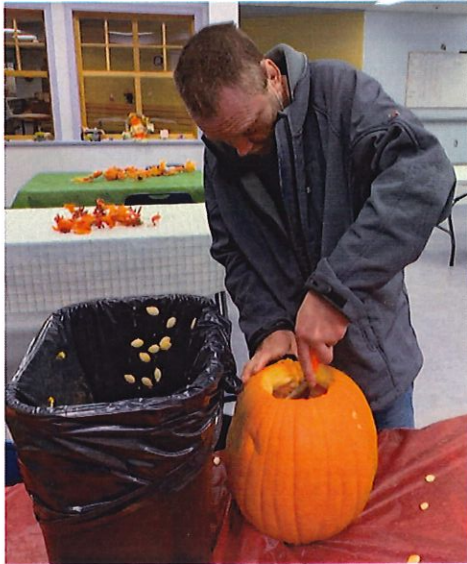
MUSIC THERAPY





Super Bowl Party prep!





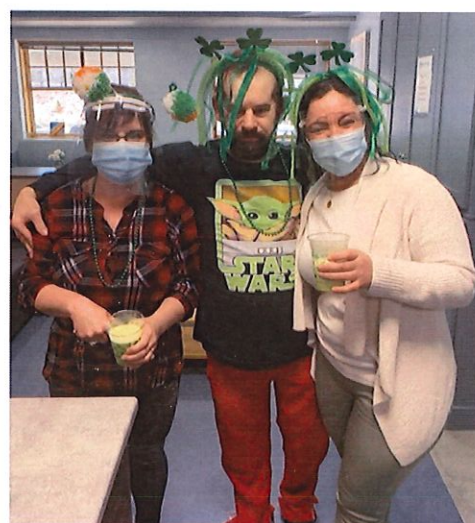
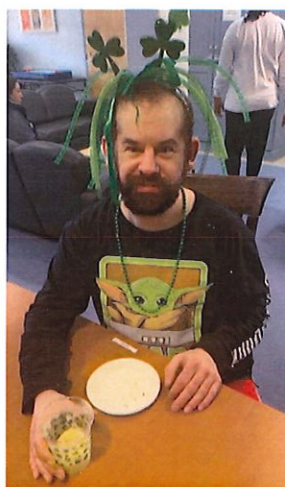
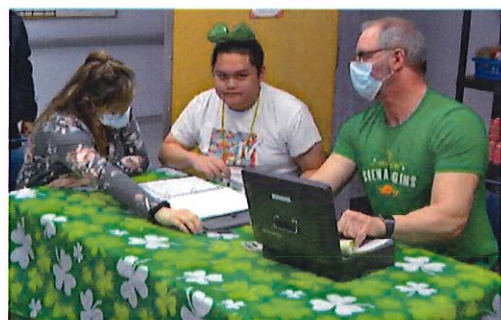


Holiday Celebrations



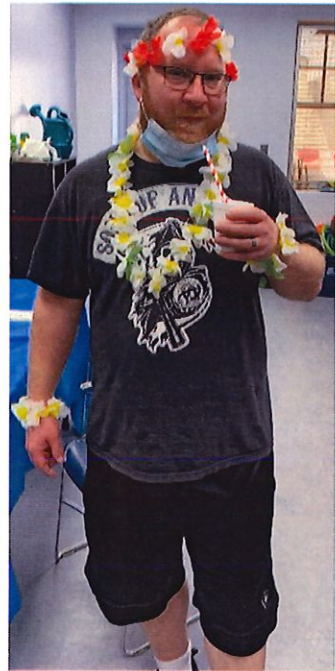
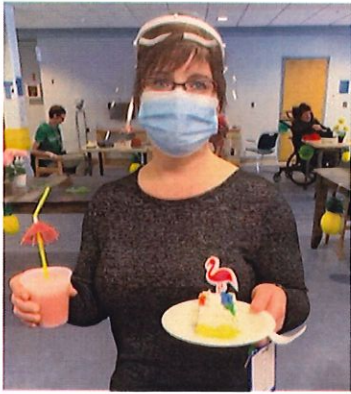


St. Patrick's
Day
Fun

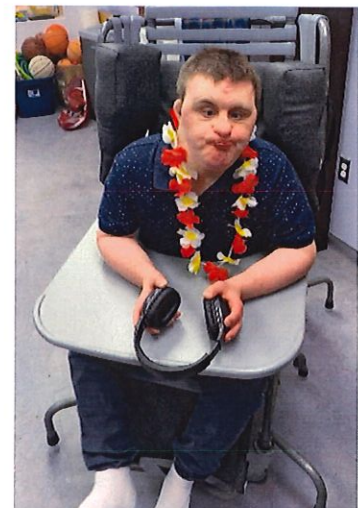
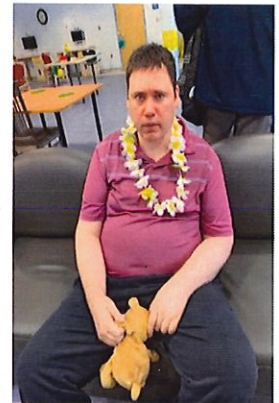


It's always cookie o'clock!





Hawaiian Theme Party



FACILITY SERVICES

Facilities and the departments that fall under that responsibility had some interesting times over the past year related to Covid and currently still working through them. In addition, we had some much needed improvements to our Quest facilities that have made a difference in staff morale and working environments.

In the Kitchen, it was a struggle as we incurred a high turnover of staff in trying to keep our numbers at full capacity to maintain the level of service Kitchen provides. For a staff compliment of 8, at one point we were down to 4. We are still down in numbers but slowly bringing qualified people on board thanks to HR. Thanks to the Kitchen staff's commitment for stepping in to meet the required level of service. A new 4 week menu was introduced by our Dietician which provided some new and exciting healthier dishes to serve to our residents and has been well received. There have been some new upgrades to the Kitchen equipment that provided for better dry food storage, safer cooking prep and better layout of space in the kitchen for cooking and preparing meals.

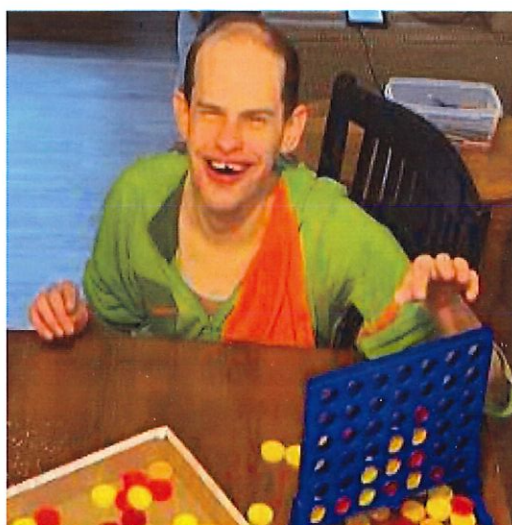
Housekeeping also had some resource challenges as Covid swept through our team members and left us reaching out to agencies to top up our level of service. In the end we hired 2 people, one to accommodate a vacant position in the RRC and one to work in CTP which would allow full isolation of our team members between floors during the outbreaks situations. Through all the outbreaks and punches that were thrown our level of cleaning services remained intact as a result of the dedication of the housekeeping team.

In Security, we had stressful periods of time with obtaining officers to meet our requirements for resident watch. It was hit and miss and even reaching out to other security firms it seemed all Security agencies were in the same situation with finding candidates to train. As our requirements lessened through the year Paladin was able to better match our needs. Our core RRC and CTP security positions have been stable with still experiencing some gaps in CTP. During the last year it was determined that Security needed to be closer to the front of the RRC where most of the residents gather for program and meals. We moved security out of the Nurse's Station and into the front glass office for better visibility to the front entrance and to the residents. This change has been working very well.

Albyn Avenue & Roywell Drive Small Option Homes

Prevailing in our second year of Covid 19 pandemic safety restrictions; our year at each of the two community-based option homes located on Roywell drive Lawrencetown and Albyn avenue Dartmouth, has been again, filled with uniquely modified celebrations; and we are pleased to be offered the opportunity to share some of that with you.

Three residents continue to reside at the Roywell drive community-based option home; and four residents continue to reside at the Albyn avenue community-based option home. The approximate resident age range between the two homes vary from ages; twenty-five to seventy.



All residents residing in the two community-based option homes require various forms of support from our Residential Rehabilitation staff, community resources, community consult services, and various consult Multidisciplinary Team members.

Both homes are fortunate to have a well-manicured spacious lawn that our residents and staff are able to enjoy all year around; whether it be playing in a pile of leaves, enjoying the sweet smell and colors of the many flowers, playing ball, or having fun making snowmen and snow angels, or the occasional dance party; there is always something readily available to enjoy and the opportunity to get some fresh air.

The Residential Rehabilitation staff were proven exceptional again this period, working diligently in collaboration with the residents and various community resources; to ensure that valuable activity and experiences were offered to the residents while maintaining the pandemic safety restrictions.

Our Residential Rehabilitation staff have made exceptional efforts to ensure that special holiday celebrations and events were created in the home, complying with pandemic safety precautions; because of their efforts our residents were able to celebrate and enjoy each holiday and its festivities without missing a beat.



Every day is a new day; the residents we serve, their families, loved ones, and staff are looking forward to great things which lay on the horizon ahead, as we continue to develop and progress as individuals.

Respectfully Submitted,

Natasha Leyenaar, LPN Manager
Albyn Avenue & Roywell Drive Small Option Homes

and collaboration with one another to overcome anything that came their way. Quest never anticipated the family support we would have for 2 Lynnett Road and are incredibly thankful for your dedication, advocacy, time and generosity.



Community Inclusion

Building this new home was a big milestone for Quest; particularly because it aligns with our strategic direction and future transformation with the Department of Community Services. Ensuring the residents of this community home are living a life that is meaningful to them remains our priority. We continue to work with the families and the Department of Community Services to support these individuals with varying abilities to reduce barriers and support inclusion. Considering the overall success of this new home, we are excited to see what new challenges and opportunities will be presented to us in the year ahead.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joe Rudderham, Executive Director
Chelsy Flemming, Community Resource Nurse
for Lynnett Small Option Home



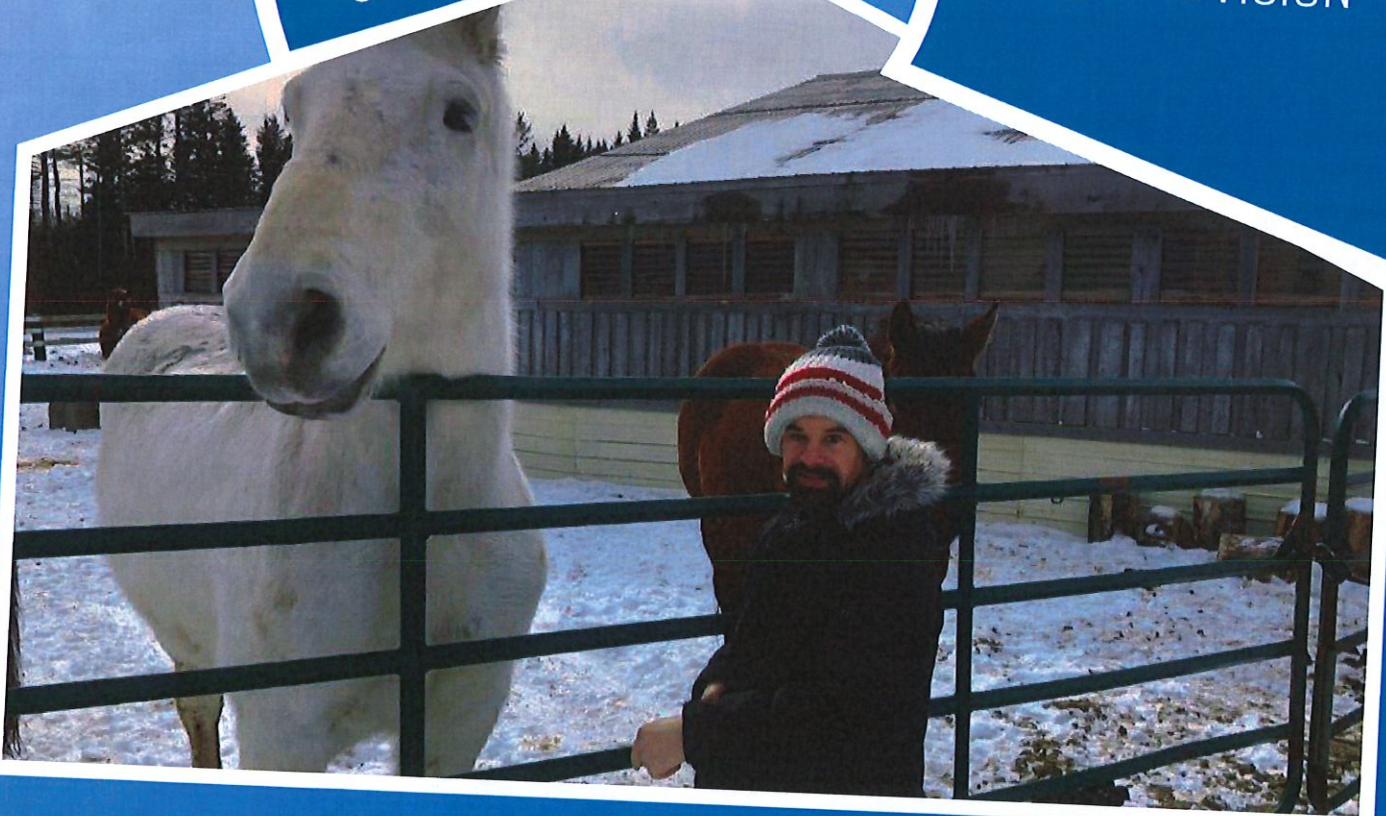
As we stand amidst the sixth wave of COVID, clients are now seeing glimpses of the possibilities that will be available when restrictions fully lift within the NSHA health care system. However, during the previous waves we were not deterred from our mandate of admitting and effectively transitioning clients to appropriate community-based settings; providing clients with the best possible care available; and striving to provide clients with meaningful engagements and new opportunities, all while also maintaining their safety by following public health guidelines regarding the pandemic.

Even with the added adversities of restrictions, our clients found ways to improve in areas identified by themselves and our clinical team. We maintained optimism through continued community access restrictions, resulting in CTP's Recreation Therapist and assistants seeking new opportunities for engagement, which included video game events, movie nights, and various music and art based programming to promote movement, exercise, and creativity within our building. When permitted, community access was encouraged to its fullest, all while following COVID-19 safety protocols. Programs such as meal preparation and grocery shopping, swimming and exercises groups, group walks to various community settings, barbeques and ice cream events, P50 programs, and work placements came back into fruition during the lulls in the pandemic. The fluid change between restricted access and permitted access created difficulties; but working as a team, our community was able to effectively endure these restrictions within the scope of our abilities, and still find ways to keep meaningful engagements throughout the pandemic. Clients were able to participate in programs such as baking for the unit, assist in the creation of our art led conference room wall, continue in art works, attend movie outings, and get back into swimming. We even made it possible for one client to achieve their "dream" through the assistance of the Make-A-Wish Foundation; assisting the client in visiting Canada's Wonderland and various other Canadian attractions in Ontario with his family.

Appendix

Quest STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

2022-2026



Quest: A Society for Adult Support and Rehabilitation became a registered not-for-profit Society in Nova Scotia in 2001 with a commitment to re-vitalize leading-edge services for clients experiencing challenges secondary to intellectual, developmental and/or physical disability and chronic mental illness.





STRATEGIC PRIORITY: A WORKFORCE THAT IS A MAGNET FOR RECRUITMENT

The best people are attracted to organizations that have a reputation for being a great place to work. Quest employees need to be our recruitment magnet, which means that they need to experience a deep sense of belonging to an organization that values them. Every staff member and volunteer must feel safe in the work they do, respected in the relationships they have and confident in their ability to fulfill their own potential through ongoing professional development and progressive opportunities.

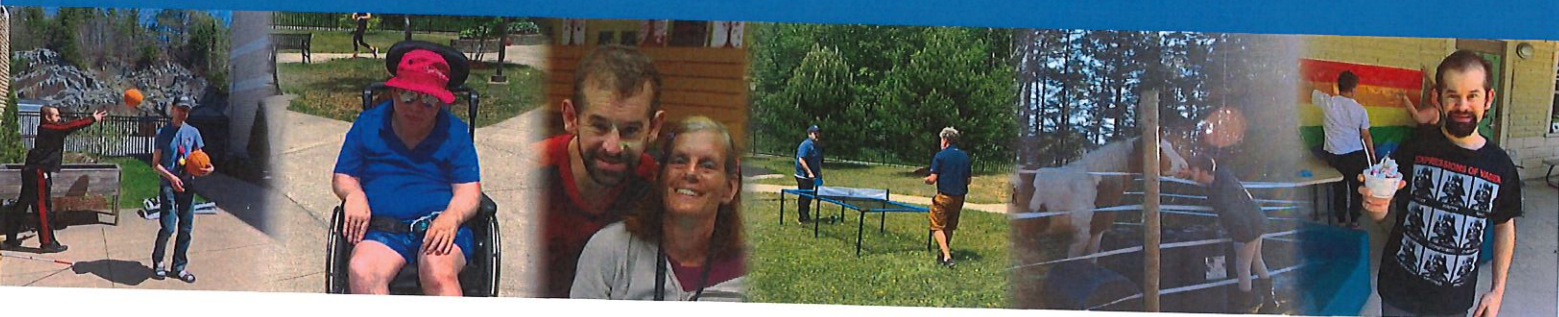
Strategic Initiatives:

- d. Develop a 3-5 year recruitment strategy that includes immigration components and promotes Quest as an exceptional employer.
- e. Review workplace safety policies and practices to ensure the highest standard is being applied, and take action where it is not.
- f. Develop a retention strategy which includes employee engagement and wellness programs as well as leadership development and mentoring programs to support succession planning.
- g. Introduce an employee satisfaction survey to assess workplace culture and opportunities for growth, with the commitment to report back on findings and improvement plans.
- h. Showcase employee initiatives, individual or team-based, that exemplify the qualities of excellence and innovation.
- i. Develop a board recruitment strategy that anticipates governance leadership requirements to achieve and sustain Quest's Strategic Plan.

Desired Outcomes:

- reduced staff vacancy rate
- reduced staff sick time rate
- reduced WCB claims due to injury and stress
- increased rate of staff retention
- increased satisfaction scores on employee satisfaction surveys
- increased diversity among staff and volunteers to reflect the diversity of the residents, participants and families that Quest serves
- Quest Board of Directors recruited, with succession plans identified





STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

Housing is more than bricks and mortar. We need to construct homes in places where the people who live in them are building neighborhoods that value diversity, demonstrate kindness and normalize inclusion.

A CAPITAL PLAN OF NEIGHBOURHOOD- BUILDING

Strategic Initiatives:

- o. Establish a Building Neighborhoods Committee with terms of reference focused on developing a capital plan for housing solutions for persons with disabilities in general, and Quest clients in particular.
- p. Build partnerships and collaboration with municipal leadership, federal and provincial housing programs and community advocates who are able to create opportunities for housing initiatives, and remove barriers to the achievement of Quest's capital development plans.
- q. Conduct a Space Use Review of the facility on Memory Lane to inform the future use of that capital asset that best meets the needs of clients, family and staff.
- r. Alignment of funding model with municipal and provincial housing programs.

Desired Outcomes:

- growth in the inventory of Quest housing stock and placement options for participants
- decrease in the length of time clients must delay discharge from Quest due to lack of housing alternatives
- increase in the number of clients who are living in community-based small option housing
- high rate of reported satisfaction by clients with their living arrangements

