



# **ANTIGONISH COUNTY ADULT LEARNING ASSOCIATION**

**AGM REPORT 2023**

## MESSAGE FROM THE ORGANIZATION ADMINISTRATOR

To say that the 2022-2023 year at ACALA was a whirlwind would be an understatement. We started with a hurricane after all. This has been a year of learning and accomplishment, but also a year of overcoming. I have been proud and humbled to bear witness to the many challenges that have been overcome and the accomplishments that have been achieved by our learners both in and out of the classroom. From banding together to help one another during Hurricane Fiona, to filming documentaries that celebrate our community, to finishing high school- and all of the many moments in between - ACALA has come together in a year of healing and learning that deserves to be celebrated. I am so grateful to the volunteers, learners, instructors and board members who have come back for our first fully in-person year after a long online pandemic. This has been a year of strengthening community partnerships to create more opportunities for collaboration and education; creating opportunities for community education for learners; and placing value on the self-empowerment that learners get from taking charge of their own education. I look forward to continuing to build on this work community collaboration and education that we are building together.

Shayla MacDonald, Organization Administrator

## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

ACALA has completed another successful year of doing the important work of assisting adults in Antigonish build the knowledge, skills and relationships that allow them to pursue their goals. ACALA students are working on many learning activities, including high school completion, workplace skills, using technology for fun and profit, and, very importantly, working cooperatively with other learners, instructors and the wider community. At the same time, they are building the confidence and relationship skills that make life more positive and meaningful.

Learning at ACALA is not limited to those registered as students. Our staff continue to develop their own skills and are constantly seeking and finding ways to make ACALA strong and responsive to the needs of learners and the community. Our staff are the best and I thank each of them for their ongoing dedication to students and the organization.

A special thank you to those who give of their time freely as volunteer tutors and board members. ACALA couldn't function the way it does without your generous gifts of time and talent.

Jack Beaton, ACALA Board Chair

# Adult Literacy and GED

This year, we had 16 ALP I-II and 17 ALP III and GED learners attend our programs. Learners worked to improve communications, math, science, and global subjects, participated in special projects and the Spell Read program, and so much more. This year three learners completed 6 GED tests. One learner, Toni Carr, completed her GED certification, congratulations to Toni!

## Digital Literacy

The digital literacy classes were busy this year, with 11 learners across three levels. Beginner digital literacy classes focused on computer literacy, internet safety and online communications. Intermediate and advanced classes worked on special projects in collaboration with ACALA Media. Our advanced tech class also helped co-facilitate the fall Phone and Tablet Boot Camp!



ACALA board members (Barb Moreton, Jack Beaton and Louise Lorefice), NSSAL staff (Bonita Decaire and Stephanie Patriquin), Shayla MacDonald, Andrew Chacko, and Andrew Stalker at the CoF Award Ceremony in December 2023



Eva Berterand Brunelle, facilitated the shadow box project for Antigonight 2023

## Antigonight

This year's summer program brought community members together to create a shadow box diorama of favorite places in Antigonish. Participants met over 4 workshops to create shadow boxes together. Displays included representations of Michele's Grill, Antigonish Aquatics, Make your Move Antigonish and the St FX Art Gallery. During the evening of Antigonight, local artist, Eva Berterand Brunelle, facilitated a collaborative shadow box featuring the People's Place Library Community Garden.

## CoF Literacy Award

ACALA was proud to honor the achievements of ACALA learner, Andrew Chacko this year. Andrew won the Canada Federation of Literacy Award for his dedication to adult learning and involvement in the American Sign Language study group. Congratulations Andrew!



# Employability and Essential Skills for Community, Learning and Empowerment

Essential Skills for Community, Learning and Empowerment has been a busy program this year, with 17 learners participating in courses offered through Essential Skills development. Learners have participated in interview projects, digital skills development, career exploration, life skills programming, conflict resolution sessions, beginners drivers' prep, American Sign Language study groups and so much more. This program encompasses the many interests of ACALA learners and helps learners to reach their goals through individualized plans and actions. This year, the program partnered with the Department of Community services to work on media literacy skills through an interview skills program (see below). Learners put their communications skills to good use and built upon the newsletter project from the 2021/22 year to develop new ways of gathering and relaying information through a creative lens. Through the Career X program, learners had an opportunity to research career options and hear from community professionals in various occupations.

## ACALA Media



The ACALA Media program was a special skills program aimed at teaching interview and technology skills to 8 learners in partnership with the Department of Community Services. During this program, learners designed interview questions, learned videography and photography from shoot to edit. Participants completed several documentary projects including "In My Eyes," a documentary interview of ACALA learner, Colin Kennedy, as well as a boxing compilation of the Red Tribe Boxing Club. To view the documentaries completed this year, check out the ACALA Express section of our website: <https://www.acalalearn.ca/acala-express/>

# Age Friendly Communities

Crossing Paths was a project that combined the sharing of skills across generations to promote respect, reduce ageism (in both directions), and reduce social isolation by highlighting the value of generational skills. Through this program seniors (ages 65+) and students (ages 16-18), mentored each other in a group setting to teach skills to one another. ACALA partnered with Dr JH Gillis Regional High School to deliver this program with youth in the school. Seniors taught skills such as American Sign Language, Stained Glass demonstration, baking and cooking. Youth taught seniors digital skills including photo uploading, and social media. This program was supported by the Department of Seniors.

## Check Me Out

This year's lunch and learn series, supported by Literacy Nova Scotia, focused on first voice presentations of Antigonish Community members. These lunch and learns gave the ACALA and the Antigonish community opportunities to hear about the lived experiences of people in our community; to build empathy; and to learn about self empowerment and how our local organizations can work to support that empowerment.

## Family Book Club: STEM

Six families participated in the STEM Family Book Club this year. This year saw a continuation of the bi-monthly workshops during which families read children's book together. Families were sent home with a copy of the week's book along with take-home activities to complete during the interim week between workshops.

Each activity was designed so that caregivers and children would need to work together to read the story, read the directions for the activity and be able to follow the step by step instructions to create the STEM project. Caregivers and children shared their activity with the group and also completed group activities.



## Volunteer Appreciation

This year we had 23 volunteers working with over 35 learners on all academic subjects, Canadian Citizenship preparation, English conversation and special projects. In addition, 3 volunteers did special presentations for classes, one worked diligently with the media literacy group on videography and 7 volunteers offered childcare for learners to be able to attend classes. Service learning students from St Francis Xavier also helped with family programs, EAL tutoring and childcare for learners.

We would also like to extend a special thank you to the 9 active ACALA board members who work to ensure that our organization is meeting goals and serving the Antigonish community.

**Thank you to our community partners  
and contributors**

### Funding Partners

Nova Scotia Department of Seniors  
Department of Community Services  
Department of Labor, Skills and Immigration  
Literacy Nova Scotia  
Town of Antigonish  
County of Antigonish  
Antigonish Kinsmen Club  
Community Health Board

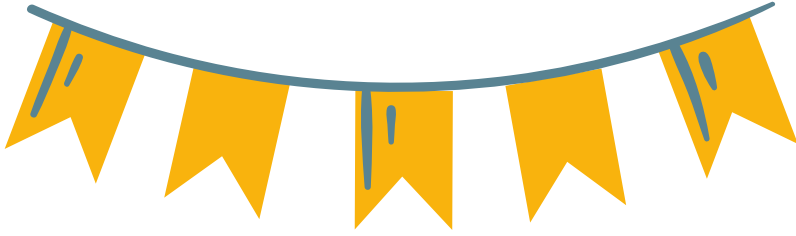
### Delivery Partners

Syrian Antigonish Families Embrace (SAFE)  
Antigonish Women's Resource Center and  
Sexual Assault Services Association  
YREACH Language Services  
Kid's First Family Resource Center  
Dr JH Gillis Regional High School  
The People's Place Library  
St Francis Xavier University: Service Learning  
Nova Scotia Works





# Learner Recognition



GED Graduate

Toni Carr

**Congratulations Toni on this huge achievement. You have worked so hard to get here!**



## Special Recognition

We would like to take this opportunity to recognize those learners who have taken the first steps to high school completion. The following learners have completed one or more GED test this year

**Alejandro Camejo:** Social Studies and Reading

**Luke MacKeigan:** Social Studies and Math

**Madison Farmer:** Language Arts and Writing

## Kingsley-Brown Legacy Writing Competition

The Kingsley-Brown Legacy is a new award given to learners who have shown dedication to literacy through the ACALA writing competition. The award honours adult literacy and education.

**Najwa AlHussein**  
**Stan Wright**

## Evelyn-Lindsay Bursary Award

This award is given to ACALA learners who have dedicated themselves to their personal learning goals over the course of the year:

**Colin Kennedy**  
**Luke MacKeigan**