



Seventh-day
Adventist Church
Newfoundland and Labrador



ADRA Community Projects in Newfoundland and Labrador



2022 Year-End Report

The Needs in Our Communities

When ADRA Canada invited local churches to develop community outreach projects in early 2022, six churches, one company of believers, and the Mission Office staff in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Newfoundland and Labrador, recognized many needs in their communities that could be addressed with the funding offered by ADRA (supplemented by additional funds from the SDA Church in NL) and the volunteer efforts of church members.

- **FEEDING THE HUNGRY:** Local churches recognized the growing issues of food insecurity in both urban and rural areas in Newfoundland, and the need to provide healthy food, support people in growing their own food, and supplement the food budget of families in need.
 - In response, community garden projects were either begun or further developed in St. John's, Bay Roberts, Marystown and Bonavista.
 - The existing food hamper/gift card project in St. John's was extended throughout 2022.
 - The churches in Botwood and Corner Brook made contributions to existing community food projects.
- **BUILDING COMMUNITY:** Psychosocial needs for community, recreation, and support for mental health issues were also identified as problems in our communities that some of our projects might address.
 - Some of the proposed projects encouraged gatherings for recreation and community-building, as in Marystown and Lethbridge churches.
 - Community garden projects also had a social aspect, encouraging people from children to senior citizens to collaborate and enjoy outdoor activities together.
 - The St. John's church has been offering the Dr. Nedley Depression and Anxiety Recovery Program for several years; the proposed ADRA project would sponsor enrollments for people unable to afford the program.
- **WORKING WITH PARTNERS:** Most of our Newfoundland SDA churches are very small, and may be unable to launch and support large programs to support homeless people, seniors, new Canadians, or other at-risk groups, yet we recognize those groups have unique needs. By partnering with existing community organizations such as homeless shelters, seniors' homes, food banks, etc, our small Adventist churches are able to make an impact.
 - The Corner Brook and Botwood churches made contributions to existing programs in their towns.
 - Conference office staff developed a project to send aid to homeless shelters in Labrador (an area of the province where we have no churches).
 - The small company of Adventists in Bonavista teamed up with a local Anglican church as well as two other Adventist churches to develop their community garden project.

These projects in which a local Adventist church teams up with other churches or community organizations also help to strengthen ties between our churches and other community members, and raise the profile of the Adventist church and of ADRA.

St. John's

The largest Seventh-day Adventist Church in Newfoundland and Labrador, St. John's church has over 150 members under the leadership of Pastor Jamie and Sarah Joseph. This church has been partnering with ADRA and Adventist Community Services to carry out a number of projects since Covid-19 forced the closure of the twice-monthly hot meal program that had been running up until 2020. With an initial grant from ADRA to address the Covid emergency situation and funding from ADRA's Eco-gardens project, two new projects were launched in St. John's in 2020: the food hamper/gift card program, and the Aldershot Community Garden. Both of these projects continued and grew through 2021 and into 2022.

Food Hampers and Gift Cards

While this program's initial focus in 2020 was on providing grocery hampers at a time when many people were unable to access stores due to Covid restrictions, over time the focus has shifted to offering grocery gift cards. **"Gift cards allow people the flexibility and dignity of making the food choices that are best for their family,"** says Community Services co-ordinator Trudy Morgan-Cole, adding the community members served include seniors and people with disabilities and conditions such as diabetes, as well as some new Canadians and international students – all of whom may not be best served by the contents of a typical food-bank hamper. However, food hampers are still provided for people who find it difficult to get to the grocery store and would prefer to have the food dropped off. Volunteer drivers from the church deliver gift cards and hampers to the homes of recipients.

ADRA funding this year allowed the St. John's church to deliver monthly \$50 grocery gift cards to over 60 households, and food hampers to between 5-8 more households, in the months of April, May, and June. Additional grants from United Way, Food First NL, and Community Food Centres Canada allowed the program to operate throughout the rest of the year.

Church member Margaret Moore, who volunteers to answer the phone for those requesting help, speaks of the response she gets from recipients. **"Although \$50 is not much in this time of rising food costs, over and over people on the phone tell me how grateful they are and what a difference this program makes to them."**



Aldershot Community Garden

The community garden project began in spring 2020 with a group of neighbours approaching the church about using the vacant land behind the church property for a garden space. With help from ADRA as well as business and government grants, the garden has now flourished for three seasons, providing 4x8 foot raised beds at no cost for any community members or church members who would like to make use of them.

New garden developments in 2022 included maintaining the 17 existing beds, building a weather-proof storage box, installing a composter and offering a composting workshop. With our ADRA funding supplemented by an additional grant from the province's ActiveNL program, further vacant land below the garden was developed into a walking trail to encourage outdoor activity for gardeners, dog-walkers, and others in the neighbourhood.

One new gardener who made use of the garden for the first time in 2022 is Sheila, a senior citizen who lives in a low-income apartment building near the church. This year she made use of the standing-height bed, which was built for seniors and others with mobility issues. Sheila says the standing bed is **“great for me because of my bad back,”** and the only complaint she had was that **“it wasn't big enough for all the vegetables I wanted to grow!”** Plans are in place to rebuild and enlarge that bed for the 2023 garden season, and perhaps add another if we have enough interest.



Sheila harvesting her garden bed



Volunteer Viviana leads a composting workshop

Dr. Nedley Depression and Recovery Seminar

The St. John's church has been offering these seminars for several years now, moving to an online delivery model via Zoom since 2020. A new addition this year was to use part of the church's ADRA funds to sponsor enrolment for people who could not afford the registration and materials fee.

Of the 22 people who attended this program in 2022, nine were lower-income people whose participation was made possible by the funding provided. Pastor Jamie Joseph, who leads the seminars, reported that all participants found the program helpful for their mental health, and that those who received the funding aid were grateful for the ability to participate.

Bay Roberts

Community Garden for Homeschool Co-operative

An existing program in Bay Roberts – a church of 42 members led by Pastor Fred and Frances Nahirny – is a homeschool co-operative serving several homeschooling families in the area. In 2022, the church received funding to start a community garden in conjunction with the homeschool project.

The community garden was planned as a way to provide fresh vegetables to lower income families, as well as teaching children how to produce their own food. The project met with some delays as land had to be cleared and soil brought in, but with garden boxes assembled, planting was able to begin.

This project was a learning experience for the children, who were taught how to make organic soil, how to compost, and the conditions needed for vegetable growth. Seaweed, manure, sawdust, peat, grass clippings, and leaves were collected to show how the best soil is made. The children had classes teaching them how to plant, weed, fertilize, and look after their garden box. They planted starter plants in the church basement which they transplanted into the garden beds.

Church member Jane Smallwood reports **“It was a lot of fun watching the children come to the garden and check to see how big their plants were getting. While harvesting the potatoes, one six-year-old became very excited to dig up eight potatoes where he had only planted one piece of a potato! After that he jumped right in and dug with enthusiasm.”**

At the end of the season a potluck meal was held at the church where people could make a recipe using their produce. The community garden also provided the church with good contacts in the community where they could identify needs; they now have a list of lower income and senior families that we are reaching out to with food hampers. Future plans include expanding the teaching element of the garden project from the children to adults in the community through healthy cooking classes. As Jane Smallwood says, **“Friendships are being formed and needs being met.”**

Marystown

Community Garden

Marystown Seventh-day Adventist Church, with a membership of 43 people led by Pastor Etienne and Kaitlynn Harushimana, began a community garden project in 2021 with ADRA support. In 2022, the garden was expanded by adding 19 raised beds for people with lower mobility, a fire pit, benches for a social area, and a 12x12 greenhouse. With these additions, the Marystown garden not only contributes to food security and healthy outdoor activity for people in the local area; it also provides opportunities for outdoor social interaction and community-building.

Resource Centre

While ADRA funding was used to maintain and expand the garden, additional elements of Marystown's project proposal were fulfilled with financial support from the SDA Church in NL, and by in-kind donations of goods and labour. Furthering the goal of making the church a more user-friendly resource space not just for members but for people in the wider community, this work included:

- Renovating a conference room where AA and other community groups are able to hold support meetings.
- Moving the pastor's office near an outside door to make the pastor more accessible to people coming in from outside.
- Sectioning off a portion of the fellowship hall with a wardrobe and collecting literature, clothing, and food items to have on hand. The goal is that when participants in community programs share struggles, the church has some resources available.
- Beginning renovation of the bathrooms to make them unisex, wheelchair accessible, and user-friendly for people with disabilities in all ways.

Pastor Etienne and Kaitlynn Harushimana emphasized that this was a team effort that would have been impossible without wonderful volunteers in both the church and community. This project has the overall goal of making the church and its community garden a welcoming space for the community.



Lethbridge

Community Centre Outreach

In the Lethbridge Seventh-day Adventist Church, a small church of 31 members led by Pastor David and Jeannette Boutcher, the Women's Ministry group proposed making some changes to their church to create a better space for community outreach and fellowship. The goal was to have regular social nights to which community members could also be invited. The space could also be used in future for other outreach programs such as cooking classes.

With the funding provided by ADRA and the SDA Church in NL, the Lethbridge church:

- Purchased two picnic tables and two benches.
- Erected a library, named Marion Pye Memorial Library in honour of a deceased church member.
- Purchased three dart boards and three electronic score boards.

The first social event, a darts night, was held on December 17, 2022. Twenty-four people – four of them community members in addition to the church members who attended – came out to play darts and enjoy good food and good company. **“The night was a success!” reports Pastor Dave Boutcher. “Many games of darts were finished with experienced and new players and lots of laughter.”** He points out that special thanks are due to Gerald Norris, Brian Campbell and Roy Cooper for their work on this project.



Bonavista

Community Garden

The Bonavista Company – led by Pastor David Boutcher of Lethbridge SDA Church – consists of just six church members. Despite the small size of this group, the Bonavista members committed to the project of creating a community garden.

Volunteer Wayne Hart went “above and beyond,” Pastor Boutcher says, in constructing and installing fifteen raised beds for vegetables. With the aid of friends from the All Saints Anglican church, and church members from Marystown and Lethbridge SDA churches, the Bonavista group fertilized and planted potatoes, carrots, turnip, cabbage, onion, beet, zucchini and cucumber.

They were joined for a harvest time celebration by members of All Saints Anglican church and a few other community friends. The abundance of vegetables was shared with 13 needy families, and the excess was donated to the Bonavista and area food bank. **“What a great time of fellowship and tremendous blessings with friends and community,” Pastor Dave Boutcher commented.**

The experience of the Bonavista company serves as a reminder that with a willing spirit and community partnerships, no group is too small to host an ADRA outreach project!



Botwood

Food Hamper Project

Botwood SDA Church, with a membership of 32 people led by Pastor Jonathan and Ana-Maria Gascoyne, operates a food hamper project to help address the persistent issue of food insecurity in Central Newfoundland. Botwood church used their ADRA grant money to deliver food hampers/meal kits to ten homes in their local area, nine times during the year. The majority of the recipients were senior citizens, with some people with disabilities and single-parent families also receiving much-needed food assistance. **“Countless individuals and families have indicated their appreciation of the food hamper during a financially challenging time in their lives,” reports Pastor Gascoyne.**

As always, projects such as these rely on the hard work of church volunteers. Mary and Lisa Burt, Delcie Hulsman, and Bruce and Verna Hemeon were all key volunteers for the food hamper project.

Partnerships

As a small congregation, Botwood SDA Church has sought to create effective partnerships with other community organizations in order to have a bigger impact than the church’s small size would suggest. In 2022, this took the form of the church making a donation from their ADRA grant towards the work of the Botwood Interfaith Goodwill Centre, an organization which operates a food bank and second-hand store with the support of many different churches and community groups in the Botwood area.

Special thanks is due to church volunteer Verna Hemeon for her work in making the Goodwill Centre donation a reality.



From the Botwood Interfaith Goodwill Centre Facebook page



Volunteers packing food hamper items

Corner Brook

Corner Brook, a church with a membership of 45 people under the able guidance of lay leaders Diane and Lawrence Burns, has faced a challenging year in 2022 with the sale of their church building and the need to find a new church home to worship in. Despite this, they have continued to be active in the community with their ADRA projects.

Like many small churches, the Corner Brook SDA congregation recognized that their impact could be greatest by partnering with other organizations in the community, as they have done in the past.

Food Aid

- The church made a financial contribution to Corner Brook Food Bank
- They also provided a grocery hamper for an international student.
- This student made their gratitude evident, saying, **“I thank you, ADRA. You did this for me. This is a big help to me especially at this time of the year [Christmas season]. You have blessed my heart and my belly.”**

Palliative Care Project

The Corner Brook church worked with the Western Memorial Hospital Palliative Care project to provide healthy snacks and other comfort items for families of patients in palliative care.

- The secretary on the unit sent a thank-you note with a photo, saying **“A huge thanks from the bottom of our hearts. Here’s the picture for you. Of course, everything isn’t in the picture, we would need a banquet table!”**
- She also mentioned that the unit is operating at capacity. Many family members come from out of town and the new building only has a vending machine with limited choices. At this point there are no nearby amenities. The secretary reported going to the Palliative Care kitchen area and seeing folks sitting around the table enjoying some herbal tea, crackers, and a bowl of clementines from the items donated by the church.



Joy Connors of the Food Bank Network (left) receives donation cheque from Diane Burns, Ministry Coordinator, Corner Brook Church



Palliative Care Unit staff with some of the items donated by the Corner Brook church

Women's Shelter

The Corner Brook church also used ADRA funds to make a financial contribution to Willow House Women's Shelter, a shelter for women and children experiencing domestic violence. The shelter sent a note in response: **"We want you to know how much we appreciate the support and generous donations given to Willow House over the years. The funding makes it possible to assist women, single moms and their children who are in very challenging circumstances."**

Labrador Outreach

(Mission Office Project)

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Newfoundland and Labrador has never had a consistent church presence in Labrador, a vast territory with a population of about 27,000 people – although our Adventist radio network, Lighthouse FM, does have stations in Labrador's two largest population centres.

The SDA Church in NL was eager to partner with ADRA for a project that would benefit homeless people in Labrador, but with no church members in the area, this was a challenge. After multiple telephone calls with a nurse at the Nain Hospital, and with assistance from the Mayor's office, and email communication with the emergency shelter, the Mission Staff over 1000 kms away in Mount Pearl were able to fill 116 bags of personal hygiene items. These were intended for distribution to residents of the Nain Men's Emergency Shelter, and Libra House in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

Mission office and Lighthouse VOAR-FM staff purchased and solicited donations of items for the bags and assembled them with the help of a team of volunteers. When the cost of shipping the bags to Nain and Happy Valley-Goose Bay proved prohibitive, a contact of the Mayor's Office at the Nunatsiavut Government arranged transportation to her office where the bags were distributed to the Emergency Shelters in Nain and HV-GB.

This project is an inspiring example of how to make a difference in a community even where no Adventist church is located.



Conclusion

The 2022 community outreach projects supported by ADRA and the SDA Church in Newfoundland and Labrador remind us that:

- No congregation is too small to make an impact in their community.
- Volunteer involvement is essential to the success of projects large and small.
- Partnering with other community groups and churches can increase the effectiveness and reach of a project.
- Though the problems facing our communities are significant, we can all make a difference.

Through these ADRA- and conference-funded projects, the Seventh-day Adventist churches in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador are carrying out our divinely appointed mission to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world. We are excited about what God has done through these projects in 2022 and looking forward to having an even greater impact in 2023.