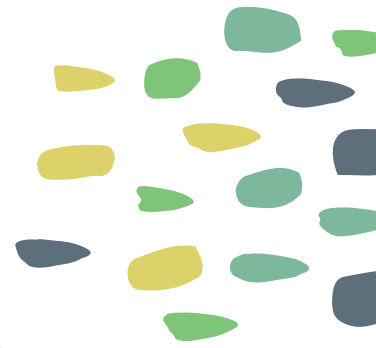


HomeBridge Youth Society

ANNUAL REPORT 2026



Fiscal Year April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026



HomeBridge

Vision

All youth and their families living in health, safety and harmony



MESSAGE FROM THE **BOARD CHAIR**

As I write my final report as Board Chair, I am struck by how quickly my nine years with HomeBridge Youth Society have passed. Although there have been many changes during my time on the board, one constant has remained: my admiration of the inspiring and essential work this organization does to support vulnerable youth across our province.

Over the years, HomeBridge has navigated a global pandemic, unprecedented staffing turnover, program closures and reopenings, and funding uncertainty. Through it all, our dedicated employees have remained steadfast in their commitment to providing the highest quality care and support to youth in care. I'm honoured to be connected to HomeBridge and to the meaningful work carried out every day within this community.

As a volunteer governance Board, we have strived to support the HomeBridge mission in thoughtful and impactful ways. This year, our efforts included conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the Executive Director, undertaking a Board self-assessment, and continuing our governance development with a Harvard-trained governance expert. We also strengthened our audit and oversight practices, including enhancements to our risk management processes, advanced Board recruitment efforts, and planned for Board Chair succession.

In addition, we prioritized strengthening relationships with the Minister and funding partners at the Department of Opportunities and Social Development. Board members also contributed their expertise through a review of management culture and an ongoing assessment of the organization's Framework of Practice. It remains a privilege to serve alongside such dedicated professionals who generously give their time, insight, and leadership in service of HomeBridge's mission.

Despite ongoing economic pressures, we remain focused on the opportunities ahead and the continued evolution of our services to meet the changing needs of youth in care. As a Board, we have the utmost confidence in the leadership team and staff, and in their unwavering commitment to HomeBridge's vision: that all youth and their families live in health, safety, and harmony. This commitment to excellence in care is matched by strong financial stewardship and a culture of accountability and transparency.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to our donors and community partners whose support makes this work possible. We are especially grateful to our cornerstone partners, the Departments of Education and Opportunities and Social Development, the IWK Health Centre, and St. Paul's Home Board as well as our many corporate and community donors. Your ongoing commitment and trust enable HomeBridge to continue making a meaningful difference in the lives of youth and families.

As I step down from my role as Board Chair, I am proud and grateful. It has been a privilege to serve alongside such dedicated colleagues and to support an organization that has such a profound impact on the lives of young people in this province. I leave with full confidence in the Board's continued leadership and in the strength and compassion of the HomeBridge team. I look forward to watching the organization continue to grow, adapt, and thrive in the years ahead. That is what I admire the most of HomeBridge. Whatever obstacles they encounter, they will always navigate those, unwavering in their mission of providing care to vulnerable youth.

Sincerely,

Jim Perrin,
Board Chair

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AS A BOARD, WE HAVE THE UTMOST CONFIDENCE IN THE LEADERSHIP TEAM AND STAFF, AND IN THEIR UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO HOMEBRIDGE'S VISION: THAT ALL YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES LIVE IN HEALTH, SAFETY, AND HARMONY.





HOMEBRIDGE YOUTH SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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J.D. Irving Limited



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Occupational Therapist and
Clinical Team Leader,
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Managing Lawyer,
Nova Scotia Legal Aid Youth Office



Dr. Lourdes Soto-Moreno, MD,
Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist,
IWK Health Centre



HomeBridge

2025 - 2026



We acknowledge we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) people first signed with the British Crown in 1725.





MESSAGE FROM THE **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

I have come to expect that each year brings both challenges and moments of hope. This past year began on a particularly high note with the reopening of Hawthorne House. Labour shortages affecting this sector have made it very difficult to recruit qualified caregivers. As such, we were especially pleased to reach our staffing targets last April and move forward with reopening, supported by an exceptional team of practitioners. Across the HomeBridge community, we are proud to employ highly skilled professionals who consistently deliver outstanding service outcomes within our field.

In 2025, a significant number of our employees presented at the Provincial Child & Youth Care Conference, and several have since been invited to share their expertise again at this year's World Conference. We also recognize that our many partnerships play a vital role in the high quality of services we are privileged to provide to youth and their families.

One of the challenges we have been navigating this past year is the planned widening of the Robie Street corridor to accommodate increased transit capacity. Since 1992, our cornerstone partner, St. Paul's Home Board, has generously allowed us to operate a program for six young people at their Robie Street location. In response to the road expansion, they have chosen to preserve the property by relocating the building further back from the street. This decision ensures that HomeBridge can continue delivering services from this important location. We are confident that, once completed, the renewed property and facility will be better than ever, allowing us to continue the exceptional work carried out at Sullivan House.

Late in 2025, we learned that our primary funder will be introducing a new equitable funding structure in 2026. We are working closely with representatives from the Department of Opportunities and Social Development to assess our service outputs and outcomes, and to better understand the potential impacts of this new model on our services. We remain confident that, through collaboration, we will establish a clear and effective path forward that supports shared expectations around safety, responsiveness and a continued high quality of care for all youth we serve.

Service innovation and growth were more measured this past year. As anticipated, it was a year of rebuilding following significant staff turnover the previous year. We implemented substantial organization-wide training initiatives to ensure our newest employees are well equipped to succeed in their roles. This includes our comprehensive New Employee Training program, which all practitioners are required to complete. We are pleased that this program will be showcased at the upcoming World Child & Youth Care Conference.

Additionally, several policy enhancements introduced by the Department of Opportunities and Social Development have been advanced this year. HomeBridge has been actively engaged in broader committee work to support seamless integration of these changes into our operations. These include improvements in care navigation and strengthened approaches to reducing the negative impacts of multiple placement transitions for youth in care.

Looking ahead, we recognize there will be challenges associated with both the new funding model and the relocation of the Sullivan House program. However, these challenges also present meaningful opportunities to strengthen clarity, stability, and long-term sustainability. Over the past 47 years, HomeBridge has not only endured but has grown, evolved, and thrived. We have overcome setbacks and earned recognition as a highly respected service provider, both locally and internationally, with our standards of practice and effectiveness documented by industry experts.

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Over the past 47 years, HomeBridge has not only endured but has grown, evolved, and thrived.

At the heart of this excellence are HomeBridge employees. Every individual and every role contributes meaningfully to the quality of care we are privileged to provide to youth and families. Supporting this work are our valued cornerstone partners, including the Departments of Opportunities and Social Development and Education, as well as the ongoing amazing support of the IWK health Centre and St. Paul's Home Board. This collective effort is further strengthened by the unwavering dedication and leadership of the HomeBridge Board of Directors.

Finally, we are continually reminded that the most meaningful aspect of our work comes from the young people themselves. It is a profound honour to walk alongside them as they share their experiences, resilience, challenges, and successes. Their trust and courage inspire our shared mission: to ensure that all youth and their families have the opportunity to live in health, safety, and harmony.

With appreciation and hope for the year ahead,

Ernie Hilton, MSc. CYCA
Executive Director





MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF YOUTH CARE SERVICES

I began writing this report on the one-year anniversary of the re-opening of Hawthorne House. Reflecting back over the year, I am very proud of the work we have done to remain committed to delivering trauma informed, strength-based care to the young people who live in the HomeBridge community, all while continuing to adapt to the broader demands upon the service system. We are truly privileged to be witness to the level of resilience and growth the young people have shown while in our care. Our priorities remain on delivering the highest quality of care possible to the young people we serve.

Over the last year, one of our most significant accomplishments was re-opening Hawthorne House which was temporarily closed in December 2023 due to insufficient staffing levels. The program was opened as our first co-ed program, and provides a temporary home to six young people. From that program over the past year we had two young people move back with their families and one move on to independent living. Notably, Youth Care Workers at Hawthorne House continue to receive calls from former youth who wish to share positive memories of their time in the program; an encouraging reflection of the impact of this work.

More broadly, over the past fiscal year we provided placement services to 80 young people from across Nova Scotia. 42 of those young people came from within the central region, and 58 came from other areas of the province. These placements ranged from short-term, supportive stays of one or two nights to longer-term care, where young people were supported over several years in building stability, developing life skills, and working toward their personal goals.

Another key accomplishment was our continued focus on Youth Care Worker recruitment and retention. This included continuing presentations to Child and Youth Care classes in both colleges and universities, as well as ongoing developmental training from presenters from across the globe. We have also made some significant investments in employee training including, Indigenous Awareness training, once again virtual training on relational youth care practice by Dr. John Digney in Ireland, as well as beginning a regular series of lunch and learns. These lunch and learns have provided employee-focused learning opportunities on a range of topics while fostering connection over a meal.

In addition, we expanded our internal training capacity by acquiring new certified trainers in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NVCI), and First Aid. Recognizing the growing number of new Youth Care Workers joining HomeBridge, we also developed a HomeBridge-specific onboarding program to support their transition into the organization. All of these initiatives have been successfully integrated into our annual training schedule.

As a result of these efforts, our Youth Care Worker turnover rate decreased by 20% over the past fiscal year. With reduced turnover, we were able to place increased emphasis on strengthening our New Employee Training Program, facilitated by Supervisors. This enhanced focus on onboarding and skill development has contributed to greater stability and continuity across our programs, enabling more consistent relationships between Youth Care Workers and young people, and fostering a stronger sense of predictability in daily operations.

The collective impact of these efforts is evident in the experiences of the young people we serve. It can be seen in the journeys of our young people as they transition to family homes, to independence, as they reconnect with family, as they receive that final report card they've worked so hard on, and as they recognize that they matter. The context may change but the care and relationship does not stop at the end of their placement.

Caroline Moore, MSc CYCS
Director of Youth Care Services

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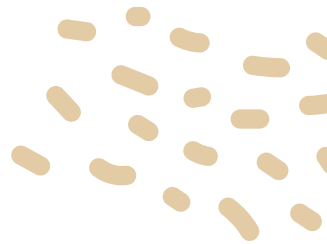
We are truly privileged to be witness to the level of resilience and growth the young people have shown while in our care.



OUR MANDATE

HomeBridge Youth Society is dedicated to promoting the safety, well-being, and healthy development of children, youth, and families across Nova Scotia. We are guided by our organizational ideology that is framed by the following:

1. HomeBridge Youth Society Vision Statement
2. HomeBridge Youth Society Mission Statement
3. HomeBridge Youth Society Organizational Themes
4. Circle of Courage (adopted from the work of Brendtro, Brokenleg & van Bockern, 2002)
5. Relational Child & Youth Care Practice (25 Characteristics)
6. Trauma Informed Theory
7. Supervision: A Developmental Approach
8. HomeBridge Youth Society Code of Professional Conduct



Through these principles we provide supportive, trauma-informed, and developmentally appropriate services designed to strengthen protective factors, foster resilience, and enhance pro-social life opportunities for young people and hopefully create an opportunity for family reunification.

Funded by the Department of Opportunities and Social Development, and in aligning with the Department's Child and Family Wellbeing Practice Framework, we work collaboratively with government partners, caregivers, schools, and community agencies to deliver high-quality child and youth care programs that support socially responsive care which includes recognizing the harmful impacts of the following:

- 🕒 Poverty
- 🕒 Racism and discrimination
- 🕒 Trauma and community violence
- 🕒 Housing and food insecurity

Informed by the National Outcome Matrix which includes the four domains; Safety, Well being, Permanency Planning and Family and Community Support

(Trocmé et. al. 2009 [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://cwrp.ca/sites/default/files/publications/2009%20NOM.pdf](https://cwrp.ca/sites/default/files/publications/2009%20NOM.pdf))

We are committed to:

- 🕒 Ensuring the safety and protection of children and youth;
- 🕒 Promoting positive development, healing, and empowerment;
- 🕒 Supporting families and communities in meeting the needs of young people;
- 🕒 Providing culturally responsive and inclusive care that respects individual identities, backgrounds, and experiences;
- 🕒 Offering evidence-informed programming that builds life skills, strengthens relationships, and supports long-term well-being;
- 🕒 Upholding accountability, transparency, and high professional standards in all service delivery.

Through these efforts, our mandate is to help children and youth thrive, foster strong and supportive families, and contribute to healthier, more resilient Nova Scotian communities.





OUR PROGRAMS

HAWTHORNE HOUSE



Part of the HomeBridge Community since 1979
Owned by HomeBridge Youth Society
Operating Costs Covered by the
Department of Opportunities and Social Development

MANDATE

Hawthorne House is located in Dartmouth and focuses on providing care for six youth 12 - 18 years of age.



JUBIEN HOUSE



Part of the HomeBridge Community since 1982
Owned by St. Paul's Home Board
Operating Costs Covered by the
Department of Opportunities and Social Development

MANDATE

Jubien House is located in Halifax and focuses on providing care for six youth 12 - 18 years of age.



SULLIVAN HOUSE



Part of the HomeBridge Community since 1993
Owned by St. Paul's Home Board
Operating Costs Covered by the
Department of Opportunities and Social Development

MANDATE

Sullivan House is located in Halifax and focuses on providing care for six youth 12 years of age and over, who identify as female.



Youth Care Workers help me by giving me the hard truth

-HomeBridge Youth



REIGH ALLEN CENTRE



Part of the HomeBridge Community since 1999
Owned by the Department of Transportation
and Infrastructure Renewal
Operating Costs Covered by the
Department of Opportunities and Social Development



MANDATE

The Reigh Allen Centre is located in Dartmouth and is licensed as an emergency placement and crisis stabilization center. It focuses on providing care for up to 14 youth 12 - 18 years of age who are in need of a stabilization, respite, or short-term placement. The center utilizes an inter-disciplinary approach to create opportunities for cognitive behavioral changes within a safe environment allowing young people to experience themselves differently.

MAPLES UNIT



Part of the HomeBridge Community since 2009
Located in the Reigh Allen Centre
Operating Costs Covered by the
Department of Opportunities and Social Development



MANDATE

A separate two-bed unit designed to focus on providing care for youth with extraordinary needs that cannot be met in a standard group-care setting.

COGSWELL HOUSE



Part of the HomeBridge Community since 2003
Owned by St. Paul's Home Board
Operating Costs Covered by the
Department of Opportunities and Social Development



MANDATE

Cogswell House is located in Middle Sackville and focuses on providing care for four youth 12 - 18 years of age.

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They feel more like a family than staff

-HomeBridge Youth



BRIDGES FOR LEARNING



BRIDGES FOR LEARNING (BFL) PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Bridges for Learning (BFL) program remains an essential support for youth in the care of the Minister, offering tailored educational services alongside emotional and social development opportunities. Since its inception in 2005, the program has served more than 600 young people who encounter considerable barriers within conventional school environments. BFL is dedicated to fostering a secure, inclusive setting where students can achieve academic progress while also developing emotionally and socially.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS AND ENROLLMENT TRENDS

In the 2025–2026 academic year, the program received 30 applications and 28 young people were admitted to the BFL program. A notable number of students attended the classroom consistently and successfully earned academic credits. There was a modest rise in high school-aged participants compared to junior high students, suggesting that the previous academic year's higher proportion of junior high students was an exception rather than an ongoing trend.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND PROGRAMMING

BFL continues to emphasize individualized learning by designing and implementing education plans that respond to each student's unique strengths, needs, and areas for growth. High school students complete courses through correspondence programs, supported by structured guidance, consistent monitoring, and individualized assistance from the BFL team to promote progress and successful completion. Junior high students are supported with coursework provided by their community schools, often accessed through digital platforms such as Google Classroom, with ongoing assistance from the team to ensure comprehension, engagement, and continuity of learning.

In addition to the core academic programming, Bridges for Learning team members incorporate a variety of interactive educational platforms, including Blookey, IXL, and Prodigy, to enhance student engagement and motivation. These tools support skill development across subject areas, reinforce learning in an accessible format, and provide opportunities for immediate feedback and progress tracking. The use of these platforms also contributes to relationship building, as the BFL team intentionally engage alongside the students in these activities, fostering connection, trust, and a more positive and supportive learning environment.

Beyond academics, BFL integrates vocational, social and emotional learning into daily practice, recognizing its importance in overall student success. Students are supported in developing skills such as employability skills, emotional regulation, conflict management, and informed decision making. These competencies contribute not only to personal development but also support credit achievement in courses such as Learning Strategies.

This year, our program provided opportunities for students to earn credits in all junior high subjects in collaboration with the student's community school and the following credits in high school:

- + English 10
- + PAL 11
- + Math Essentials 10
- + Math at Work 10
- + Mi'kmaw Studies 11
- + Life 11
- + Math Essentials 11
- + Construction Tech 10
- + Learning Strategies 10

As some students continue in the program for multiple years, expanding course options remains a key focus to support progress toward course credit attainment, employment pathways, and post-secondary goals.

THE BRIDGES FOR LEARNING TEAM



BridgesforLearning

HOLISTIC STUDENT SUPPORTS

Establishing an environment where students feel respected and included is central to the BFL team approach. The program prioritizes building a culture grounded in trust, inclusivity, and mutual respect by recognizing each student's unique experiences and strengths. The team fosters meaningful relationships through active listening, open communication, and opportunities for student voice and participation. When students feel acknowledged and valued, they are more likely to engage positively in their learning and personal growth.

BFL's approach extends beyond academics, incorporating a range of supports designed to address the whole student. Supports of this nature include the "Tony Talk" roundtable, facilitated by Cultural Program Advisor, Tony Smith, which continues to be an important element of the program. During the past academic year, the roundtable was further strengthened through the addition of Cheyenne Jones as co-facilitator. Cheyenne brings valuable lived experience as a survivor of sexual abuse, exploitation, and complex trauma, and her perspective contributes meaningfully to messages of resilience and healing. This forum offers students a safe and supportive environment to engage in open dialogue, share their experiences, and deepen cultural understanding. It also promotes student voice while fostering respect, empathy, and a sense of community.

RECREATION THERAPY

Recreation Therapy also continues to play an important role in supporting student engagement and wellbeing. For young people who have experienced trauma or face mental health and behavioural challenges, structured recreational activities provide constructive outlets for expression and coping. These experiences help students regulate emotions and re-engage with their academic work more effectively.

The Recreation Therapist also facilitated partnerships with the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic and the Youth Development Initiative to deliver the Safe Spaces and Relationship Program. This boatbuilding initiative provided students with a collaborative, hands-on learning experience. Through the program, students developed practical skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, and time management, while also building confidence and a sense of connection. The shared experience of working toward a common goal strengthened relationships and reinforced a sense of belonging within the learning environment.

EXPRESSIONS PROGRAM OF THE ARTS

The Expressions Program continues to offer weekly opportunities for students to engage in music and visual arts. Participation remained strong, with many students using creative activities as a means of self expression and emotional processing. These experiences provide both therapeutic benefits and a platform for students to share their perspectives in meaningful ways.





BRIDGES FOR LEARNING CONTINUED

FUNDING AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

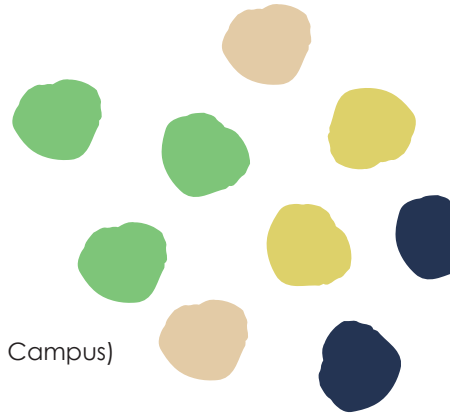
Since 2006, the Departments of Education and Opportunities and Social Development have provided ongoing funding for the Bridges for Learning program, enabling HomeBridge to deliver responsive and high quality educational programming to young people who face significant barriers to succeeding in mainstream school. This sustained partnership has been instrumental in supporting student success and program growth.

Supporting youth-in-care as they pursue their education is both a significant responsibility and a privilege. Despite facing complex and often difficult circumstances, BFL students consistently demonstrate resilience, perseverance, and determination. Success within the program is reflected not only in academic achievements but also in the personal growth and expanded opportunities experienced by each student.

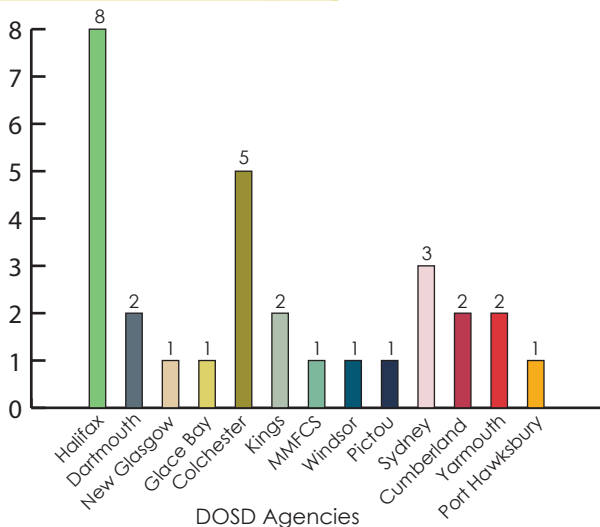
The Bridges for Learning team remains dedicated to supporting these young people, ensuring they have access to the resources, relationships, and encouragement needed to succeed.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS CONNECTED TO BRIDGES FOR LEARNING IN 2025 – 2026:

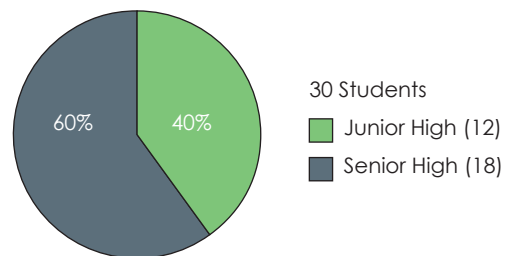
- ✦ Citadel High School
- ✦ Sydney Academy
- ✦ Millwood High
- ✦ Bicentennial School
- ✦ J.L. Ilsley
- ✦ Pictou Academy
- ✦ Ross Road School
- ✦ Dartmouth South Academy
- ✦ New Ross Consolidated
- ✦ Dartmouth High
- ✦ Lockview High
- ✦ Northumberland Regional High School
- ✦ St Agnes Junior High
- ✦ Sackville Heights Junior High
- ✦ Horton High School
- ✦ Cobequid Education Centre
- ✦ Bedford Forsythe Education Centre (Dartmouth Campus)



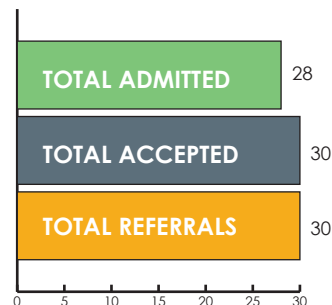
Referrals: August 2025 - June 2026



BFL Applicants from Junior High and Senior High School August 2025 - June 2026



BFL Referrals/ Accepted/ Admitted August 2025- June 2026





IN THE COMMUNITY

HomeBridge's youth caring programs provide a safe, stable, and supportive home for vulnerable youth in Nova Scotia; young people who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to live with their families at this time. We recognize that having a youth care program in your neighbourhood may come with questions or adjustments, and we are truly grateful for the kindness and openness many so many of our community members have shown.

Placing youth care programs within typical residential neighbourhoods is a deliberate and important choice. Living in a community setting helps the young people experience a sense of normalcy, belonging, and connection, things that are essential for healthy development and healing. Being part of a neighbourhood allows them to learn everyday life skills, build positive relationships, and feel included rather than isolated or "set apart." These experiences play a critical role in helping youth build confidence, resilience, and hope for their future.

Our team is committed to being respectful neighbours and responsible community members. Our Youth Care Teams are on site 24/7 to support the young people and ensure the program is managed. We take pride in fostering a safe, therapeutic, and positive environment, for both the young people and our neighbours.

Each year, we produce a Report to the Community, which is hand-delivered to neighbors surrounding our programs to keep them informed about developments within the HomeBridge Community. The purpose of this report is to foster open communication. This initiative is a key part of our neighborhood relations strategy, as we truly value the opportunity to connect with community members and hear their feedback. The report includes information about our programs and the work we do with vulnerable youth. This process has been invaluable, allowing us to engage in meaningful conversations and collaborate in building stronger communities that support all their members.

**I would like the neighbours to know that kids in care are not bad.
We just need people to love us.**

-Sullivan House Youth

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EXPRESSIONS PROGRAM OF THE ARTS

FINDING LIGHT, EXPRESSIONS FOR RESILIENCE, HOPE & HEALING

Youth-in-care have often experienced significant trauma, such as abuse, neglect, loss, and abandonment. This, along with the instability of being removed from their families and moved through multiple placements, can disrupt healthy development, attachment, and self-esteem. Resilience and hope are critical for these vulnerable youth because they directly influence a young person's ability to heal from trauma, overcome adversity, and build a meaningful future despite the challenges they've faced.

Many young people who struggle to articulate their experiences or trust adults, shy away from traditional therapy. Art and Music Therapy, however, provide powerful, non-verbal avenues for expression, reflection, and emotional regulation. Through these sessions our skilled facilitators create safe, creative environments where youth can externalize difficult emotions, explore identity, and process trauma at their own pace. These expressive modalities tap into the innate human drive to create and connect, which is particularly valuable for young people who have felt voiceless or powerless. Through artistic exploration, youth gain agency over their stories, develop self-awareness, and begin to reframe their sense of self in more positive, hopeful terms.

Participation in therapeutic art and music programs also strengthens resilience. As youth develop new creative skills and witness their growth, they build confidence and a sense of mastery. Engaging in creative practices supports emotional regulation, enhances problem-solving abilities, and fosters persistence in the face of challenge, all core components of resilience.

Moreover, these therapeutic programs nurture hope by reconnecting the young people with joy, beauty, and meaning. The therapeutic relationship with a trained facilitator also fosters healthy, trusting connections, and reinforcing the idea that relationships can be safe and supportive. Group-based programs encourage peer connection and reduce isolation, allowing the young people to feel seen and valued within a community.

Basically, participation in the Expressions Program of the Arts creates an essential bridge between pain and healing. It supports participants in rebuilding their inner strength, developing a hopeful vision for their future, and laying the foundation for long-term emotional well-being and personal growth. For all of these reasons, the theme of this year's program was **"Finding Light, Expressions for Resilience, Hope & Healing"**.

During Music Therapy this year there were many special moments. A keyboard was requested for Sullivan House to support a young person's desire to learn to play. During her lessons she often sits at the piano and says how much joy it brings her. Another young person was excited to have the Music Therapists support their application to Musical Theatre at Dalhousie University and yet another had a guitar purchased for them to be used as a positive outlet and self-expressions.

THE EXPRESSIONS PROGRAM OF THE ARTS TEAM



Many group activities also took place from "what's on your playlist?" to music themed mindfulness colouring and many singalongs. A simple game of "what's on your play list?" is a great icebreaker and connection piece for a group that is hesitant to participate. Music is personal, but also universal. Sharing songs helps people learn about each other's tastes, moods, and identities in a low-pressure way that is simply fun. Mindful colouring is also a great activity for reluctant participants. It reduces stress and anxiety by encouraging a meditative state that lowers heart rate and quiets the mind, offering an accessible, low-stakes creative outlet that boosts focus, promotes relaxation and helps to anchor your thoughts in the present moment.

Every year we host a Holiday Coffee House to kick off the festive season and, more importantly, give the young people an opportunity to showcase the talents they discover through Expressions. Initially, only one young person volunteered to perform this December. When the time came, they were very nervous so a Youth Care Worker and several other youth took the stage with them. This was a beautiful showing of support and great role modeling by the Youth Care Worker who had never sung publically before. They did several group performances and the audience loved it.

This festive event also includes a craft sale, put on by the young artists who participate in the Expressions Program of the Arts. Our Art Instructor said one of the highlights of her year was watching the young people work with such pride and maturity to make ornaments, cards and decorations to sell. They were very excited about this opportunity and put a lot of thought and effort into their work.

Throughout the year, they worked on a variety of activities in their art sessions, but one of the most popular was experimenting with resin. They had endless fun making keychains and coasters with glitter, beads and dried flowers. The young people loved experimenting with this technique, but it also made them focus on very precise, step by step instructions which helps to build important life-skills.

They also worked with clay, painted and had fun with mixed media activities, such as layering pastels with India ink and paint markers to create fun designs. Even young people who don't typically engage enjoyed the playful style of adding ink to wet paper and watching designs and colours develop. Another technique that seemed to draw in reluctant participants was simply setting out a bin filled with various art materials, craft supplies, fun and colourful little bits and bobs. The young people loved digging through the supplies and seeing what was there to work with. Even if no art project came out of it, they often engaged in conversations, got curious and had fun exploring the materials.

Sessions run from September through June throughout the entire HomeBridge Community, including our on-site school program, Bridges for Learning. Art and Music sessions take place twice weekly, rotating through all programs and photography sessions take place with youth who are interested on a one-on-one basis. Youth who show a particular interest in honing their skills also have the option to move on to Master Classes, which are one-on-one, focused sessions with their chosen facilitator. A number of young people took advantage of this opportunity this year to work on learning an instrument or improving their art skills.

Implementing these types of programs and activities in a coordinated and supportive environment can effectively build protective factors for vulnerable youth, strengthen their resilience, and empower them to overcome adversity, heal and thrive. Thank you to the incredible donors that fund this meaningful program. Together we are definitely making a difference. This year's donors are listed below.



**HALIFAX YOUTH
Foundation**

**St. Andrews
Presbyterian Church**



**DOMUS
REALTY**

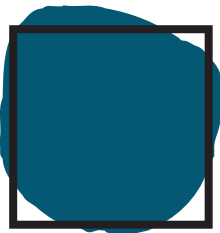
**Doane
Grant Thornton**

**Kiwanis Club
of Dartmouth**



**Canadian Progress Club
HALIFAX CITADEL**





RECREATION THERAPY

A Letter from the Recreation Therapist

It has been an honor this year to use Recreation Therapy as a pathway for connection, confidence-building, and growth among the young people in the HomeBridge Community. What stands out to me most is the individuality each youth brings to our time together — their talents, curiosity, goals, and the unique ways they engage with the world around them. It has been incredibly rewarding to support them as they discovered new passions, strengthened existing strengths, and found new ways to connect with their communities.

Across the year, these experiences took many forms: creative expression, hands-on woodworking, participation in sports, outdoor adventures, and involvement in community initiatives. Within each of these moments, the young people demonstrated resilience, willingness to take healthy risks, and genuine pride in what they achieved. Some of the most powerful outcomes came not only from the activities themselves, but from the confidence, hope, self-discovery, and sense of belonging that grew alongside them.

The moments of growth and joy we witnessed this year would not be possible without the team's incredible commitment to the young people we serve. I remain sincerely thankful for the dedication of the HomeBridge team, the courage and enthusiasm shown by the young people we support, and the generosity of our community partners who help make these opportunities possible. Together, we continue to create spaces where youth can explore who they are, build meaningful connections, and move forward with confidence. I am excited for the year ahead and the many opportunities it will bring for continued growth, discovery, and connection.

Rob Grandy, CTRS

Over the past year, it has been rewarding to have the opportunity to build connections with the young people who live in the HomeBridge Community through the following activities:

- Rock Climbing
- Bouldering
- Sailing
- Lake Fishing
- Deep Sea Fishing
- Bicycling
- Pottery Painting
- Ice Cream on the Boardwalk
- Swimming
- Beach Days
- Atlantic Splash Adventure
- On-Tree
- Woodworking
- Activate Halifax
- Splashifax
- Magic Mountain
- Shubenacadie Wildlife Park
- Tidal Bore Rafting
- Escape Rooms
- Lunch and Dinner Outings
- Signing up for Library cards, and using the Library independently
- Learning to safely use Gym equipment, then going to the Gym independently
- Splatter Paint Room
- Nature Photography
- Hatfield Farm
- Baseball
- Soccer
- Basketball
- Harbour Hopper Tours
- Sightseeing in Lunenburg
- Steele Wheels Auto Museum
- Snowboarding
- Peggy's Cove
- Visiting the Black Cultural Centre
- Shopping for Art Supplies
- Employability Skills and Certifications
- Bike Repair
- Playdium
- Dog Walking
- Collecting Sea Glass



SUMMER RECREATION

We feel incredibly fortunate to have had the support of a senior Youth Care Worker in the role of Recreation Programmer throughout the summer; his expertise in program planning and youth engagement significantly bolstered the impact of the summer recreation program. The youth took a hands-on role in brainstorming ideas to make the most out of their summer. Their ideas ranged from relaxing strolls along the Eastern Passage boardwalk, to big road trips to Magic Mountain. Seeing the young people try new things, build confidence, and learn valuable lessons about themselves through recreation has been especially meaningful.

During the summer break, HomeBridge youth participated in **235** hours of recreation activities through the summer recreation program. In addition to this direct programming, several youth were engaged in community sport leagues including Suburban FC, IHSC Soccer Club, and the Dartmouth District Minor Baseball Association.

Youth Care Teams across all of the programs demonstrated exceptional creativity and support, fostering meaningful engagement and helping the young people truly make the most of their summer. The youth are already making big plans for next summer's adventures!

YOUTH FARMER'S MARKET

This year's Youth Farmer's Market stood out as an especially memorable part of the Summer Recreation Program. The youth demonstrated impressive teamwork, initiative, and entrepreneurial growth. Their efforts included participating in practice job interviews, gathering fresh produce in the valley, and coordinating a successful public market featuring fruits and vegetables, baked goods, and youth-created artwork.

The success of this program was made possible through the generous support of the Youth Development Initiative and the dedicated planning and facilitation of our Recreation Therapist, Program Activity Coordinator, and Youth Care Workers.

COLLABORATION WITH DR. WONG

Supporting young people in accessing the healthcare they need often requires a flexible, relationship-based approach. Over the past year, we saw the meaningful impact of integrating Recreation Therapy alongside the exceptional care provided by IWK Pediatrician, Dr. Tania Wong on-site at the Reigh Allen Centre.

For many of the young people we serve, pediatric appointments can feel overwhelming due to fear, previous negative experiences with healthcare systems, or challenges communicating their health concerns. By blending principles of relational child and youth care, recreation therapy, and pediatric medicine, we were able to create a more supportive and approachable experience.

A key part of this approach involved integrating meaningful recreation-based experiences into what might otherwise feel like difficult appointments. This provided a familiar and trusted presence that helped increase feelings of safety, reduced anxiety, and supported engagement with care. This relationship-centred approach was especially valuable in helping youth successfully receive important healthcare interventions, including their meningococcal vaccinations. I feel incredibly honoured to have received the Nova Scotia Therapeutic Recreation Association's 2025 Trailblazer Award for our work integrating recreation therapy into pediatric medicine practice.



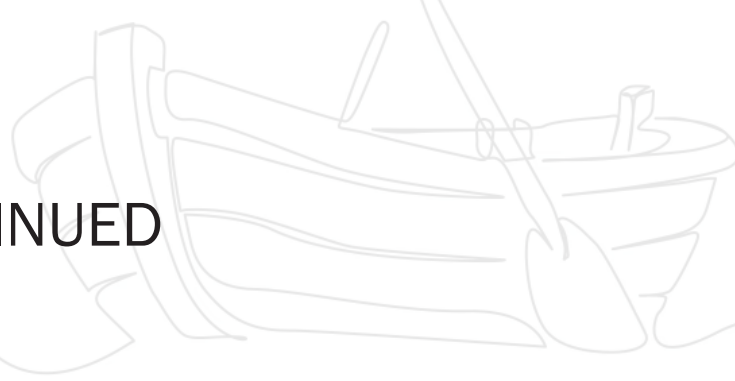
“

I wasn't gonna get out of bed this morning, but every time you guys go do stuff, everyone has cool stories, so I had to come!

-Jubien House Youth



RECREATION THERAPY CONTINUED



BOAT BUILDING

With the generous support of the Youth Development Initiative, six Bridges for Learning students participated in the *Safe Spaces and Relationships* boat building program this year. During the winter semester, students built two cedar toboggans and a 14-foot Bird-Class Dinghy.

Students developed a wide range of valuable skills including:

- Safely using a variety of hand tools and power tools
- Basic measurement
- Applying fibreglass
- Working with epoxy
- Steam bending cedar planks
- Tying knots
- Learning nautical terminology
- Using appropriate personal protective equipment
- WHMIS certifications
- Creating basic DC electrical circuits
- Building a mock plumbing system
- Teamwork, respect, commitment, and professionalism



Two students participated in the *We Can Foil* program with instructors from Sail Canada. They had the opportunity to learn to use hydrofoils, and to spend time on Zodiacs and Hydro WASZPS

One student represented HomeBridge and Boat School at the Halifax International Boat Show, alongside myself and the team from the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic. Another youth gave a short presentation about his experience with the boatbuilding program at HomeBridge's Annual General Meeting last year. These experiences really show the pride the young people take in their participation in this program.

The students also launched their boat "Sandpiper" at the end of the school year. A crowd of HomeBridge employees, professionals from the IWK & YDI, and family members attended to show their support.

Right now, the 2026 team of boat builders are hard at work completing another fourteen-foot sailboat to launch. These students have also had the opportunity to steam-bend oak masthoops, which will be used aboard the Bluenose II.

We continue to be proud of all of the meaningful experiences these programs provide for the young people who participate.





Thank you for supporting Recreation Therapy!



HALIFAX YOUTH
Foundation





THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMMING

Therapeutic Programming within the HomeBridge Community has been and continues to be an essential component in helping youth experience themselves differently, both within our programs and within their communities. We try to focus on "meeting each youth where they are at" to discover what their interests, goals, hobbies, and needs are at that given time. The personal growth of program participants is encouraged through adaptable life skills, developing employability skills, cultural and recreational activities, and emotional management (how to identify triggers and coping strategies when dealing with anger, anxiety, or self-esteem). As always, our program planning remains rooted within our care planning framework, the Circle of Courage (Brendtro, Brokenleg, and Van Bockern, 1990) which includes:



Mastery

Achieving attainable goals by being creative, persistent, competent, self-motivated, and accepting challenges.

Belonging

Being a respectful part of a group by being friendly, caring, cooperative, respectful, and forming healthy relationships.

Generosity

Contributing positively towards others by sharing, caring, being supportive/helpful, compassionate, and expressing social/societal concerns.

Independence

Demonstrating personal responsibility by being assertive, confident, empowered, leading (displaying leadership), problem solver, and disciplined.

Daily Life Skill Programs are constantly changing to suit the needs of the individual groups of young people who participate at any given time. Each youth comes to us with their own unique story so it is crucial we are implementing programs that will be beneficial for their individual needs and development. Other programs introduced are mindfulness, distress tolerance, and emotional regulation to help youth learn how to live in the moment. This helps them develop healthy ways to deal with stress and regulate their emotions so they can improve their relationships with others and themselves.

Exercise or physical activity is also incorporated weekly as it is known to enhance mood, reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, boost energy levels, and so much more. The Program Activity Coordinator and Recreational Therapist work closely to collaborate on new and exciting activities the youth may want to experience. Together, they have introduced programs that have helped youth identify their bodies' messages, needs, and wants. There are also times when one may have a closer relationship with a young person. By collaborating, this helps to build, strengthen, and hopefully foster future connections.

Over the past year, we have focused on celebrating holidays in meaningful ways to ensure each youth leaves with lasting memories. For New Year's Eve, we decorated one of the programming rooms and created a fun "balloon drop" to mark the occasion. At Halloween, we transformed the space into a haunted house maze using garbage bags and blankets to guide participants through. With flashing lights, eerie music, crawling spaces filled with "spider webs," and sensory "feel boxes" at the end, this made for a fun adventure. Many of the youth enjoyed it so much that they eagerly joined in to help scare our brave staff members who participated.

During the holiday season, "Santa" made a special, early visit during our holiday lunch. We decorated our program room door as a gingerbread house and created a warm, festive atmosphere complete with unlimited hot chocolate, festive music, and holiday movies. While these are some of our most memorable celebrations, we have also stayed engaged throughout the year with activities such as indoor and outdoor scavenger hunts, making sweet treats, creating 3D flowers, and crafting handmade cards with positive affirmations to share with others in the building. These experiences have supported the youth in developing communication skills, building confidence, and strengthening their connections with the Youth Care Teams who contribute so much behind the scenes.

I like Food Fridays. Cooking isn't bad, but making cookies was the best part.

-HomeBridge Youth



We also place a strong emphasis on honouring, educating, and bringing awareness to important dates and cultural observances throughout the year. During significant months, we decorate our classroom door and bulletin board, using art as a way to reflect, show appreciation, and explore meaningful topics through creative expression and research. For example, during African Heritage Month and Mi'kmaw History Month, we created displays that showcased our learning from various programs and activities.

We further support this learning by engaging in experiences such as visiting museums, watching educational films and videos followed by group discussions, and incorporating cultural practices like smudging with sage in our classroom. We also encourage youth to share their own knowledge and perspectives, fostering open and respectful dialogue. This includes making meaningful use of the resources within our building by inviting individuals such as our Cultural Program Advisor and members of the Nova Scotia Transition & Advocacy Youth program (NSTAY) to share their lived experiences. These conversations provide valuable insight, promotes understanding, and help deepen the youth's appreciation of diverse cultures and perspectives.

Some youth are initially hesitant to participate when educational content is presented because they say it's "hard to talk about" or uninteresting. In response, we have been working to find more interactive and engaging ways to present meaningful information while still maintaining its importance and depth. Research suggests that incorporating fun and lighthearted elements can increase engagement and information retention. With this in mind, we have introduced creative approaches such as a "Family Feud"-style game, where Youth Care Workers and youth dress up and present meaningful topics in an entertaining way. We also incorporate a variety of interactive activities like bingo and Jeopardy-style games to make subjects such as hygiene, boundaries, consent, and healthy relationships more approachable and enjoyable. These strategies have helped create a more encouraging environment, making it easier for youth to engage with important topics while having fun.

One of the structured programs that is regularly offered is Cooking Towards Independence. This program, funded by the Children's Aid Foundation of Nova Scotia, continues to be a favourite with the young people. Through this life and employability skill program, affectionately known as "Food Fridays", participants are encouraged to learn basic cooking and food handling skills, nutrition, and how to shop wisely to combat rising food costs and inflation. They also practice their communication skills as they plan and negotiate their Food Friday menu as a group, choosing a main meal, side dish, and dessert for approximately 20 people that can be made with a \$100.00 budget. This planning process also allows the young people to feel connected to their culture and families as they can make family recipes or culturally traditional dishes. The skills they build while participating are not only necessary for independent living but also transferable to the job/labour market. Many find their first job in the food industry and some even discover a passion for culinary arts as a career. On weeks we aren't doing Food Fridays, we still incorporate making a healthy drink and/or treat. Whether this looks like smoothies, wellness shots, or protein snacks it continues to build on their culinary skills and awareness.

Throughout the year, youth are offered an array of engaging programs geared towards life-skills and social-emotional learning including fun, physically active, pro-social programs out in the community. These activities range from leisure activities to entrepreneurial opportunities such as our Youth Farmers Market. These types of programs often lead to meaningful discussions about the impacts of inflation and the housing crisis, and what this may mean for their futures. With these important conversations, youth then brainstorm ways to better their future, through continuing their education to gain access to jobs that can withstand inflation. With the success of the Youth Farmers Market in the past, and the popularity of Food Fridays, we have plans to expand the Reigh Allen Centre community garden this summer to include fruits, vegetables, and flowers. The hope is for the garden to become part of our therapeutic program to educate youth on responsibility, nutrition, and nurturing.

Some of the other fun, less structured activities they participate in are as follows:

MARCH BREAK AND SUMMER PROGRAMING

- Horseback riding
- Fishing
- Hiking
- Splash parks
- Swimming
- Art programs
- Car racing simulator
- Glow in the dark mini-golf
- Outdoor interactive activities
- Geocaching (and making positive messaging geocaches)
- Photography
- Bowling
- Activate
- Virtual reality
- Skating
- Going to the Gym
- Playdium





THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMMING CONTINUED

All therapeutic programs offered in the HomeBridge Community are designed to assist youth in developing skills to enhance their lives both now and in the future. Some of the structured programs offered during the daily programming are as follows:

- Cooking Towards Independence
- Butterfly Release Program
- Gardening
- Conflict Resolution
- Healthy Relationships (peer, family, partner(s)).
- Sexual Health & Puberty education
- Self-esteem
- Hygiene (caring for your body, self-care)
- Habit formation
- Alcohol and drug awareness
- Encouraging empathy/ anti-bullying via plants ("Value of Words" project).
- Communication skills
- Stress reduction
- Daily life skills
- Visual arts
- Pottery
- Woodburning
- Stress Reduction (Identifying triggers, coping strategies, reflection, and HeartMath (Bio-Feedback))
- Yoga
- Fidget tool making
- Entrepreneurial Programs (Farmers Market, Coffee House, Partnership with IWK art) and service learning
- Resume building
- Cultural Awareness
- LGBTQ+ Lessons plans (terminology, community, history, awareness).
- Volunteering (lunches for those experiencing community displacement)
- Physical activity (gym, hikes, rock climbing, indoor play, etc.).
- Community outings to the Art Gallery, Georges Island, Discovery Centre, Museum of Natural History, The Ovens Natural Park
- Community clean up around the RAC



Respectfully Submitted by:

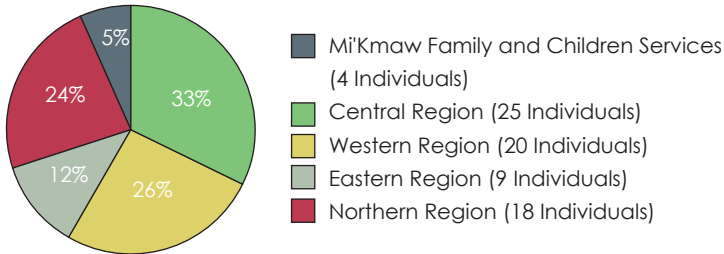
Danielle McLaughlan-Payne, Program Activity Coordinator



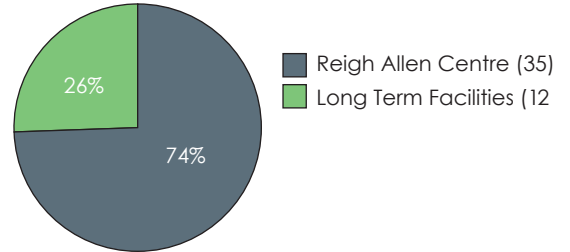


HOMEBRIDGE YOUTH SOCIETY AT A GLANCE

Individual Youth per Department of Opportunities & Social Development Region or Child Welfare Agency Residing in Programs - 76 Total

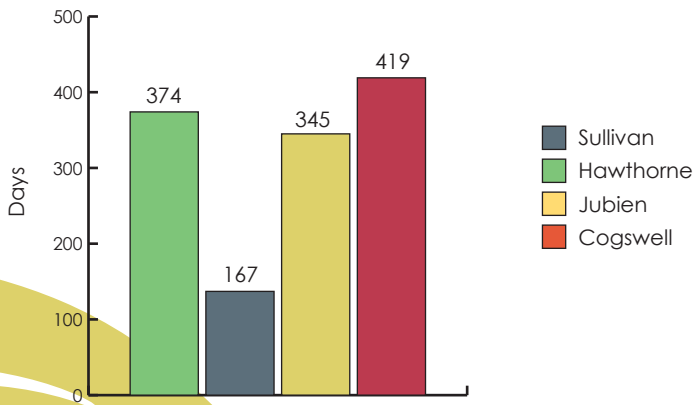


Program Placements of Youth from Outside the Central Region - 47 total individuals

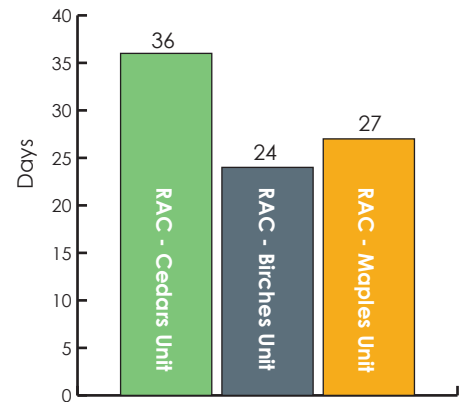


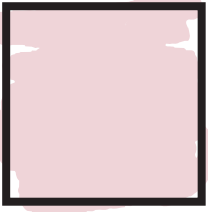
76 individual youth were served during 2025/2026, however there were 121 total youth admissions to all programs, which includes a number of youth who had multiple admissions and were served by more than one HomeBridge program.

Average Length of Stay in Child & Youth Caring Programs - Long Term Homes



Average Length of Stay Requiring Emergency Stabilization at the Reigh Allen Centre (RAC)





ADVANCED TRAINING FOR BEST PRACTICE

At HomeBridge, we are committed to excellence in all aspects of our work, which requires continuous learning and growth. Staying informed about the latest therapeutic interventions and programming for vulnerable youth is essential, as is keeping up with emerging research and trends across the diverse professional fields that make up our multi-disciplinary team. This year, our employees have engaged in various educational opportunities to enhance their knowledge and ensure we provide the highest quality service.

EXTERNAL TRAINING

ASIST

- Train the Trainer

Association of Fundraising Professionals

- Fundraising in Uncertain Times: How to Be Proactive to Secure Your Funding

Canada Helps

- Keeping Donations Flowing During the Canada Post Strike
- Securities Made Simple: A Guide for Charities of All Sizes

Carters Professional Corporation

- 2025 Carters Annual Charity & Not-for-Profit Law Webinar
- Copyrights and Trademarks in a Virtual Universe: What Charities and NFP's Need to Know
- Donor Advised Funds: An Overview of Key Legal Issues

Constant Contact

- AI for Good: Practical Strategies for Non-Profits

CPHR BC & Yukon

- Eh to Z- 51 Reasons that Canadian screening is different

Chartered Professionals in Human Resources Nova Scotia (CPHRNS)

- Addressing Intimate Partner Violence
- Supporting ADHD in the Workplace

Chartered Professional Accountants of Nova Scotia (CPANS)

- ASNFPPO - 2025 Update
- How to be Firm with Staff without Being a Jerk
- Ethics and Misinformation
- CPA Skills that AI can't Beat
- Email Etiquette Writing with Confidence
- Promoting Employee Engagement
- Creating a Healthy Feedback Loop
- Emotional Intelligence: Make deeper connections
- Excel Essentials for Staff Accountants
- Professional Ethics
- Neuroscience at Work: Work smarter, not harder
- Fraud in the Workplace
- Intercultural Inclusive Leadership

Crisis and Trauma Resource Institute

- Critical Incident Group Debriefing

Direction 180

- Naloxone Training



Dr. Michael Gauthier and Mark Either
● Indigenous Awareness Training

Fetal Alcohol Nova Scotia Conference - Learn. Collaborate. Act.

HeyOrca
● How Marketing Teams Use AI

ISANS
● Interviewing with Intercultural Skills and Aspect
● Atlantic Immigration Program Intercultural Training

John Digney
● Relational Practice

Medavie Blue Cross
● The Life Span of a Disability Claim

Non-Violent Crisis Intervention
● Train the Trainer

Rubin Thomlinson LLP
● Top 10 Investigation Cases of 2025

SMU Executive & Professional Development
● Facing Common Leadership Challenges
● Project Management
● Emotional Intelligence
● Maximizing Employee Effectiveness
● Executing Change and Overcoming Resistance

#SocialEast
● Maximum Reach – Tailoring Your Content Across Platforms
● More Than Marketing – Building Traditions
● The New Rules of Marketing
● Content Beyond Brand Awareness
● Social Purpose – Driven Brand Strategy

INTERNAL TRAINING

- ASIST – Suicide Intervention
- Cultural Awareness Training
- Lunch and Learn Series
 - How we Think About Change
 - Responding to Non-Physical Violence
 - Keeping Safe While Setting Limits
 - Emergency Mental Health and Addictions Services
- Mindwell Academy
 - Basic Fire and Life Safety
 - WHMIS
 - Medication Awareness
- Non Violent Crisis Intervention
- Saint John's Ambulance First Aid and CPR
- SafeCheck
 - Food Safety Certification
- Student Advisor Training
- The Purposeful Use of Daily Life Events (DLE)



HomeBridge continues to leverage various video chat platforms to facilitate consultations, mentoring, and learning opportunities with out-of-region experts at minimal cost. Whether through one-on-one consultations with global Child and Youth Care professionals or group training sessions that would otherwise require travel and accommodations for facilitators, this technology has significantly enhanced the accessibility and feasibility of training and consultation opportunities.



HOMEBRIDGE YOUTH SOCIETY

TEAMWORK



SUPERVISOR TEAM



MAINTENANCE TEAM



KITCHEN TEAM



INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM

“ A boat doesn't go forward if each one is rowing their own way. -Swahili Proverb



SHARING OUR SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

The young people who live in the HomeBridge Community are among the most vulnerable youth in our province. They come to us during what is often a very challenging period in their lives. We consider it both a privilege and a responsibility to provide the highest quality care and support. We take this commitment seriously and work constantly to evolve our practices as we learn and grow.

Our team is composed of a diverse group of professionals, ranging from those with decades of experience to those just beginning their careers. Each dedicated practitioner brings unique expertise and perspectives to our work. We are committed to sharing this knowledge to help develop the next generation of professionals.

One way we support this commitment is by offering student placement opportunities. These placements not only allow us to contribute to the field of Child and Youth Care but also enrich our own practice. We find the exchange of ideas and fresh perspectives incredibly valuable, as we often learn just as much from our students as they do from us.

This year, HomeBridge provided placements for 13 students seeking hands-on experience in human services. Each student was paired with a dedicated HomeBridge Student Field Advisor, ensuring they received the guidance and support needed to achieve their learning objectives. These students came from the following institutions and programs:

Nova Scotia Community College, Ivany Campus - Child and Youth Care
Nova Scotia Community College, Truro Campus – Child and Youth Care
Eastern College – Child and Youth Care

HomeBridge employees also contributed their time and talents by sitting on the following Boards and Committees outside of the organization:

- Nova Scotia Child and Youth Care Workers Association (NSCYCWA)
- Eastern College Advisory Committee for Child and Youth Care
- Relational Child and Youth Care Practice Journal Advisory Board
- Curriculum Advisory Board: Holland College Child & Youth Care Worker Program
- Nova Scotia Community College Program Advisory Committee (NSCC PAC)

Memberships:

- Project Management Institute, Nova Scotia Chapter
- Association of Fundraising Professionals, Nova Scotia Chapter
- CPA Canada (Chartered Professional Accountants)
- CPANS (Chartered Professional Accountants of Nova Scotia)
- Chartered Professionals of Human Resources Association of Nova Scotia (CPHR Nova Scotia)
- FICE Canada
- Trafficking and Exploitation Service System (TESS)
- Nova Scotia Child and Youth Care Workers Association (NSCYCWA)
- Association of Children's Residential Centers
- International Child and Youth Care Network (CYC Net)
- National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC)
- Nova Scotia Therapeutic Recreation Association (NSTRA)





COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much

- Helen Keller



Since opening our first program in 1979, our goal has always been to provide the best services possible for youth-in-care. A lot has changed over the years, but our commitment to providing quality care and support definitely has not and we are grateful that others share this passion as well. We simply could not do the important work we do with out the community partners who support our efforts ad provide essential resources beyond what we can offer.

THE IWK HEALTH CENTRE

Access to health care for both your physical and mental health is incredibly important, no matter who you are, and for youth-in-care there are often even more barriers to these services. Thanks to the IWK Health Centre, however, every young person in the HomeBridge Community has access to a Pediatrician and a Mental Health and Addictions Counselor right where they are, ensuring they receive essential care in a familiar and supportive environment. Access to mental health and addictions support, along with primary healthcare services, has been transformative for the well-being of our youth.

This began in 2014 with the expertise of Clinical Social Worker Jeff Thoms, who has served as an on-site Mental Health and Addictions Counselor in the HomeBridge Community. He has come to be a familiar and comforting resource for both the young people and our Youth Care Teams. Through his compassionate and skilled approach, he has helped create a safer and more informed environment for those navigating complex challenges. His knowledge in substance misuse and harm reduction has also been incredibly helpful in building capacity in our youth care teams. In 2024 we welcomed Social Worker Kevin Heenan to further support Jeff's work by providing direct services to youth in the HomeBridge Community. We are grateful for the dedication and contributions of both Jeff and Kevin and value the positive impact they continue to make within HomeBridge.

Since 2022, we have also had Dr. Tania Wong set up with a fully operational clinic at the Reigh Allen Centre. As a Pediatrician, she offers pre-scheduled and walk-in appointments one day per week for the young people. She has become a familiar presence that has significantly improved healthcare outcomes for the young people we serve. This includes better prescription and medication management, early diagnosis of sexual health concerns, vaccinations, and overall improved access to medical support.

While the IWK Health Centre offers many community resources, getting youth-in-care to attend outside appointments can be challenging for a variety of reasons. By bringing these vital services directly to them, where they live, and providing continuity of care through trusted professionals, we have seen a remarkable shift. The young people in our care now look forward to their appointments, fostering a sense of trust and empowerment in their own healthcare journeys. We are profoundly grateful to the IWK Health Centre for their unwavering support and commitment to our mission.



IWK Health



THE HOME DEPOT CANADA FOUNDATION

The Home Depot Canada Foundation has been a regular supporter of HomeBridge since 2014, providing regular donations through the Orange Door Project. Their focus on preventing and ending youth homelessness aligns perfectly with our efforts to help youth-in-care heal from their past trauma and prepare for successful independent living.

A big part of the Orange Door Project is an in-store campaign where customers can purchase an “orange door” to support the cause. The Home Depot Canada Foundation has raised millions of dollars for charities across the country through this campaign and we are eternally grateful that we are one of them. The team at The Home Depot Dartmouth Crossing has chosen HomeBridge as their charity partner and through their creative efforts has raised well over \$100,000 over the years to support life -skill building and therapeutic programming for the young people who live in the HomeBridge Community.

The impact of this support is incredible as it has allowed us to create positive opportunities and experiences for hundreds of vulnerable youth over the years. Their support has touched the lives of every young person who has been part of the HomeBridge Community for well over a decade and this is something we will never take for granted.

GRATITUDE AND COLLECTIVE IMPACT

We are incredibly grateful for the generosity and commitment of our community partners. Their support allows us to create opportunities that shape the lives of youth-in-care. Together, we are making a difference, ensuring that every young person has the chance heal and look forward to a better tomorrow.





OUR CORNERSTONE PARTNERS

Department of Opportunities and Social Development

Funds HomeBridge's operating budget

St. Paul's Home Board

Owns Sullivan House, Jubien House and Cogswell House

Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal

Owns the Reigh Allen Centre

Department of Education

Funds two Teaching positions for our school program, Bridges for Learning

IWK Health Centre

Provides mental health, addictions and pediatric support



DONATIONS/FUNDRAISING FISCAL 2025/26

Health Literacy Program	\$ 168
General Donations.....	\$ 7,820
Youth Development Initiative (YDI): Farmer's Market & Safe Spaces & Relationships Grants.....	\$ 8,358
Holidays of Hope (Including St. Paul's Christmas for Youth).....	\$ 15,106
Expressions Program of the Arts.....	\$ 48,855
Recreation & Occupational Therapy Program.....	\$ 78,259
Bridges For Learning (Department of Education grant).....	\$ 168,654

HomeBridge received/fundraised over \$327,000 in fiscal 2025/2026

Thank you to those who contributed to the Annual Report:

Jim Perrin, Ernie Hilton, Caroline Moore, Renee Stevens, Jackie Woodford, Colleen Clark, Carol Lethbridge, Jodi Angus, Danielle McLauchlan-Payne, Rob Grandy, and Margaret Lawton.



HBYS OPERATING

INCOME STATEMENT

(UNAUDITED)

For the year ended March 31, 2026

	ACTUAL 2026	BUDGET 2026	ACTUAL 2025
REVENUES			
Grants	\$ 8,909,157	\$ 8,909,157	\$ 7,857,402
Per diem (occupancy)	730,328	828,486	483,668
Investment income	40,831	-	52,993
Donations	7,820	-	5,326
Other funder reimbursements	3,412	-	-
Retroactive monies	-	-	422,538
Other DOSD Funding	-	-	17,122
	9,691,548	9,737,643	8,839,049
EXPENSES			
Wages & benefits	8,836,402	9,105,951	7,275,525
Food	198,061	145,881	153,670
Office	168,331	38,168	159,743
Repair & maintenance	144,991	75,706	150,887
Light, Power, Cable	103,584	80,894	97,561
Insurance	97,888	42,217	100,886
Staff Training	90,168	23,041	13,165
Household & cleaning supplies	62,348	23,810	56,895
Travel	58,129	51,104	64,310
Professional services fees	52,893	34,202	129,608
Telephone	41,483	22,933	41,140
Youth Life Skills Programming	41,030	13,760	31,537
Household furnishings	28,075	12,963	51,922
Fuel	22,713	36,342	24,563
Water	12,446	10,944	11,047
Property Taxes	9,302	4,170	9,124
Pharmacy	7,646	7,937	12,613
(IBP) Incentive Based Programming	4,522	7,620	3,578
Board development	3,993	-	3,965
Retroactive wages & benefits	-	-	422,538
Total Expenses	9,984,005	9,737,643	8,814,277
Net Income (loss)	\$ (292,457)	\$ -	\$ 24,772

For a copy of HomeBridge Youth Society's audited financial statements please contact Colleen Clark, CPA, CA HomeBridge Director of Finance at (902) 466-1439 x 224 or cclark@homebridgeyouth.ca



HomeBridge Donor List - Fiscal 2025/2026



18 Dartmouth Air Cadets Squadron
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Thank you

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