

ANNUAL REPORT

Bringing Communities Together

2025-2026

Message from the Chair

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to reflect on another productive year for the North Shore Community Association. The continued growth and success of the organization are made possible through the dedication of our staff, volunteers, members, and community partners.

Throughout the year, NSCA has continued to strengthen its programs, partnerships, and presence across the North Shore while remaining focused on the needs of our English-speaking communities. As a Board, we are proud to support the organization in its work and to provide guidance as it continues to grow and respond to new opportunities and challenges.

I would like to thank our Executive Director and staff for their commitment and hard work, my fellow Board members for their leadership, and our volunteers, partners, and community members for their continued support.

We look forward to another year of working together to strengthen our communities and ensure a strong and vibrant future for the English-speaking population of the North Shore.



Edith O'Brien
Chair, NSCA

Board of Directors

Edith O'Brien
Chair

Marcella Beaudoin
Vice-Chair

Donald Goodfellow
Treasurer

Barbara Bursey
Secretary

Marianne Bizeau
Director

Jackie Bizeau
Director

Danielle Duguay
Director

Gary Fish
Director

Julia Fillon
Youth Director

Message from the Executive Director

As another year comes to a close at the North Shore Community Association, I am proud of what we have accomplished together. Through the dedication of our staff, Board of Directors, volunteers, members, and partners, we continue to strengthen and support the English-speaking communities of the North Shore.

This year has been marked by collaboration, community engagement, and the continued development of programs and services responding to the needs of our community.

Our partnerships at the local, regional, and provincial levels remain essential in helping us improve access to services, create opportunities, and ensure that the voices of English-speaking residents are heard.

I sincerely thank our staff for their dedication, our Board for their leadership, our volunteers for their valuable contributions, and our many partners and community members for their continued support.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to building strong partnerships, responding to emerging needs, and contributing to vibrant and inclusive English-speaking communities across the North Shore.



Jody Lessard

Executive Director, NSCA

Our Team

Jody Lessard
Executive Director

Charlene Lavallee
Coordinator-Senior Wellness

Amber Dalby
Community Outreach
Agent

Alicia Buffitt
Youth Project Coordinator

Natalie Greene
Programs Coordinator

Aitalina Stepanova
Communications &
Research Agent

Christine Charlemagne
Development Agent

Brigitte Lalo Malec
Community Development Agent

Sarah Chicoine
Guidance Counsellor (c.o.)

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2025–2026 At a Glance

5,081

participant
engagements across
NSCA programs and
activities

356

activities and
sessions offered

2,173

participations in
Senior Wellness
programming

2,012

participants in
children, youth &
family
programming

896

participants in
mental health &
young adult
programming

193

Senior Wellness
activities

87

children, youth
& family
activities

76

mental health
& young adult
activities

645

hours of respite
care and friendly
visits provided to
seniors

556

participants in
Story Time,
Toddler Time &
HEY activities

1,432

participants at
community events
and outreach
activities

1,191

parents and adults
engaged through
youth & family
activities

821

children reached
through youth &
family activities

12 500

average monthly
views on Social
media page

22

local, regional &
provincial tables &
committees
represented

377

new followers on
Social media

Highlights from 2025-2026

May-June 2025 – Senior Wellness wrapped up its spring programming in Sept-Îles and Baie-Comeau while NSCA consulted with English-speaking residents in Port-Cartier about expanding wellness activities there.

June 2025 – NSCA joined the 3rd Northern Impact 829 gathering in Jonquière with partners from three northern regions and helped advance shared action planning for remote English-speaking communities.

NSCA also participated in the Sept-Îles Youth & Family Fair, where 106 people visited our table to learn about programs and resources.

September 2025 – Senior Wellness programming officially began in Port-Cartier, extending regular wellness opportunities to a third community.

NSCA celebrated 25 years at its Annual General Meeting in Baie-Comeau, with nearly 40 community members and special guests in attendance.

October 2025 – NSCA participated as part of Destination Côte-Nord delegation at the Salon d'emploi in Montréal, where 550 individuals visited the kiosks and expressed interest in employment opportunities on the North Shore.

October-November 2025 – Wear It Purple Day activities at QEHS and BCHS promoted inclusion, acceptance and support for LGBTQ+ youth.

Launched the online Community Services Mapping Tool to help community members more easily identify services available in English.

November-December 2025 – AGELESS documentary screenings brought youth and seniors together in Sept-Îles and Baie-Comeau to discuss ageism and intergenerational understanding.

December 2025 – Career Day at QEHS connected approximately 139 students with 20 kiosks representing career paths, resources and local organizations.

The annual Christmas Tea in Sept-Îles brought together 90 participants and supported community giving through backpacks, care packages and gifts.

March 2026 – Intergenerational mental health activities connected students and seniors through Positive Mental Health Day and Well-Being BINGO activities.

NSCA continued hands-on youth programming at BCHS, including life skills, cooking, Chat N' Chill sessions and family-focused Parent Volet activities.

Across April 2025–March 2026 – NSCA's activity records documented 5,081 participant experiences across programming for seniors, youth, families, mental health and community activities. This is an attendance figure rather than a count of unique individuals.

2026 – NSCA secured Community Opportunity Fund: Employment Service Support funding to expand personalized English-language employment and guidance services across the North Shore.

Arts, Culture & Community Life

Community life remained at the heart of NSCA programming. Social, cultural and creative activities gave residents opportunities to meet, celebrate, volunteer, share traditions and build relationships across communities and generations.



25 years

of service
recognized at the
AGM



40

community
members and
guests at the AGM



90

participants at the
Sept-iles
Christmas Tea



3

community
recognition award
recipients

25th Anniversary and AGM

Nearly 40 community members attended NSCA's Annual General Meeting on September 20, 2025 in Baie-Comeau. The event recognized 25 years of service to the English-speaking community and our Executive Director Jody Lessard was recognized for 25 years of dedication to NSCA.

Seasonal & Cultural Activities

Fruitcake baking, holiday brunches, intergenerational, Christmas activities and seasonal meals continued. Community Book Clubs remained active. Creative programming included paint nights, crafts and gingerbread activities. St. Patrick's Day brought together senior and community members in Sept-iles and Baie-Comeau.

Community Recognition

Three recipients were recognized with the Marc Deslaurier Outstanding Community Involvement Award for their exceptional contributions and commitment to community life.

Giving Back

Christmas Tea fundraising supported backpacks, gifts and donations for people in need, respite care clients and local women's shelters. These efforts highlight how our social programming mobilizes volunteerism and mutual support, strengthening connections and creating a caring, inclusive community.

Community Development, Outreach & Partnerships

● Northern and Regional Collaboration

- Participated in the 3rd edition of the Northern Impact 829 Network in Jonquière with Neighbours Rouyn-Noranda, Coasters Association and ECO-02, supported by CHSSN and RDN.
- Worked with northern partners on common challenges including access to services, youth retention, socio-economic development and community development in remote regions.
- Executive Director Jody Lessard represented NSCA at the Regional Development Network Community Builders event and AGM, where NSCA was recognized as one of five organizations celebrating a milestone anniversary.
- Continued local and regional representation through community events, collaborative tables and joint initiatives.



● Community Outreach

- Participated in MAMU Connectons Ensembles at Manicouagan Park, where approximately 50 people visited the NSCA kiosk to ask about programs and services.
- Participated in the Sept-Îles Youth & Family Fair, which brought together more than 35 community organizations; 106 people visited the NSCA table.
- Promoted community, family, health, youth, senior and employment resources through newsletters, social media, partner events and direct outreach.
- Continued supporting newcomers and residents in navigating local services and community resources.

● Staff Development and Planning

- In September, the Baie-Comeau and Sept-Îles teams came together in Baie-Comeau for a two-day staff retreat. The retreat focused on strategic planning, team building, and reflection, helping to strengthen internal collaboration and establish a shared vision for the year ahead.

Inclusion, Well-Being & Intergenerational Connections

● AGELESS - Real Talk, Real Change

NSCA hosted screenings of the documentary AGELESS - Real Talk, Real Change: To End Ageism in Sept-Îles and Baie-Comeau. In Sept-Îles, 17 seniors and 15 students viewed the film together. In Baie-Comeau, 17 Senior Wellness members participated, followed by an intergenerational screening with 12 BCHS students, three seniors and a staff member. The discussions encouraged participants to examine age-based assumptions and better understand lived experiences across generations.



● Positive Mental Health Activities

- On March 11, 16 Secondary 5 students and 18 seniors participated in a Positive Mental Health Day at QEHS, using games and discussion to explore well-being and build intergenerational connections.
- On March 24, BCHS students and Baie-Comeau seniors joined a Well-Being BINGO afternoon combining social connection with mental health discussion.
- A Positive Well-Being BINGO Night in Sept-Îles included a presentation by counsellor Sarah Chicoine on healthy coping strategies.
- Two March Paint Nights offered teens and adults a creative way to relax and connect.
- NSCA promoted a Toolbox for Positive Mental Health, making self-help information and support resources easier to access.

● Intergenerational Connections



Intergenerational programming continues to expand. Seniors read with students at Flemming Elementary, supported the school's Olympic Day, cooked with students at QEHS and shared creative activities with Riverview School students in Port-Cartier.

These activities helped reduce isolation while building mutual understanding and community belonging.

Health & Social Services

NSCA continued to support English-speaking residents in understanding and accessing health and social services, while working with regional partners to improve awareness of existing services and navigation tools.

● Improving Access to Services in English

- Continued promotion of the CISSS de la Côte-Nord Access Program and English-language service information.
- Promoted the Allô / Follow the Yellow initiative, which helps English-speaking users identify health professionals who have volunteered to assist with communication and understanding.
- Continued awareness of pictogram and geocator tools used at the Sept-Îles hospital to make navigation easier.
- Promoted the availability of Aire Ouverte services for youth ages 12-25, including free and confidential psychosocial telehealth services across the region.
- Promoted the 211 North Shore service following its October 2025 launch, helping residents locate community, governmental and social resources.



Community Services Mapping Tool

NSCA launched an online Community Services Mapping Tool designed to make organizations offering some level of service in English easier to find across the North Shore. The tool supports residents looking for health, social, family, employment and community services and strengthens NSCA's role as a regional information hub.



SHARP Information Sessions

NSCA, in collaboration with CHSSN, continued to offer SHARP (Services for Healthy Aging in the Right Place) sessions covering practical topics such as assistive devices, fall prevention, essential health and social service hotlines, home-care support and financial assistance for aging at home.



McGill Community Network Bursary

A Sept-Îles student pursuing studies in Social Work at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi was selected as the 2025–2026 McGill Community Network Bursary recipient. The bursary program supports students in health and social service fields and responds to regional priorities for improved access to services in English.



Health Promotion

Health and wellness information was integrated throughout the year into senior programming, youth activities and newsletters, including workshops on assistive devices, fall prevention, essential hotlines, dental care, nutrition, dementia, mental health and healthy aging.

Senior Wellness Programming



AT A GLANCE

2,173

participations across
Senior Wellness
programming

55

Seniors for
National Seniors
Day

193

documented
activities and
services

15

Participants in the
Rob Lutes music
workshop

● Expansion to Port-Cartier

We extended regular Senior Wellness programming to Port-Cartier, creating welcoming spaces for seniors to connect, participate and access supports close to home. Partnerships and local interest continue to grow.

● Learning and Healthy Aging

Workshops and sessions on cooking, life skills, mental health, and dementia awareness empower seniors with knowledge and confidence while building connections between generations.

● Wellness Activities Across Communities

From wellness gatherings and intergenerational events to music, movement and mindfulness, activities in Baie-Comeau, Sept-Îles and Port-Cartier helped strengthen well-being, inclusion and a sense of belonging.

● Community Connection & Giving

Stitch & Yarn recorded 224 participations, bringing seniors together. Beyond the social benefits of the group, members also used their time and talents to support others by contributing handmade items and care packages to people in need.

Youth & Young Adults

NSCA creates positive spaces where youth and young adults can learn, connect, build skills and feel supported. Through engaging activities, workshops and community events, we help young people strengthen their well-being, express themselves and discover opportunities.



YOUTH ACTIVITIES & INITIATIVES

Wear It Purple Day



Activities at QEHS and BCHS promoted inclusion, acceptance and support for LGBTQ+ youth.

Chat N° 'Chill & Life Skills



NSCA also offered Chat N° Chill, a monthly lunch-hour group where students could openly discuss topics including mental health, wellness and community life in a safe, supportive setting.

The After-School Life Skills Program



continued with monthly hands-on sessions for students in Grades 3 to 6. Topics included basic first aid, cooking, financial literacy and practical everyday knowledge.

Cooking & Nutrition



Hands-on cooking workshops, including the 5 Épices workshop at BCHS.

Career Exploration



Students connected with local organizations and resources during the QEHS Career Day.



139

students reached
at the OEHS
Career Day



34

participants in the
intergenerational
Positive Mental
Health Day



31

students in the 5
Épices cooking
workshop at
BCHS



29

participants in
the World
Children's Day
activity at BCHS



YOUNG ADULTS ACTIVITIES

- ✓ Paint Night at Y-W-Miyako Galerie d'Art brought young adults together for a guided canvas project.
- ✓ A Gingerbread House Competition combined creativity with intergenerational involvement as seven Senior Wellness members served on the judging panel.
- ✓ Community Book Club activities continued in Sept-Îles, including a Christmas-themed gathering with games and prizes.
- ✓ Hybrid Paint Nights in March 2026 gave teens and adults a creative, relaxing opportunity to participate from NSCA offices or online.



Children, Families & Early Childhood

Programming for children and families continued across Baie-Comeau, Sept-Îles and Port-Cartier, combining early literacy, language development, school readiness, parent support and hands-on family activities.



2,012

participant engagements in children & family activities



1,191

parents and adults engaged



821

children reached



96

activities and services



Story Time, Toddler Time & HEY

40 sessions • 556 participations

Seasonal stories, crafts, healthy snacks, literacy bags and school-readiness support helped little learners thrive.



Early Childhood Week

26 students joined the BCHS parade and flag activity

Community participation and “blankie-square” solidarity highlighted the importance of early learning on the North Shore.



Coco Placote & Language Development

8 English-subtitled capsules

Practical, engaging language-development resources for families to learn, play and build communication together.



Family Activities & Parent Support

31 students in the March 5 Épices cooking workshop

Parent Volet sessions plus bilingual cooking and crafting activities strengthened skills, confidence and family connections.

Employability & Career Development

Employability became an increasingly important area of NSCA's work during 2025-2026. The organization combined outreach, career events, partnerships and practical support while preparing to significantly expand English-language employment services across the North Shore.

● Employment Outreach

At the October 2025 Salon d'emploi in Montréal, NSCA joined Destination Côte-Nord partners to promote career opportunities in the region. A total of 550 people visited the kiosk expressing interest in visiting the North Shore for employment.

NSCA participated in the 2026 Salon de l'emploi at Galeries Montagnaises, supporting job seekers with CV updates and interview preparation tips.

Career Day at QEHS connected approximately 139 students with 20 career and resource kiosks.

Employment information continued to be shared through NSCA's communications channels and partner networks.



New Employment Service Support Funding

In 2026, NSCA secured new funding through the Community Opportunity Fund: Employment Service Support to expand services for English-speaking residents. The initiative is designed to address barriers created by limited access to employment supports in English and to help residents find, secure and maintain meaningful employment.

Planned and Emerging Services

One-on-one
career and
guidance
counselling

Career and
educational
orientation
support

Skills, interest
and readiness
assessments.

CV and cover
letter support

Interview
preparation
and job search
guidance

Workshops
and
information
sessions

Referrals to
complementary
training, literacy
and employment
services

Expanded
digital
outreach and
information
sharing

Acknowledgements

NSCA gratefully acknowledges the financial support of:



Funded by the Government of Canada's
Enabling Fund for Official Language
Minority Communities Program





Our Mission

The North Shore Community Association is a non-profit regional organization dedicated to serving, representing, and instilling pride in the English-speaking community of Quebec's North Shore. Our aim is to empower residents and to strengthen the community across the region by working to make information and resources available, by facilitating community initiatives, by encouraging and improving communication, by promoting access to services, by developing partnerships and by increasing the visibility of the English -speaking community. Together, we are building a vital, informed and strong community.

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