

THE PARTICIPAPER

An Inverness County Periodical

Fall 2025

VOL 46
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Chief Administrative Officer's message

**KEITH MACDONALD
INVERNESS COUNTY CAO**

Each season in Inverness County brings its own opportunities, and fall is a time to take stock of the strength of our communities. As the busy summer season winds down, we turn our attention to the organizations, volunteers, and initiatives that continue to make our county a vibrant place to live, work, and visit.

In this edition of *The Participaper*, we celebrate milestones that speak to the strength and spirit of our Inverness County. We recognize Mabou's own Rankin Family, whose induction into the Cape Breton Music Industry Hall of Fame recognizes their immense contribution to Cape Breton's musical identity. We also mark significant anniversaries: the Whycocomagh Volunteer Fire Department's 75 years of service and dedication; Pleasant Bay Whale Interpretive Centre's 25 years as both a local hub and a draw for visitors; and Glendale Parish's 150 years, which the community marked with a show of faith, tradition, and Gaelic

culture. These organizations—like so many across Inverness County—exist because of the dedication of volunteers. Their longevity is a testament to the way volunteerism continues to shape our safety, our heritage, our culture, and our local economy.

You'll also find stories of resilience and community leadership—from our Recreation & Community Wellness team's work with trail volunteers to reflections from a Get Active summer student who brought energy and joy across our municipality. Finally, Robert Bernard of We'koqma'q shares a powerful reminder of why truth and reconciliation must guide us every day of the year.

This edition is filled with stories that highlight the dedication, creativity, and spirit that define Inverness County. We hope you enjoy reading about these accomplishments and the people behind them, and that you take pride in the community we continue to build together. ■

Keith

The Participaper

Editor/writer: Dave MacNeil
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info@invernesscounty.ca | 902-787-2274
or visit the municipal building in Port Hood.

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Contact:
Municipality of Inverness County
375 Main Street, PO Box 179
Port Hood NS B0E 2W0
info@invernesscounty.ca



A letter from the editor

DAVE MACNEIL

info@invernesscounty.ca

In this edition of *The Participaper*, I interviewed Robert Bernard, who has made it his life's work to help Indigenous people like himself to succeed, and to teach non-Indigenous people about the struggles still facing his people a generation after the last residential school closed in Nunavut in 1997.

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30 is an opportunity for all Canadians to reflect on our nation's relationship with Indigenous people, and to educate ourselves about not only the atrocities of the Indian Residential School system, but the ongoing struggle of Indigenous peoples in Canada to restore and maintain their culture, their language and their sense of place in our country.

There's too often a tendency to believe that Truth and Reconciliation is just about residential schools, and not appreciate the ongoing problems faced by Indigenous people. Putting those challenges in the rear-view mirror serves no one.

The lives of Indigenous Canadians are still largely influenced by the Indian Act, a piece of legislation enacted in 1876. While it's been amended over the years, the act still imposes governing structures and land limitations that adversely affect the everyday lives of our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

Bernard says education is the key to reconciliation, but that reconciliation does not come without first confronting the truths about the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians, and he's hopeful when he sees a new generation educating themselves and confronting the truths in a way that his generation didn't. ■



Cover photo: Flowers adorn the mailbox at this farm in Glendyer, near Mabou.
(Photo: Dave MacNeil)

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Jimmy and Heather Rankin joined the show's other performers for a rousing rendition of *Mull River Shuffle*. From left: Jimmy Rankin, Dylan Guthro, Jodi Guthro, Fiona MacGillivray, Marilyn MacKinnon. (Photo: Max Kearns)

The Sound of Home: The Rankins enter the Cape Breton Music Industry Hall of Fame

BY SIOBHAN BEATON

On June 19, Centre 200 in Sydney was filled to the rafters with music fans gathered from across Cape Breton to celebrate three legends of East Coast music as they were inducted into the

Cape Breton Music Industry Cooperative's Hall of Fame. Among the honourees were broadcaster and champion of local music Donnie Campbell, the late and much-loved Bruce Guthro, and Mabou's very own Rankin Family.

Rising to fame in the 1990's, the Rankin Family band was comprised of siblings Heather, Raylene, Cookie, Jimmy, and John Morris. Their music captured the rhythm of rural life, honoured the family's Gaelic roots, captured stories of local characters, and has been a soundtrack of east coast life for over three decades.

Before catching the attention of EMI Records in 1992, the band sold 100,000 records independently—many of them through consignment sales at Cape Breton shops and gas stations. After they were signed, the band sold more than two million records, won five Junos and 15 East Coast Music Awards, among other honours.

The Hall of Fame show paid tribute to each inductee with live performances of their songs, played by close friends, family, and the house band—including Rankin Family touring member Howie MacDonald. Marilyn MacKinnon, Fiona MacGillivray, Delores Boudreau, and Gordie Sampson, took to the stage to honour The Rankins with covers of beloved classics like *Feel the Same Way Too*, *Gillis Mountain*, *Fare Thee Well Love*, *The Orangedale Whistle*, and more. The group captured the heart, energy, and harmony of the original family band.

But it was Marilyn's performance of *Rise Again* that truly stilled the room. The song, so closely tied to the late Raylene Rankin's unforgettable voice, seemed to cast a quiet spell over Centre 200. For a few moments, the crowd sat in stillness, wrapped in harmony, memory, and something that felt a lot like magic. It was a powerful tribute—not only to the music, but to the presence and legacy Raylene left behind.

While many know the Rankins for their vocals and storytelling, Cape Breton's fiddle players and fanatics know that John Morris Rankin left a mark of his own in that scene before his passing in 2000. His tunes are stitched into the island's musical fabric. That night, Howie MacDonald played a lively set of John Morris's compositions, including *Jack Daniel's Reel* and *Molly Rankin's*, the latter named after John Morris's daughter, who now fronts the indie rock band *Alvvays*. It was a nod to legacy—how Cape Breton music continues to evolve while staying rooted in tradition.

The Rankins' official induction was presented by fellow Mabou native Margie Beaton, who handed medals to Jimmy, Heather, and Howie MacDonald. In her speech, she captured what so many were feeling: "The Rankins' music has made life better and richer for Mabou, and all of Cape Breton. It is beautiful to hear hay making and fishing in songs on the radio—to hear songs about us and our way of life."

Heather and Jimmy took the mic for a short but heartfelt speech. They laughed about long tours and shared vans, and Heather reflected on the strength of the local scene: "It never ceases to amaze me, the talent this island cooks out." Her words were met



The whole crowd, including Jimmy and Heather Rankin, enjoyed fellow Mabou native Rankin MacInnis' performance. (Photo: Max Kearns)

with loud applause. It was clear that this moment belonged not just to the Rankins, but to the whole island.

To close out the night, Rankin MacInnis—another proud Mabou native—took the stage for a rousing rendition of *Mull River Shuffle*. Jimmy and Heather joined in, bringing the crowd to their feet. The final note of the night came from Howie, who fired up *Hull's Reel*, written by John Morris—a perfect ending that celebrated both joy and legacy.

The Rankins' music is more than entertainment—it's part of Cape Breton's cultural DNA. It tells our stories, honours our people, and keeps our traditions alive. As Margie said, hearing your own life reflected through the radio is a powerful thing. On June 19, Cape Breton returned the favour with a standing ovation, offering thanks to a family who helped define who we are—one harmony at a time. ■

Whycocomagh firefighters investing in trail safety

BY DAVE MACNEIL

As the Whycocomagh Volunteer Fire Department prepares to celebrate its 75th anniversary next year, chief Shawn Harrison says responding to calls on the local trails system has led the department to add new equipment.

In the past year, a side-by-side was leased, after a snowmobiler was involved in an accident on the trails near the fire hall. Harrison says his department was lucky the trail was groomed, so they were able to reach the victim using their medical truck, so they could get him to where he could be taken to hospital by Emergency Health Services (EHS).

He noted that the department has added high angle rope rescue equipment following another incident in which a snowmobiler went over a 60-foot embankment.

The 19-member force serves between 2,500 and 3,000 residents from the Little Narrows turnoff on the Trans Canada Highway, out to Skye Glen, into West Lake Ainslie and Orangedale as far as Portage Road. It responds to an average of 45 calls a year, and most of those are medical.

Harrison, who has served as chief since 2015 and has been on the department for 17 years, says they're doing fewer medical calls now because they don't often have the volunteers available during the day.

"We used to be full-fledged MFRs (medical first responders) and we'd get a call for everything," he recalls. "You want more than two MFRs if you're going to a call. With people not available, we're there to help EHS if needed."

He says six members joined in the past year and a half, but he adds they'd really like to get membership up to around 25.

"We're not the only department with that challenge," Harrison explains. "It's a big time commitment for training and fundraising. The members are getting older and it's getting harder to get young people in." He adds, "when people join, I tell them you can do whatever you're comfortable with. If we're at a scene, we need people at the trucks to get equipment. They don't have to be right in the middle of it. We don't force people to do things they're not comfortable with."

Despite the department's small size, Harrison says members are good to turn out for calls, adding that they have a good relationship with the nearby We'komaq department and can often call them when assistance is required.

The Whycocomagh department was incorporated in January 1951 with John Allen Waters as its first chief and Charles MacMillan as deputy chief. The first fire hall was built between 1963 and 1964, and its first major equipment acquisition came in 1968 when it purchased a 300-gallon tanker.

The department moved into its current hall in 2010 and was able to pay it off six years later thanks to the local community, which supports its many fundraisers. Harrison says he hopes to see the department's main pumper truck—which was purchased last year—be paid off this year. That truck, which includes a 1,500-gallon tank, had a price tag of \$572,000.



Members of the Whycocomagh Volunteer Fire Department pose with the new 3000-gallon tanker they purchased in Newfoundland in 1968. (Photo: Contributed)

He says the majority of the department's yearly revenue comes from taxes levied by the municipality, but he says proceeds from the weekly Nova Scotia Firefighters 50/50 draw, the largest draw of its kind in Canada, make up nearly a third of that revenue.

Harrison says generous donations from community members and other fundraisers undertaken by the department make up the remainder, including a twice monthly darts night launched last winter, an annual Daytona 500 event, and a WestJet draw in which the winner takes home a trip for two anywhere in Canada.

Harrison is assisted by two deputy chiefs, Dale MacAulay and Jordan MacRitchie, who is also SCBA (self contained breathing apparatus) captain. Other leading roles are filled by Jamie MacInnis (training officer), Derek MacInnis (truck captain), Sherryl Harrison (secretary), Nancy Turbill (MFR captain), Andrew Tubman (extrication captain), Ken Hunter (hose captain), and Jennifer MacInnis (communication captain). Rounding out the membership are Jamie Sutherland, Lisa Harrison, Jordan Keeling, Robbie MacLean, Greg Jones, John Lewis MacKeigan, Matt Brosens, Curtis van den Heuvel and Zach Simpson. ■



Whycocomagh fire chief Shawn Harrison shows off the side-by-side the department has leased to aid in rescuing people in trouble on local trails. (Photo: Dave MacNeil)



Posed alongside their new pumper, purchased last year, are department members (from left) chief Shawn Harrison, Derek MacInnis, Jamie MacInnis, Dale MacAulay, Jordan MacRitchie and Jordan Keeling. (Photo: Dave MacNeil)

Getting to know... Matthew Hobden

In this recurring series, we ask a municipal employee a few questions to get to know them better.

Where are you from?

I was born in northern Alberta, but I grew up and was raised on Vancouver Island.

What's your role with the municipality?

I'm a construction coordinator with the Capital Projects team.

What's your service time?

I've been with the municipality since the beginning of March.

What are your main responsibilities in your job?

Right now, I'm overseeing the wastewater treatment upgrade

project in Inverness. I'll be involved in any other major infrastructure projects involving the municipality.

What's the best part of your job?

I'm enjoying how multi-faceted and encompassing it is, and I also like how big Inverness County is. There are so many different things going on all over.

What's your favourite thing about Inverness County?

My mother is from Inverness County, so I grew up coming here every summer. One of my favourite things now is seeing the development, and the communities grow.



Matthew Hobden

What's your favourite shop/store/service in Inverness County?

I really like the Mabou Farmer's Market. It's pretty handy for my wife and I, so we go every weekend. I like the variety of products and the people that it brings to the area.

Finally, coffee or tea?

I'm a coffee person for sure – two cups minimum!

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Centre marks anniversary with whale of a year

BY DAVE MACNEIL

The Whale Interpretive Centre in Pleasant Bay hasn't only managed to survive for a quarter century, but if visitor numbers in June and early July are any indication, 2025 could be its best year ever.

Doris Fraser, who became president of the Friends of Whale Watch Cape Breton—the charitable organization that runs the centre—in 2010, said business is booming. She noted that the centre, which managed to stay open through the COVID years, is now enjoying record crowds.

Interviewed by *The Participaper* in mid-July, Fraser said about 35,000 people came through the doors of the centre each of the past two years, adding that the anticipated drop in American visitors has not materialized.

"I'm old, so I follow the news and that, and I hear that the Americans are not travelling," she noted. "Well, maybe they're missing the rest of Nova Scotia, but they're certainly coming to Cape Breton. They're coming in droves, and they're coming earlier this year."

Fraser said the three independent whale tour operators at the Pleasant Bay wharf, located a few steps from the centre, are experiencing one of their best years ever.

"One whale tour operator has 31 seats on her boat and last week she was full four days in a row, which is a lot for this time of year," she said.

"Some of the American visitors are actually return customers," she added. "Maybe they were here 10 years ago, and they wanted to come back and do the Cabot Trail and retrace their steps."



The skeleton of a Minke whale is among the many exhibits on hand at the Whale Interpretive Centre in Pleasant Bay.
(Photo: Dave MacNeil)



A 10-foot whale tail, commissioned by the Municipality of Inverness County and installed in 2022, welcomes visitors to the harbour in Pleasant Bay. (Photo: Dave MacNeil)

Fraser said they encourage visitors to the centre to check out the tour operators, as well as many other businesses in the community.

“We’re a small town and we work well together,” she added.

The centre opened in 2000 with support from the municipal, provincial and federal governments, and Fraser said the Municipality of Inverness County continues to be very supportive with grants. But she said it’s the enthusiasm and support from people in Pleasant Bay and surrounding communities that has made the centre such a huge success.

A special celebration was held at the centre in late July to celebrate the anniversary and to thank the many people who helped make the dream of its founder and first manager, George Fraser, a reality. He was among those honoured with a citation which read as follows:

“With deep appreciation for your unwavering commitment, leadership and hard work over the 25 years that you were a part of creating and maintaining the Whale Interpretive Centre. Your passion, guidance, and vision have shaped not only this museum but also the volunteers and employees who have both joined you over the years or followed after you. Thank you for your years of service, your mentorship, and your legacy of outstanding leadership. Your dedication will be cherished for many years to come.”



Doris Fraser, right, president of Friends of Whale Watch Cape Breton, is joined by museum staff member Danielle MacKinnon. (Photo: Dave MacNeil)

In a social media post following the celebration, the Friends of Whale Watch Cape Breton issued the following statement:

“It was truly an honor to gather today to celebrate this incredible milestone – the 25th anniversary of the Whale Interpretive Centre.

In the heart of our small, beautiful town, we’ve witnessed firsthand how much this building has become not only just a museum and place of learning and discovery, but a cornerstone of our community as a whole.

Thanks to the hard work, passion, and vision of those who have supported it – our staff, volunteers, local businesses, and our surrounding communities – we have built something truly special.

As we celebrate this 25-year journey, let us continue to thrive and evolve, carrying forward the legacy of those who have contributed to its success.”

The Whale Interpretive Centre, which remains open this season until October 15, is located on the Harbour Road in Pleasant Bay, 30 seconds from the Cabot Trail. It offers something for all ages, as visitors can learn about whales and porpoises, and even meet Hook, a 3D life-size replica of a local long finned pilot whale.

Staff lead guided tours of the centre, offering extensive knowledge of the area and ready to answer any questions visitors may have about whales, fishing, local trails and businesses. ■

PlayFinder Scores Big in Inverness County

This spring, the Municipality's Recreation & Community Wellness team introduced a new online registration platform for all recreation programs and equipment loan opportunities.

PlayFinder is a Nova Scotia-built platform designed with small communities in mind that makes registration easy to navigate, clearly categorizes programs, and even recommends activities based on the user's age, location, and interests.

It flags scheduling conflicts before you register, sends reminders for upcoming events, and offers responsive, helpful tech support.

For municipal staff, PlayFinder has been a game changer. It generates program rosters automatically, creates contact lists for updates, and, perhaps

most importantly, processes secure online payments. That payment feature has opened doors for new partnerships with community organizations like Wave Volleyball and Fèis Mhabu, where the municipality can handle registration and marketing while ensuring payments are properly collected.

Recreation Programmer Krista MacInnis says the difference was clear this summer. "PlayFinder made everything run far smoother, for residents and for our team," she noted.

From day camps to special events, the Recreation & Community Wellness team's busiest season ran with fewer hiccups and more happy participants, allowing everyone to spend less time signing up, and more time showing up and having fun.

To learn more, visit <https://playfinder.ca>. If you have questions about the new platform or ever need a hand using it, please reach out to Support@PlayFinder.ca at any time and their helpful local staff will assist you. They also welcome constructive feedback for platform improvements. ■

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Phosphorus-rich bone meal for flowers and fruit, and potassium-rich wood ash in small doses for just about everything. (Photo: Caroline Cameron)

Gardening from the underside...

BY CAROLINE CAMERON

Our goal as a gardener is to create the best conditions for our plants, so that they can realize their full potential.

It is easy to assess the amount of sun, wind and the water they receive, but while the foliage and flowers get all the praise and glory, we only see half the story. The roots do a lot of the heavy lifting, labouring away, uncelebrated, in the dark. Understanding how well the roots are being served by the soil is the gardener's challenge.

The work of the root is to grow through the soil and absorb moisture and nutrients, and create an anchor to hold the plant in place, and upright. The qualities of the soil dictate how well the roots do,

and ultimately, the gardener's job is to create a "healthy soil," encouraging a teeming ecosystem of insects, fungi and bacteria that make soil nutrients available for roots.

We gauge how good our soil is largely by how sandy or clayey its texture is, and it's good to see a darker brown colour, which indicates a good amount of organic matter.

The texture of the soil - whether clayey, sandy, or loamy - defines whether the roots have access to the moisture and air they need. Inverness County soil is most often very clayey or very sandy, so it can benefit from getting the texture balanced a bit by adding one or the other, and in most cases, adding organic matter.

When you consider the fertility of the soil, there are three main soil nutrients needed by your plants, and each has different benefits:

Nitrogen (N) encourages lush growth of leaves.

Phosphorus (P) supports healthy roots, flowers and fruits.

Potassium (K) is good for all-around plant health.

Fertilizer packaging often displays its "NPK value," like 10:14:10, to reflect its best use. This example would support root and flower production because of the higher middle number - phosphorus. A nitrogen-rich fertilizer wouldn't be ideal if you're growing tomatoes, because you want fruit, not leaves.

You can enrich your soil from a number of sources, either organic or inorganic. The term "organic," in the soil context, just means a material that comes from once-living things, and will decay to enrich your soil. Organics like manure, leaves, seaweed, grass, mulch, and bone meal, also help to hold moisture, discourage erosion, while also creating texture to create air pockets that keep roots aerated.

Because organics aren't "manufactured," they aren't usually sold with measured NPK values, but their qualities are easily found. Manure is famously high in nitrogen, while bone meal is high in phosphorus, and wood ash is a good source of potassium. As natural materials, organics also contain a wide range of micronutrients, the minerals and compounds needed in small amounts.



Organics generally break down gradually, meaning that they can be added at any time of the year. However, late summer/early fall fertilizing is not ever recommended because it might encourage too much new growth when plants should be preparing for winter.

“Inorganic” materials arise from non-living materials, like lime or calcium. They naturally occur in the soil but can also be manufactured and sold with NPK values as conventional granular fertilizers. These are available in fast-release and slow-release forms.

In a fast release form, you need to be careful of the timing and conditions when you apply inorganic fertilizers, such as temperature, rainfall, and stage of growth of the plant. Inorganic fertilizers, in many cases, are applied when the crop is actively growing, so that the released minerals are taken up by the crop right away. Each has its particular use, but these fertilizers lack the broad range of micronutrients found in most organic fertilizers.

The main caution with inorganic fertilizer is that too much use causes rapid breakdown of organic matter, so soil texture and overall soil health deteriorates over time. In many cases, it is best used alongside organics. A healthy balance of these soil components makes for happy microorganisms and insects that continually enrich your soil.

The fertility of the soil is not just determined by what minerals are present, but also by how the soil’s acidity changes the form of the nutrients, making them more or less available to the roots. Typically, soils in these parts run acidic, and most crops



The best soil has the right balance of clay, sand, and organic matter, providing moisture retention and aeration for a healthy soil ecosystem. (Photo: Caroline Cameron)

are fine with this, but they are often happier with a slightly acidic pH. This factor takes a while to remedy, either by adding peat (for acidity), or lime (to make more basic).

Unusually high or low pH would challenge most plants, so it’s good to know where you stand. Soil testing through the Department of Agriculture is worth following up on. With that information, you can learn more about the right fertilizer, application time, and quantity. Soil health is a longer-term project, but the dividends are priceless.

Happy Gardening!

Seasonal note: This is a good time of year to root prune small trees and shrubs that you want to move. Drive a spade fully into the ground in a circle around the base, to cut larger roots and encourage new root growth near to the base. Move in the spring before the leaves emerge. ■

Caroline Cameron coordinates Mill Road Grows Community Garden and Greenhouse in Inverness and offers gardening and guiding services around Cape Breton Island. Please submit any gardening tips, questions, and news to strathlorne@gmail.com



St. Mary of the Angels Parish in Glendale recently celebrated its 150th anniversary, wrapping up a weekend full of events with a ceilidh at the parish hall. (Bottom, left) Sisters Catherine and Kharis Boyd entertained with their stepdancing prowess. (Photo below) Eileen Grabka, left, one of the volunteers behind planning the festivities, joins Donna Meagher-Stewart of Halifax at one of the many historical displays. (Photo, bottom right) The MacDonalds of Queensville provided a few tunes. Brothers Johnny MacDonald (left) and Sandy MacDonald (right), and cousin Brian MacDonald (middle).

(Photos: Dave MacNeil)



Parish celebrates 150th anniversary at St. Mary of the Angels

Served by another Father Rankin for 35 years, it was only fitting that as St. Mary of the Angels Parish in Glendale celebrated its 150th anniversary recently, it was highlighted by mass led in Gaelic by Father David Rankin.

A native of Mabou, and an associate pastor in Sydney River, the younger Father Rankin, a Cape Breton step dancer and guitar accompanist, celebrated mass at the same altar as Father John Angus Rankin, parish priest in Glendale from 1959 to 1994. The elder Father Rankin was one of the proponents behind the annual Glendale Scottish concert, which has entertained thousands of Celtic music enthusiasts since 1961.

The Gaelic mass kicked off the celebrations held August 1 to 3. The weekend also featured a second mass – this time in English – with Bishop Wayne Kirkpatrick officiating, an open house with historical displays, as well as a luncheon and ceilidh featuring local musicians, singers and dancers.

St. Mary of the Angels has been served by Father Duncan MacIsaac, a native of Judique, since 2018. He is also parish priest at St. Francis de Sales in Lower River Inhabitants, St. Louis in Louisdale, and a mission church, St. Margaret of Scotland on River Denys Mountain. He also presides during special occasions at St. Margaret's in West Bay Rd. and St. Patrick's in Whiteside.

Before getting its own Roman Catholic Parish in 1875, Glendale was a mission of Judique parish from 1818 to 1845, Creignish from 1845 to 1871, and Port Hawkesbury from 1871 to 1875.

A public meeting in 1875 laid the groundwork for the new parish, and a collection taken during that meeting raised \$30 to go towards the construction of a church and glebe house. The new parish served 220 families in an area that included Kingsville, Queensville, Glenora, MacIntyre Mountain, Glendale, Glendale Mountain, Gladstone, Melford, River Denys Mountain and Dennistown.

Father Donald MacIsaac, a native of Broad Cove, arrived that same year and immediately began construction of the new church, which was completed two years later.

Alex Smith designed the church and also built the original altar, which is now in use at St. Margaret of Scotland Church on River Denys Mountain. That original altar was used at Glendale until Father Donald MacLennan, the parish's third resident pastor, purchased the present one in 1919.

For the past 28 years, the former glebe house has served as the Father John Angus Rankin Cultural Centre, which hosts cultural events and houses local archives, genealogical documents, weaving looms and a gift shop.

Glendale was a thriving rural community 150 years ago, with all the amenities required to support the main industry of farming, including blacksmiths, sawyers, carriage makers, coopers, masons, millers and weavers.

One of the participants in the 150th anniversary celebration was Jeff MacDonald, who authored a history of the area titled "Gaelic Traditions of Glendale, Kingsville and Area," which outlined the arrival of Scottish immigrants to the area. Following are excerpts from that publication:

"By the late 1700s and early 1800s, due to economic, political, religious and cultural pressures, thousands of highlanders began leaving their Scottish homeland and coming to the New World. In Nova Scotia, a form of 'chain migration' occurred where emigrants chose to settle in districts to which their own relatives and those from their own 'old country' districts had

come and settled. It was a 'community migration.' By the end of the pioneering era in Nova Scotia, Gaelic culture dominated the eastern third of the province. By the turn of the 20th century, it is estimated that there were at least as many as 75,000 Gaelic speakers in Cape Breton."

"Gaels began coming to Glendale, Kingsville and area in the 1790s and this continued at least until the 1840s. The majority came from the predominantly Catholic areas of Moidart, Arisaig and Lochaber, on the mainland of Scotland. Others came from South Uist, Mull, Lismore, Eigg, Muck and Glenelg."

"When our ancestors came to this area, they did not possess much of material value, but they took with them a great store of wealth in their language and oral tradition, their faith and beliefs, and their traditions of music dance and song."

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the parish in 1975, Father John Angus Rankin shared the following message:

"In 1875 Bishop C. F. MacKinnon set up Glendale as a separate parish and appointed Fr. Donald MacIsaac to take over as its first pastor. Father MacIsaac, a native of Broad Cove, Inverness County, was the son of Alexander MacIsaac (Alasdair MacAilein) and his mother was Anne MacIsaac. He was the first native of Cape Breton to labour in this diocese. He laboured in Glendale from July 1875 to September 1901 - 26 years, two months."

"It is a strange coincidence that during the 100 years of its existence, three priests from Inverness County served the parish for period of 57 years. As the present pastor, I regard it quite a privilege, as a native of the county, to be here to celebrate the end of the first century and the beginning of the second. This celebration is a tribute to the people of the parish who not only preserved and maintained the institution of their ancestors, but in many instances improved on the existing structures so that generations yet unborn will be able to call this their homeland and their parish."

"This construction of a church 100 years ago was no easy task - there were no power saws, no electrical tools - yet these pioneers built a structure that has endured, and today it is a proof of the faith, the



Father Duncan MacIsaac, a native of Judique, has been the parish priest at St. Mary of the Angels in Glendale since 2018.

courage, and the zeal of the pastor and people of that time, and it is also a tribute to the people and priest of these times."

"The number of masses offered to God in the church, all the confessions heard, all the communion distributed, all the instruction preached, kept the people in close contact with their heavenly Father and inspired young men and young women to answer God's call to the priesthood and religious life. I rejoice with you, the people of St. Mary of the Angels Parish, in this festive occasion."

"To those who have gone before us we say, 'well done good and faithful servants, may the joy of the Lord be yours.' To the present parishioners and those who will follow in your footsteps, we say, 'Lean gudluth ri cliù do shinnsear (follow closely the fame of your ancestor - Gaelic proverb). As you enter the second century, you may face it with the same courage and determination with which your ancestors faced the first. ■

Truth and Reconciliation Day 2025

Bernard says the fight for change needs to happen 365 days a year

BY DAVE MACNEIL

Each year, September 30 marks the National Day for Truth & Reconciliation. Robert Bernard says he has to be hopeful that meaningful change can come that will improve the lives of Indigenous Canadians.

“We’re very resilient people,” he adds. “If we didn’t find hope in something, we’d have given up long ago.”

Bernard, a Mi’kmaw man who grew up in We’komaq First Nation and still lives there, is the owner of Indigenous Guide Consulting Services. He’s been working with Indigenous communities across Atlantic Canada for more than 30 years in the areas of culture, heritage, tourism and business development. He also conducts cross-cultural training seminars for clients.

He says Truth and Reconciliation Day, which was first observed in 2021, has meant different things to him at different times over those four years, noting that it’s caused him to reflect on why so many horrible things have happened to his people.

Among those are the atrocities resulting from Canada’s Indian Residential School (IRS) system, the church-run and government-funded institutions which took Indigenous children against their will, subjecting them to abuse and neglect in order to assimilate them into white European culture and religion.

Indigenous rights activists led a successful lawsuit, the largest class-action settlement in Canadian history, which mandated apologies from the Canadian government and official church bodies,



Robert Bernard stands outside the new We’koqmaq Cultural Shop, which opened earlier this year in the community. (Photo: Dave MacNeil)

as well as allocating approximately \$2 billion to be distributed among survivors of the IRS system.

The settlement led to the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 2008, a government sanctioned body that spent several years interviewing IRS survivors, and it released its final report in 2015, recommending 94 calls to action for the government to right such historic wrongs.

“When you talk about Truth and Reconciliation, you realize you’re an Indigenous person who’s been targeted by government, essentially to be wiped off this earth,” Bernard says. “At the end of the day, that’s a harsh truth to live with, because it begs the question, ‘why?’”

“Why did this happen and why is it continuing to happen? And that’s the other reality – it’s continuing to happen, but in different ways.”

He says coming to terms with what has happened to Indigenous Canadians like himself has been a 30-year journey, ever since he began working with government representatives.

“That is when I began to realize that something else is happening here,” he explains. “There’s another



Ella Nicholas, manager of the new We'koqma'q Cultural Shop, talks with Robert Bernard about some of the crafts featured at the centre. (Photo: Dave MacNeil)

reason why people talk to us in a certain way or work with us in a certain way – or don't want to work with us in a certain way, or just ignore us in a certain way."

"There are some people who actually care, but they are stuck in a system where they are limited in what they can do," he adds. "There are people out there who really want to make change happen and want to educate people, but there's just as many people – and likely even more – who like the status quo."

Bernard says the horrors of residential schools is just part of the systemic oppression of Indigenous Canadians.

"Imagine if you had two or three children under the age of 10 and they were taken away from you," he says, "and not just your children, but your brother's children, your sister's children, your nation's children across the country. You had no chance to change that because you'd be either beaten or shot or put in jail."

"The sense of place has been taken away from us for so long and yet, somehow, our people are still here, language has somehow held on, yet it's dying quickly. Our people are trying their best to reclaim our culture, our language, our connection to the environment, our protection of resources, but there's just so much that's happened and the impacts of it are so deep and multi-generational."

A growing part of the work of Indigenous Guide Consulting Services are the cross-cultural awareness seminars which Bernard has been conducting. He says a key element of achieving real change is educating people about the wrongs experienced by Indigenous Canadians.

"I've probably done 100 training courses in the last 10 years, and I would say 90 per cent of the people I've trained don't know 90 per cent of what I share with them," he says. "To some degree it doesn't surprise me, only because I know what I faced growing up."

“There was a lot of racism,” he recalls. “There still is, but it’s not as bad. People are starting to understand, and it’s starting to become a requirement that you need to take these cross-cultural awareness training courses. But I think where it’s changed the most is in the school systems where they’ve actually began to implement some changes – kids are finding out some of this history and they’re actually educating their parents about Indigenous history.”

Bernard says when he attended junior and senior high school in Mabou, the history of Indigenous Canadians was little more than a chapter in a textbook.

“Nobody knew what treaties were, nobody knew what a residential school was, nobody knew what centralization was, nobody knew the government created the Indian Act so that we would be all part of society and not honour the treaties that have been there since 1725,” he says.

“When we talk about Truth and Reconciliation, it’s about educating people, and people really taking the time to understand what has happened, what were the impacts, and how that is still affecting us today. We’re still living in a reserve system that was established in 1876. Where does the term reserve come from? It comes from a space you set aside for animals. That is how government and the leadership at the time thought about, as they said, Indian people.”

He says if Indigenous people have a responsibility when it comes to the 94 calls of action presented in the TRC’s report, “it is to our children, to our culture, to our language and continuing to protect the environment.”

Bernard says sometimes the slow pace of progress can be frustrating.

“The TRC report with 94 recommendations came out in 2015,” he says. “That’s 10 years. What have we done about it?”

He says he sees progress from time to time, but that meaningful change can only happen when people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians, can openly discuss the truths of the systemic abuse that has occurred.

“It’s never too late for people to change their views and to learn something and to do the right thing.”

“It’s kind of like the Northern Lights,” he explains. “They happen every once in a while, and you’re amazed when they happen and they’re so beautiful, and then they go away.”

“That’s how I feel about opportunities for change. When they happen, they’re wonderful and everyone feels good about it and then it goes away. Where is the follow-up? Where is the accountability? Where is the implementation? Why are things the same? Why haven’t we changed?”

Bernard says although his people continue to be ruled by the Indian Act of 1876, an act which established the reserve system which is still in place a century and a half later, it’s only been the last 25 or 50 years that Indigenous communities are standing up to society. He says if there’s reason for hope it’s in the Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth.

“I think the solution is in our children, society’s children, to arm them with information, because sometimes we’ve already learned what we feel comfortable about knowing and learning,” he says. “So, it will likely take another generation or two to either lose it totally, or to begin to recognize it, and value it and put it where it deserves to be, and then truth and reconciliation is happening every day.”

“It’s never too late for people to change their views and to learn something and to do the right thing. Some people will think it’s too hard. It’s not something we expect to happen overnight. It takes time.” ■

Connecting people to trails

Ferraro helping local groups realize their vision

BY DAVE MACNEIL

To say Emery Ferraro's arrival in Inverness County was serendipitous would be an understatement.

Hired in June of last year in the Municipality's new role of trails coordinator, Ferraro met their wife through a shared love of Gaelic music and culture. Born in Alberta, they moved to Oregon when they were seven, so neither they nor their Iowa-born wife had any natural connection to Gaelic but met through that interest.

"We both just kind of stumbled into it, both through a love of the music and a love of the culture," Ferraro says. "I always wanted to move back to Canada someday and 'someday' became last year."

"We always had our eye on Cape Breton as a place that we thought we'd feel at home, and we decided it was time to leave the US and come back to Canada, and so we just started looking at Cape Breton and when the trails job opened up at the municipality, I thought, 'well, this is just too good to be true. I've got to at least try.'"

Ferraro has a degree in environmental science, but they learned everything they know about trails while on the job in Oregon.

"I worked primarily with an organization called Trailkeepers of Oregon for a little over six years, learning the ins and outs of trail building, trail engineering, trail design, as well as grant writing skills, management skills, and community engagement."

Ferraro says their position is the result of a consultant's report on the needs of local trails groups in the county, noting that "the primary

recommendation of that study was the county hire a trails coordinator to be a liaison to all the wonderful trails groups we have here in Inverness County."

"I like to get in the woods whenever I can and I definitely wanted to support the existing volunteer groups, so I spent last summer getting out with volunteers as much as I could, just getting to know people, but mostly focusing on building those relationships, both with the local volunteers as well as other organizations in the area, and of course organizations at the provincial and federal levels as well, to make sure I knew who my support networks were, and where funding comes from," Ferraro explained.

"It was really just getting the lay of the land," Ferraro adds. "It's one thing to start a new job, but it's another thing to start a new job in an entirely different country with an entirely different governance system, so I really had to make sure I knew how everything worked here. I often say my job is connecting people to trails and trails to people – getting residents out on trails to help them celebrate and enjoy this wonderful place we live in."

They work closely with the volunteers involved with the Celtic Shores Coastal Trail, but Ferraro is quick to point out that there are many other groups throughout the county who work tirelessly to build and maintain other trail systems.

Like the trails that serve hikers and snowmobilers alike, Ferraro's job is year-round, and much of the time they're not in the woods helping to create trails, they're building relationships with various organizations, including the Nova Scotia Trails Federation, which represents and supports the many volunteer groups that help maintain the more than 10,000 kilometres of trails in the province.

Ferraro is also partnering with other groups to promote environmental education, including the Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP), and the Young Naturalists Club, which has branches throughout Nova Scotia and focuses on environmental education for pre-school children.

"I'm partnering with them to start a branch of that club here in Inverness County and trying to get that off the ground," they say.



Until the provincial ban on entering the woods came into effect, Emery Ferraro, left, was tirelessly working with their team to create trails in the county. Taking a break from their work (right photo) are, from left, Joseph MacDonald of Port Hood, Alexander Rankin of Mabou and Roddie Gillis of Mabou. (Photos: Dave MacNeil)

But building and maintaining trails still remains the main focus in their position, and a lot of that work is done in conjunction with the Inverness County Trails Federation.

“That’s a volunteer-run group and the Municipality has a set amount of dedicated funding that goes to that group, and then that group of volunteers field applications from the member organizations, which are all groups that have trails in Inverness County and then, based on the need, they divvy it out.”

Ferraro is also a consultant on the Jajiktek Seawall Trail project which will develop a 50-kilometre, high-difficulty multi-day coastal trail hike through remote backcountry in northern Cape Breton.

“The Municipality has dedicated staff to help manage that project, and I’ve been consulting on the trail alignment and just generally supporting the more technical aspects of that project,” they explain, adding that the team working on that project hopes to break ground next summer.

Another project in the works is a proposed cross country ski trail in the Margaree area, as a group reached out to them after they recently made a presentation to the Margaree Development Association.

Ferraro says they’re open to working with any group that has an idea for a trail.

“If someone reaches out and says we’re interested in having a trail in our community or they’re interested in accessing resources to maintain or expand an existing trail, I’ll definitely sit down with that group and find out what their goals are,” they note.

“It’s always about understanding how equipped they are to either get the volunteers required to get things done or help support them, because I’m just one person so my main goal is to figure out what it takes to empower the groups to see the goal they have come to fruition.”

On August 5, the Government of Nova Scotia restricted any travel or activities in the woods due to prolonged hot and dry weather conditions. The ban, however, did not stop Emery and their team. Although unable to access trails, the team supported the municipality’s Get Active summer students with youth programming, garbage clean-ups, fleet and rental bike maintenance, and held events focused on stargazing and youth environmental education. ■



Why September is the perfect time to get back on track (and why that's totally normal)

BY GLENNNA CALDER, ND

There's something about September that feels like a fresh start. Even though the calendar year is still in full swing, the shift in seasons - cooler mornings, changing leaves, the return of routine after summer holidays - makes this time of year feel like a second "New Year."

As a naturopathic doctor, I often hear people say, "I completely fell off track this summer." Whether it's eating more indulgently, skipping workouts, or letting routines slide, there's often a tinge of guilt in these confessions. But here's the truth: getting off track is not a failure. It's part of a normal, flexible, and sustainable lifestyle.

Falling Off Track Is Normal - And Healthy

Health isn't about being "perfect" every day. It's about ebbing and flowing with life and then having the tools, self-compassion, and structure to return to what makes you feel your best.

Summer is about enjoying yourself - vacations, BBQs, late nights, and ice cream with the kids. It's meant to be more relaxed. When September rolls around, it's not about punishment or extreme overhauls - it's about realignment.

So, if you've been feeling a bit off your game lately, know that you're not alone. And even better, know that you don't need to make drastic changes to feel like yourself again.

Here are five practical tips to help you gently get back on track this fall:

1. Rebuild One Habit at a Time

Don't try to overhaul your whole life in one week. Instead, pick one foundational habit that will have a ripple effect. For many of my patients, that's simply re-establishing a consistent sleep routine or starting the day with a nourishing breakfast.

Choose one area: maybe it's meal prepping lunches, drinking more water, or getting to bed by 10 p.m. Build that into your week for seven to 10 days before layering on something else.

Start small, be consistent, and let the wins build momentum.



2. Use September Energy to Your Advantage

There's a natural motivation that comes with fall. Kids are back in school, schedules become more predictable, and there's a collective energy of "getting organized."

Use this seasonal rhythm to your advantage. This is a great time to rebook your health appointments (like labs, acupuncture, or naturopathic check-ins), revisit your supplements, or return to your movement routine. Your brain is wired to want structure again - lean into that.

3. Nourish with Seasonal Foods

One of my favourite things about fall is the abundance of nutrient-dense, grounding foods. Think: root vegetables, squash, apples, beets, kale, and warming spices like cinnamon and turmeric.

If summer was more about patio snacks and travel meals, now's the time to bring it back to the kitchen. Try roasting a tray of seasonal veggies on Sunday or making a simple soup for lunches. It doesn't need to be complicated, just intentional.

4. Get Outside Daily, Even for 10 Minutes

We're heading into shorter days, so every minute of natural light counts. Aim to spend at least 10 minutes outside each day, whether it's a walk before dinner, your morning coffee on the porch, or taking calls while standing in the sun.

Light exposure during the day helps regulate your circadian rhythm, boost your mood, and support hormone health. Bonus: it also helps make the transition into winter less abrupt and more graceful.

5. Check In, Don't Check Out

When you feel "off," it's easy to ignore it and say, "I'll deal with that later." But symptoms like fatigue, bloating, mood swings, or brain fog are your body's way of asking for support. September is a great time to check in with your healthcare providers. Lab testing, nutrient assessments, or just a conversation about how you're really feeling can give you the clarity you need to make confident, informed choices about your health.

Gentle Reminders as You Reset:

- You don't need to be extreme to feel better.
- You can make progress without being perfect.
- Getting back on track can feel good, not like punishment.

Whether you're returning from vacation, sending kids back to school, or just craving some structure, September is the ideal time to reconnect with your health goals, and with yourself.

Glenna Calder, Naturopathic Doctor



Lizzi's Loop Adventure Camp

BY KRISTA MACINNIS

Lizzi's Loop Adventure Camp was created in honour of Lizzi MacEachern, a vibrant and joyful young girl from Port Hood who touched many lives before passing away unexpectedly at the young age of 11. Lizzi embodied all that we hope to inspire on the Get Active team—kindness, laughter, friendship, inclusion, and a love for being active.

The camp was specially designed for children ages four to six so they can experience the magic of summer camp, just like their older siblings. It offers a fun, safe, and imaginative introduction to the world of outdoor adventure and play. At its heart is the idea that every child deserves to feel the excitement of going to camp, to make new friends, explore nature, be creative, and leave each day with a sense of wonder.

One of the camp's most special features is Lizzi's Loop, a trail built in her memory. The trail winds gently through a beautiful natural setting in Port Hood, offering a perfect space for imagination and movement. It's a place where campers go on scavenger hunts, story walks, superhero missions, and nature explorations. The loop itself was created with help and input from Lizzi's family and community members who wanted to honour her memory in a meaningful and lasting way.

Each day at Lizzi's Loop Adventure Camp is built around a fun and engaging theme—Teddy Bear Picnic, Under the Sea, Bug Day, and Superhero Day—with hands-on crafts, physical activities, creative games, songs, and stories.

During Teddy Bear Picnic Day, each child brought their favourite teddy bear along for their annual check-up with Get Active team member, “Dr. Brooke MacLellan,” who made the experience both playful and memorable. On Bug Day, campers ventured into the wilderness to search for creepy crawlies and even built their very own bug habitats to take home. Superhero Day allowed children to create their own superhero personas, complete with custom powers and costumes, and work on their agility through fun obstacle courses and challenges.

The children were full of excitement from the moment they arrived each day. They made colourful crafts, explored new activities, and stayed active through games, dancing, and trail adventures.

This summer, campers joined us from across Inverness County—from Inverness to Creignish to Whycocomagh—and friendships blossomed across communities. A standout moment was on Superhero Day, when our very own “Peter Parker,” Hayden Gillies, made a surprise appearance and brought an extra spark of magic to the day.



The Get Active team's very own Peter Parker arrived for Superhero Day at the Adventure Camp, bringing lots of joy and excitement to the campers. *Photo: contributed.*

Leading this initiative was Summer Student Coordinator Marisa MacLellan. Now in her second season with the Get Active team, Marisa brought her creativity, leadership, and love for working with children to every aspect of the camp. As she prepares to enter the Education program at StFX University this fall, we were lucky to benefit from her natural ability to inspire, organize, and bring joy to each day of programming.

The Get Active team, made up of some of Lizzi's former teammates, classmates, and friends, put their hearts into creating a camp filled with joy and meaning. The camp has become a beautiful part of Lizzi's legacy—carrying forward the joy she brought to those around her and making sure every child leaves with laughter, memories, and a little bit of Lizzi's sparkle. ■



L'arrivée de nouveaux arrivants francophones pourrait enrichir le tissu social de Chéticamp en apportant de nouvelles perspectives, expériences et compétences. (Photo : Daniel Aucoin)

Accueillir et intégrer les nouveaux arrivants d'expression française à Chéticamp

PAR DANIEL AUCOIN

La communauté acadienne de Chéticamp a été officiellement sélectionnée pour déployer le projet des Communautés francophones accueillantes (CFA). Au cours des prochaines années, on veut mobiliser la communauté pour qu'elle crée les conditions favorables à l'accueil et à l'établissement à long terme de personnes immigrantes francophones dans la région.

Le projet des Communautés francophones accueillantes est une initiative du Ministère de l'Immigration, Réfugié et Citoyenneté Canada. Grâce à ce programme, le Canada redouble d'efforts pour accueillir de nouveaux arrivants d'expression française qui enrichiront le tissu linguistique, social, culturel et économique des communautés francophones en situation minoritaire. L'initiative des CFA représente 24 zones qui ont été sélectionnées pour accueillir et soutenir les nouveaux immigrants francophones pour s'assurer que ceux-ci se sentent les bienvenus dans leur nouvelle communauté.

Le programme des CFA a débuté en 2020 afin de soutenir les nouveaux arrivants francophones qui souhaitent s'intégrer dans les régions rurales



Chéticamp est l'une des 24 régions francophones choisies en tant que communauté francophone accueillant (CFA) dans le cadre du Plan d'action pour les langues officielles du Gouvernement du Canada. (Photo : Daniel Aucoin)

en dehors du Québec. En 2024, le gouvernement fédéral a annoncé que le projet pilote des CFA allait faire l'objet d'une expansion avec la volonté de passer de 14 à 24 communautés à l'échelle du pays.

Dès l'annonce de ce projet pour Chéticamp en 2024, la phase planification a commencé et a impliqué des intervenants de différents secteurs car cette initiative se veut pour, par et avec la communauté. L'initiative CFA à Chéticamp est un programme géré par la Société Saint-Pierre. La gouvernance de l'initiative est assurée par le comité consultatif communautaire composé de six bénévoles provenant d'organismes de Chéticamp et de membres observateurs.

La CFA de Chéticamp a pour mission de faciliter l'accueil, l'intégration et l'enracinement des personnes immigrantes francophones dans la région. Grâce à une approche humaine et inclusive, la CFA veut créer un environnement personnel, social et professionnel. En collaboration

avec les partenaires locaux, elle favorise un milieu où chaque personne peut s'épanouir, contribuer à la vie communautaire et bâtir un avenir durable en français.

La Société Saint-Pierre a choisi Betty Ann Cormier au poste de coordonnatrice de la Communauté francophone accueillante. Betty Ann apporte avec elle une solide expérience en mobilisation communautaire ainsi qu'un profond engagement envers l'inclusion et la promotion de la culture francophone. Grâce à son parcours en engagement communautaire, la coordonnatrice est bien placée pour diriger des initiatives visant à créer un environnement accueillant et inclusif pour les nouveaux arrivants francophones à Chéticamp.

À titre de coordonnatrice, Betty Ann Cormier dirige les efforts visant à favoriser l'intégration et la participation des immigrants francophones à travers des initiatives culturelles, éducatives et communautaires. Elle collabore étroitement avec les partenaires locaux, les intervenants et les membres de la communauté pour appuyer la vision d'une communauté francophone vivante et inclusive.

Lisette Aucoin-Bourgeois est la directrice générale de la Société Saint-Pierre à Chéticamp. " Nous sommes ravis d'accueillir Betty Ann Cormier au sein de notre équipe. Sa passion pour la communauté francophone, combinée à ses compétences en leadership et à son approche



L'immigration francophone représente une opportunité précieuse pour la communauté acadienne de Chéticamp de renforcer sa vitalité, de préserver son patrimoine et de prospérer dans un avenir durable. (Photo : Daniel Aucoin)

collaborative, font d'elle la personne idéale pour renforcer nos efforts d'accueil et bâtir dessein durables avec les nouveaux arrivants."

CFA de Chéticamp vise à promouvoir un leadership inclusif, un accès équitable aux services d'accueil et d'établissement, des opportunités économiques et un engagement communautaire à travers une variété d'activités et de services spéciaux. On veut mettre tout en oeuvre pour appuyer les nouveaux arrivants d'expression française dans la réalisation de leur projet de vie au Canada.

La Société Saint-Pierre souhaite collaborer avec Immigration francophone Nouvelle-Écosse ainsi que d'autres organismes, dont Cape Breton Partnership qui gère un volet d'immigration très important au Cap-Breton. Le processus d'intégration de nouveaux arrivants d'expression française a pris de l'expansion l'année dernière lorsque Immigration Nouvelle-Écosse a créé un nouveau poste de conseillère en établissement pour la région du Cap-Breton.

La CFA de Chéticamp et son comité consultatif communautaire ont mis sur pied un Plan communautaire. Parmi les initiatives proposées, on retrouve un accès équitable aux services d'accueil et d'établissement. On veut aussi développer des opportunités économiques et l'entrepreneuriat, en plus d'effectuer des rencontres de sensibilisation avec des employeurs de la région.

Dans la communauté acadienne de Chéticamp, on fait face à des défis démographiques tels que

le faible taux de natalité, le vieillissement de la population et la pénurie de main-d'oeuvre qualifiée. L'arrivée de nouveaux immigrants francophones pourrait contribuer à augmenter la population de Chéticamp, renforcer son tissu social et culturel et apporter une nouvelle dynamique économique. ■

Read an English version of this article at:
participaperonline.ca

Holiday Collections

Municipal offices, Strathlorne Recycling Facility and Kenloch Waste Management Facility will be **closed on Monday, Sept. 30, Monday, Oct. 13 and Tuesday, Nov. 11** for National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, Thanksgiving and Remembrance Day.

REGULAR COLLECTION		Bag limits: 4 garbage bags no limit on blue bags
National Day of Truth and Reconciliation September 30, 2025		
NO COLLECTION	→	DOUBLE COLLECTION Monday October 20, 2025
NO COLLECTION	→	DOUBLE COLLECTION Monday November 18, 2025

Download Recycle Cape Breton from the Apple or Google Play Stores to view your collection calendar.





The team supported multiple summer festivals throughout the municipality, including getting in on some of the sand sculpture fun during Mabou Ceilidh Days.

Get Active Inverness County: Summer Fun, Connection, and Community

BY CARLY BEATON (GET ACTIVE TEAM MEMBER)

This summer, communities all over Inverness County felt the excitement of the municipality's Get Active program. It wasn't just about playing sports or getting exercise. It was about bringing people together, helping kids feel like they belong, and making fun memories for families.

The Get Active team spent the summer traveling around the county. They went from town to town, bringing games, equipment, and positive energy with them. Their goal was to make it easy for everyone to join in. They didn't expect kids to bring

gear or pay big fees. They just wanted everyone to feel welcome. Whether someone lived in the county their whole life, just moved, or was back for a summer visit, there was always a place for them.

The team focused on removing barriers to recreation. Programming was free or extremely affordable, and Get Active supplied equipment so the kids just had to show up. It was about making sure no one missed out. This summer's programs were bigger and more open to everyone than ever before. Along with favourites like beach volleyball,

spike ball, and multi-sport days, they added some fun new options like Arts and Crafts Days, Science Days, and LEGO Clubs. These activities brought in kids who might not have been into sports before, and it was great to see everyone having fun in their own way.

There were also some exciting partnerships this year. One of the highlights was the Alba FA “Play Gàidhlig” Soccer Camp that came all the way from Scotland. It mixed soccer drills with learning Gaelic and was a huge hit. The team also worked with JaysCare and the local softball association to start “Girls at Bat,” a program that helps support girls in sport. Wave Volleyball also came on board to offer high-level coaching, which really helped build confidence and skills in young athletes.

On top of all that, Get Active supported a number of community events including Mabou Ceilidh, the Inverness Gathering, Chestico Days, Festival de l’Escaouette, the Margaree Highland Games, and Judique’s 250th anniversary. One of the biggest



Participants of the Alba FA ‘Play Gàidhlig’ Soccer Camp had the unique opportunity to receive professional-level soccer coaching from visiting coaches while immersing themselves in the Gaelic language—blending sport and culture. The camp was spearheaded by Fèis Mhabu and supported by the Get Active team.



The Get Active team at one of the teen beach volleyball tournaments. L to R: Hayden Gillies, Kacey MacDonald, Brooke MacLellan, Marisa MacLellan, Isla Gillies, Carly Freimanis, Carly Beaton, Violet MacDonald, Kateag Hawley. (Photos: contributed)



The Get Active crew hosted spike ball tournaments for teens grade seven and up on beaches throughout the summer.



The Get Active team partnered with the Inverness Gathering committee to help host the second Annual Gary MacInnis Beach Volleyball Tournament. Winning team pictured L to R: Sarah Ryan, Nicole MacFarlane, Allistair MacDonald, Kevin Poirier, and Nick Venne.

events of the summer was the Second Annual Gary MacInnis Memorial Beach Volleyball Tournament on July 23rd in Inverness. Last year, it brought out more than 100 people and teams of all ages. This year, it was even bigger. It was a day full of energy, community spirit, and friendly competition, all in memory of a coach who meant a lot to so many people.

One of the best things about the Get Active program is how inclusive it is. If a kid showed up without a team, the staff would jump in and make

sure they could still play. Parents even asked to join sometimes, just because the environment was fun and welcoming. In the end, this summer wasn't just about staying active. It was about building a stronger community.

Every game, every craft, and every activity gave kids the chance to try something new and make new friends. All summer long, people came out, got involved, and helped create something really special. One game, one beach day, and one smiling kid at a time. ■



Out and About

Making its Canadian debut across two locations on Cape Breton Island, *Joan Jonas, We come from the sea* is an immersive art experience featuring the celebrated installation *Moving Off the Land II* by acclaimed artist, Joan Jonas.

We come from the sea examines the line between art and nature, fact and feeling. Jonas' deep connection to Cape Breton, where she has lived seasonally since 1970, is woven throughout, bringing local landscapes and local spirit into a global conversation.

(Photo: Maximilian Geuter, 2022)

Simultaneously presented at Eltuek Arts Centre (Sydney, NS), and Inverness County Centre for the Arts (August 10-October 12, 2025) by Art Gallery of Nova Scotia and the National Gallery of Canada.

invernessarts.com

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REGULAR COUNCIL MEETINGS take place on the first Thursday of each month and start at 9:30 a.m. These meetings are open to the public.

The municipality's Facebook page also carries up-to-date information on Inverness County events and other items of interest to our residents.

f [@InvernessCounty](https://www.facebook.com/InvernessCounty) Stay up-to-date with what is happening in the county.



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