



# Newfoundland & Labrador Annual Review 2017 – 2018

**cnib**  
a century of change

**100**  
years





## About CNIB

Established in 1918, CNIB provided food, clothing, residences and library services to blinded veterans and other Canadians living with vision loss. Our organization has evolved over the last 100 years; in addition to charitable programs – such as education, advocacy, research and client support – CNIB has become the primary provider of vision rehabilitation in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In 2017, CNIB proudly introduced a new brand for our rehabilitation services: **Vision Loss Rehabilitation Newfoundland and Labrador**. With funding from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador through Eastern Health, we provide essential services that enhance independence, safety, mobility and emotional well-being for individuals with vision loss.

We're also committed to offering a range of **CNIB Foundation** programs, that are entirely dependent on charitable funding that complement and enhance our rehabilitation services. These programs focus on improving quality of life for individuals with vision loss and creating a more inclusive, barrier-free society.

In 2018, we are proud to begin our second century – and we look forward to continuing to work in partnership with those we serve, as well as with other organizations, the medical community, and government to create a future in which every Newfoundlander and Labradorian with sight loss has the opportunity to fully participate in life.

# Collaboration with health professionals and community organizations

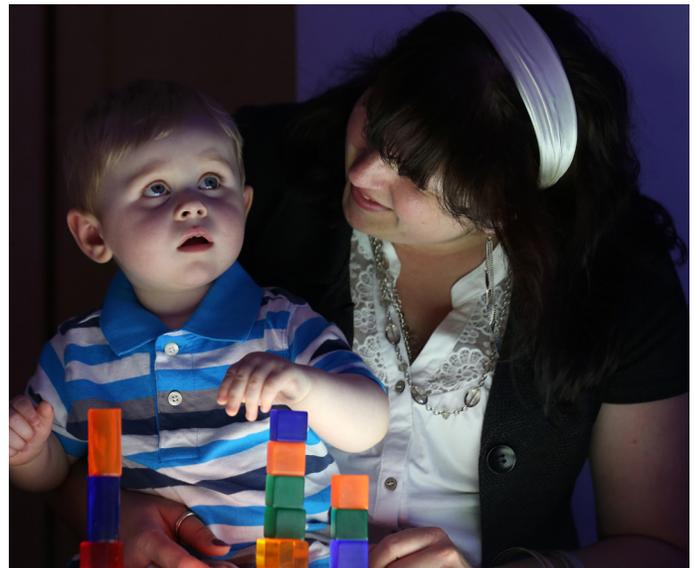
CNIB is working in partnership with allied health professionals and academic communities to create an exceptional client experience, while improving the quality of life for individuals who are blind or partially sighted.

In fact, more than half of the people who come to CNIB in Newfoundland and Labrador are referred by an ophthalmologist or an optometrist.

Working collaboratively and leveraging our respective strengths enables us to reach individuals before their vision loss has a severe, lasting impact on their health, independence and quality of life. It leads to better outcomes for individuals with vision loss and reduces pressures on hospitals and care facilities.

## Claire's Community and The Cerebral Palsy Association

**Claire's Community** (a non-profit community organization which provides support to families who have a child who is sick or has a disability) and **The Cerebral Palsy Association of NL** have both teamed up with CNIB to provide monthly parent support groups and playgroups at our CNIB office in St John's. These groups, open to any parent/caregiver who has a child with a disability, continue to grow in popularity and have even started to expand into paint nights and craft nights.



## Lions Clubs NL

The **Lions Clubs of Newfoundland and Labrador** continue to make a tremendous impact on CNIB clients provincewide through their commitment to provide funding for the purchase of white canes, which are distributed to clients free of charge. This amazing commitment has had a huge impact on the lives of our clients by enhancing their independence.

The Lions Clubs NL have also recently become more involved in our Foundation programs; providing space and catering for peer support events and committing to helping with the recruitment of volunteers for our Vision Mate program.

Thank you to Lions Clubs N3 and N4 for their continued work in making a difference in the lives of those who are blind or partially sighted in our province.

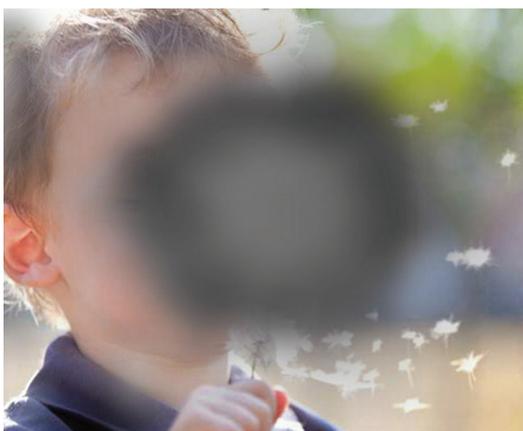


# NEWFOUNDLANDERS & LABRADORIANS WITH SIGHT LOSS



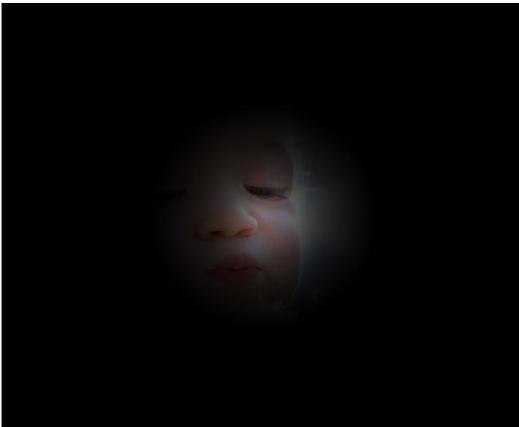
Sight loss is a significant health issue in Newfoundland & Labrador, where approximately 84,000 people are estimated to be living with a sight-threatening eye disease. Among this group, approximately 6,800 have experienced serious vision loss and are partially sighted or blind.

The vast majority of sight loss in Newfoundland & Labrador occurs as a result of eye diseases acquired in adulthood. In some cases, medical or surgical treatment can stabilize or improve eyesight, while in others the loss is permanent.



## **Age-related macular degeneration (AMD):** **21,500 Newfoundlanders & Labradorians**

AMD is a progressive eye disease that causes damage to the macula, the central part of the retina. There are two forms of the disease – the dry form, and the more serious, rapidly progressing wet form.



## **Glaucoma:**

### **4,000 Newfoundlanders & Labradorians**

Glaucoma is an often symptomless eye disease in which a build-up of pressure inside the eye irreversibly damages the optic nerve. Over time it can develop into a loss of peripheral vision, severe tunnel vision or total blindness.



## **Diabetic retinopathy:**

### **10,300 Newfoundlanders & Labradorians**

Diabetic retinopathy is a complication in which high blood glucose levels cause blood vessels in the retina to swell and leak, damaging eyesight. Nearly all Type 1 and 60% of Type 2 patients develop some retinopathy in the first 20 years of having diabetes.



## **Cataracts:**

### **48,000 Newfoundlanders & Labradorians**

Cataracts typically form with age as the lenses of the eye harden and turn cloudy, leading to blurred vision. Cataracts generally can be removed through surgery.

# VISION LOSS REHABILITATION

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR



Our certified specialists work closely with ophthalmologists, optometrists and other health care professionals, providing essential care on a referral basis throughout Newfoundland & Labrador.

Vision Loss Rehabilitation Newfoundland and Labrador would like to acknowledge the **Government of Newfoundland and Labrador** for providing funding for vision rehabilitation therapy through our service delivery and funding agreement with **Eastern Health** and the **Department of Advanced Education, Skills, and Labour**.

## Low Vision Services

For individuals with low vision, learning to use the sight they have can be life-changing. Our certified specialists:

- provide information about eye diseases and explain how they affect vision in an easy-to-understand way
- teach how to use lighting and colour contrast to maximize remaining vision
- help select appropriate low vision aids and assistive technology – from specialty magnifiers to telescopes, iPads and apps
- teach how to use these devices for everyday tasks like reading small print on medications and food packages, to reading personal mail, newspapers, phone numbers and recipes, to watching TV, to reading street signs and bus numbers

## Independent Living Skills

Our specialists help individuals learn skills to accomplish everyday activities independently and safely. Instruction includes:

- techniques for meal prep, from pouring a cup of coffee to using household appliances and cooking a full course meal
- organization and labeling techniques to easily locate and identify household and personal items, such as medications
- tips for identifying money and banking
- techniques for using the telephone and keeping track of phone numbers
- how to use large print, braille and audio products to read and keep track of information
- how to use products designed for individuals with sight loss, adaptive technology (including cell phones with built-in accessibility features) and apps

# Orientation & Mobility Instruction

Learning to travel independently with sight loss is an essential skill. Our specialists teach:

- safe and comfortable ways to walk with a sighted person
- how to navigate indoor environments safely and independently
- about different types of white canes – ID, support and long – and help determine the proper cane to best meet someone's needs
- cane techniques to walk safely and independently throughout one's community
- way-finding skills, including how to use landmarks
- how to safely cross streets at intersections controlled by stop signs and traffic lights
- how to use public transportation
- new routes to be able to travel independently to places in a community
- about guide dogs
- how to use accessible GPS apps that assist with orientation and locating points of interest

**834 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians** received services from Vision Loss Rehabilitation NL in 2017-2018



## Adjustment to Vision Loss Counselling

Counselling is critical for people coming to terms with their sight loss, understanding and dealing with their emotions and accepting the support and training that will allow them to live independent, active lives. Services include:

- a structured eight-week Adjustment to Vision Loss group program, facilitated by a trained professional, to help individuals adjust to the social and emotional impact of vision loss
- one-on-one counselling and/or referral to other mental health supports
- connecting individuals to community programs and helpful resources available in their local area

## Services for Children, Youth and Families

Our specialists help children, youth, and their families and caregivers:

- develop individual rehabilitation plans based on ongoing assessments for children and youth
- make referrals to outside agencies, and connect parents and caregivers with needed resources and information
- provide supportive counselling and advocacy for families

Vision Loss Rehabilitation NL specialists delivered more than **8,845 hours** of vital vision rehabilitation services to individuals who are blind or partially sighted in Newfoundland & Labrador from April 2017 to March 2018.

## Assistive Technology

Our services help people who are blind or partially sighted to have the equipment and education for maximizing their quality of life through using the latest adaptive technology. Our specialists:

- assess and recommend devices and provide instruction to use them
- provide support with technology to enhance work and school
- assist in finding funding for technology

## Career Supports

Our Career Support Services meet the unique needs of people who are blind or partially sighted. Our specialists offer:

- career planning and counselling
- workplace accommodation assessment and training
- support in transitioning from high school to post-secondary training
- support for employers and employment agencies

## MEET LAYLA TULK

At just 12-years-old, Layla Tulk is a national award-winning writer, having placed in CNIB's Braille Creative Writing Contest – twice. In 2016, Layla placed first for her poem called “My Baby Cousin Gabe,” and she placed second in 2017 for her short story, “The Best Season Ever.”

From Nicky's Nose Cove, a small community in central Newfoundland & Labrador, Layla began learning braille at the age of four through the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA). Diagnosed with Optic Nerve Hypoplasia – a congenital condition in which the optic nerve is underdeveloped or absent and causes the disruption of messages between the eyes and brain – she has no functional vision.

In October 2017, Layla and her mom Jennie flew to Toronto to accept her second place award at the CNIB Braille Conference. She captivated the audience with her infectious laugh and a reading of her story. She loved walking around the downtown area, shopping and meeting new people.

While in Toronto, Layla met CNIB's president and CEO, John Rafferty. They spoke about how braille helps her in school, the importance of both non-sighted and sighted individuals understanding braille, and of Layla's dream to be involved with CNIB when she grows up.

The highlight of Layla's summer is attending CNIB's annual Family Camp, which takes place at the Lion Max Simms Camp in Bishop Falls. She attends with her mom and brothers, Rylan and Lucas. She loves arts and crafts, swimming in the outdoor pool, spending time with friends and making new ones.

Layla is a role model to many of the other children and families at camp. Her family welcomes anyone new with open arms. They encourage and inspire others by sharing their experiences and answering questions from other parents. Layla will become a junior camp counsellor in summer 2019, when she will acquire skills in planning and leadership while continuing to be a role model and inspiration to other campers and families.



**Layla with her mother Jennie and brothers Rylan and Lucas at CNIB Family Camp**

# FOUNDATION PROGRAMS

CNIB offers a range of programs aimed at enhancing the quality of life for individuals who are blind or partially sighted and their families.

Our **Peer Support Programs** ensure individuals with vision loss have ongoing opportunities to connect either one-on-one or in group settings. Such programs include our Coffee Club, Walking Club, and Tech Time.

**“These programs are wonderful. I am new to a lot of technology and Tech Time has allowed me to meet others while making advances in my technical skills.”**

~ Client

Our **Self-Advocacy Champions** are changing what it means to be blind today. Self advocacy is about enabling people to acquire the skills, the confidence and the motivation to be able to be advocates for themselves and others to change the world we live in. The goals of this program are to provide our advocates with the kind of knowledge that can help challenge the status quo confidently and effectively; and to build a core group of individuals who can help empower others in their communities to advocate for themselves.

Many of our Foundation programs are offered at no charge to participants, thanks to the generosity of CNIB's donors.

Our **Children and Youth Programs** offer a range of peer support and camp experiences where kids can just be kids, while learning about self-advocacy, developing leadership skills and making new friends. Programs include our Family Camp, Playgroups, Snoezelen Room Program, Parent Support Groups, and Ready, Set, Go Program.

**“My child starts counting down to camp the day after Christmas.”**

~ Parent

CNIB hosts **Monthly Social Groups** that provide opportunities for clients to get together with others experiencing sight loss. This group, one of the most popular of our Foundation programs, has had clients engaged in different activities, such as listening to a local client author reading from her book, a bingo night and dining at our local Jungle Jim's restaurant.



**130 people attended the Canadian Blind Hockey Workshop – including clients, parents, caregivers, a local high school hockey team and volunteers.**

In October, 25 clients attended our **Canadian Blind Hockey Workshop** – an ice hockey and goal ball skill development workshop – thanks to Canadian Blind Ice Hockey’s Matt Morrow and Newfoundland Blind Ice Hockey’s Steve Joy. The event was shared on local TV and radio stations, Hockey Night in Canada’s Facebook page and Paths to Literacy’s website (a site for professionals working with children who are blind or partially sighted). One of the attending parents has set up a local league and three of the attending clients have gone on to play in the National Blind Hockey Tournament in Toronto.

Our **Vision Mate Program** matches individuals with specially-trained volunteers who offer companionship and one-on-one assistance with day-to-day tasks and errands. We currently have 25 clients matched with vision mates in our province.

## Preventing eye injuries one workshop at a time

CNIB’s Eye Safety workshops educate organizations and employees about eye safety in the workplace, at home and at play, build a culture of safety and reduce the costs of workplace eye injuries. In 2017-2018, CNIB reached 1,236 participants at 40 workshops within industry, high schools, and colleges.

The success of this program is possible because of the support we receive from platinum sponsors **WorkplaceNL** and **Husky Energy**, and our community partners **Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Optometrists (NLAO)** and **Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Safety Association (NLCSA)**.



## Centennial Celebration

In celebration of CNIB's centennial, more than 75 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians with sight loss, donors, supporters, volunteers and staff gathered at Government House for a presentation of our Century of Change Awards.

March 2018 marked CNIB's 100th anniversary and we had a lot to celebrate, including the dedication and passion of volunteers at every level of our organization. They donate their time, talent and treasures to help make sure CNIB has the resources to reach our goals and to empower the clients we serve to achieve their goals.

On March 15, 2018, The Lieutenant Governor, The Honourable Frank F. Fagan and Her Honour Patricia Fagan hosted a ceremony at which time His Honour presented CNIB's outstanding volunteers with the Century of Change Award Medals.



# PHILANTHROPY

Every dollar raised, and each donation received helps us to build and expand our charitable programs in communities across Newfoundland and Labrador.

However one chooses to support CNIB, funds raised are making a significant difference in the lives of individuals with sight loss in every corner of the province – and many communities in between.

## Visions Lounge

In September 2017 CNIB hosted its annual Visions Lounge fundraiser at Loose Tie on George St. A modern venue, Loose Tie provided an energetic and fun setting for a successful event that was attended by 90 sponsors, donors, and volunteers who helped CNIB raise more than \$63,000 in support of our Family Camp.

Thank you to our presenting sponsor **Seaforce Group of Companies**, as well as **Coast 101.1FM**, **The Telegram**, **KMK Capital**, **Re/MAX United**, **Protek Industries**, **DF Barnes**, **DCH Crane**, **CIMA**, **Scott Consulting**, **Frontier Subsea**, **Seadrill**, **DOF Subsea**, **Integrated Logistics**, and **Browning Harvey** for their generous support of this annual event.

## 50-50 Raffle

The first annual CNIB 50/50 raffle was a tremendous success. Organized by CNIB Board members Sarah, Terry and Danny and supported by a number of volunteers, tickets were sold at public BBQs at Dominion on Stavanger Drive as well as at RONA in Paradise. The grand prize winner walked away with just over \$3,700! Congratulations and thank you to all involved.



CNIB staff members enjoying a night on the town, raising some greatly needed funds for our Foundation programs.

# Dining in the Dark

## **Dining in the Dark**

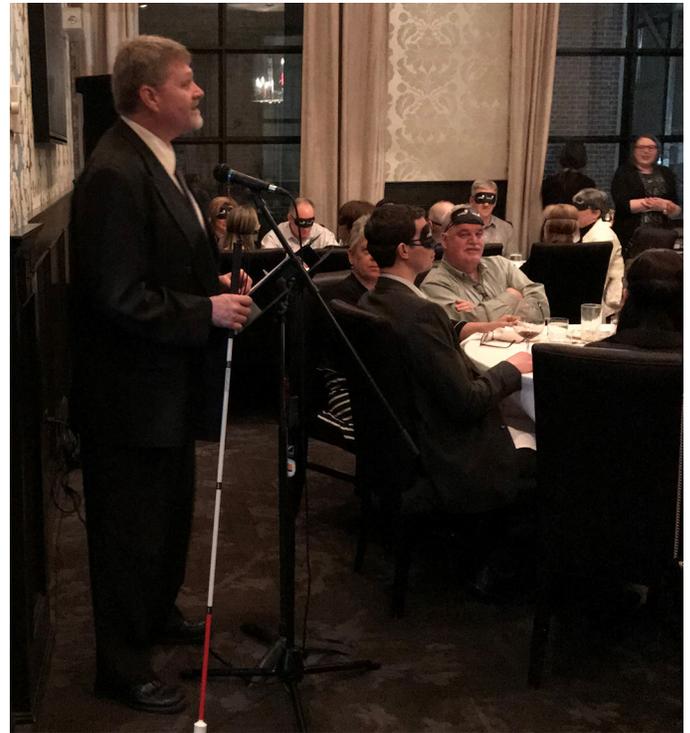
Gypsy Tea Room,  
presented by Browning Harvey  
In May 2017, CNIB hosted its 5th Annual Dining in the Dark event at Gypsy Tea Room. This year we welcomed 74 guests, who enjoyed a fabulous three-course meal and had the pleasure of listening to Kelly Picco and her Vision Mate, Desiree, talk about this important program and the change it creates not only in the lives of our clients, but also in the lives of our volunteers. The evening raised over \$10,000 in support of CNIB's Vision Mate Program.

## **Dining in the Dark**

Raymonds  
presented by Browning Harvey  
A sold-out crowd enjoyed an evening of fine dining at Raymond's in St. John's in February 2018. CNIB welcomed 77 guests who had the pleasure of listening to CNIB's Allan Angus speak about his journey as a CNIB client as well as his involvement with our youth clients. The evening raised \$20,000 in support of our Post-Secondary Youth Orientation and Transition Program.



**Smiling CNIB staff members ready to greet guests as they arrive at the Gypsy Tea Room.**



**CNIB's Allan Angus shares his story of sight loss – becoming a CNIB client and working with our youth clients – to the audience at Raymonds.**

## Community Giving

### Support for the Assistive Technology Loaner Program

CNIB would like to thank **Telus Community Fund** and **VOCM Cares Foundation** for their generous support of our new Assistive Technology Loaner Program. This new initiative will give individuals who have sight loss access to the latest technology, free of charge! Thanks to their support, CNIB clients are able to discover assistive technology uses in everyday life and learn what technology best suits their needs before making a financial commitment. The program has monthly technology sessions, where clients get together to discuss, use and troubleshoot with their own personal technology and the latest items in CNIB's loaner library.

## GoodLife Kids Foundation

Thank you to the GoodLife Kids Foundation for their support of the Ready. Set. Move. Program, which creates age appropriate recreational opportunities for our child and youth clients. Twenty-eight families with young children living with sight loss were given the opportunity to get out and get active, trying out new and exciting recreational activities such as mini-golf, laser tag, acrobatics, juggling, swimming, bowling, trampolining, and more.

## Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Optometrists

CNIB is truly thankful for NLAO's continued support of our Foundation programs like the Eye Safety Program. In December, the NLAO held a silent auction at their Annual General Meeting, raising \$2,500 in support of CNIB Foundation programs. Throughout the year they also sponsored the Vision Health Moments which aired weekdays on VOCM across the province.



**Dr. Sarah Hutchens presents CNIB Executive Director Deborah Wearn with a cheque from the NLAO's AGM auction.**



**A colourful result! Our newest artists showcasing their artistic talents alongside local artist Bobbi Pike.**

## Third Party Events

Every year CNIB relies on the support of our community partners who organize and plan their own fundraising events to support our Foundation programs. Thank you to every person who has taken the time to plan an event in support of CNIB and its Foundation programs.

This year we were thrilled to have had number of diverse and unique community events such as a Paint and Sip with local artist Bobbi Pike, a Hair Care Sale, a Christmas Calendar Fundraiser, a Stella and Dot Jewelry fundraiser and more.

### **CNIB would like to recognize others who supported us in 2017-2018:**

Congregation of the Sisters of the Presentation  
Eleanor Gill Ratcliffe  
Emera  
Ice Caps Care Foundation  
Lions Clubs International District N4  
Lions Club International District N3  
Provall Parts Ltd  
Re/Max United  
Re/Max Realty Specialists  
Responsible Sharing Committee  
Sisters of Mercy  
The Concert Crowd  
Tiffany Village  
Walmart – Stavanger Drive



**CNIB Summer Student Amber accepts a cheque from a young CNIB client and his mom in support of our Family Camp.**



**Marian Zaichkowski creating beautiful artwork.**

# Heartfelt Thanks

CNIB couldn't do the work we do without the incredible support of our dedicated team of volunteers. We recognize the Newfoundland & Labrador Board members' commitment to vision health and thank them for their contributions in 2017-2018.

## **CHAIR**

Philip Strong

## **PAST CHAIR**

Trevor Giles

## **MEMBERS**

Cindy Antle

Jason Blair

Dr. Sarah Hutchens

Lori Mercer

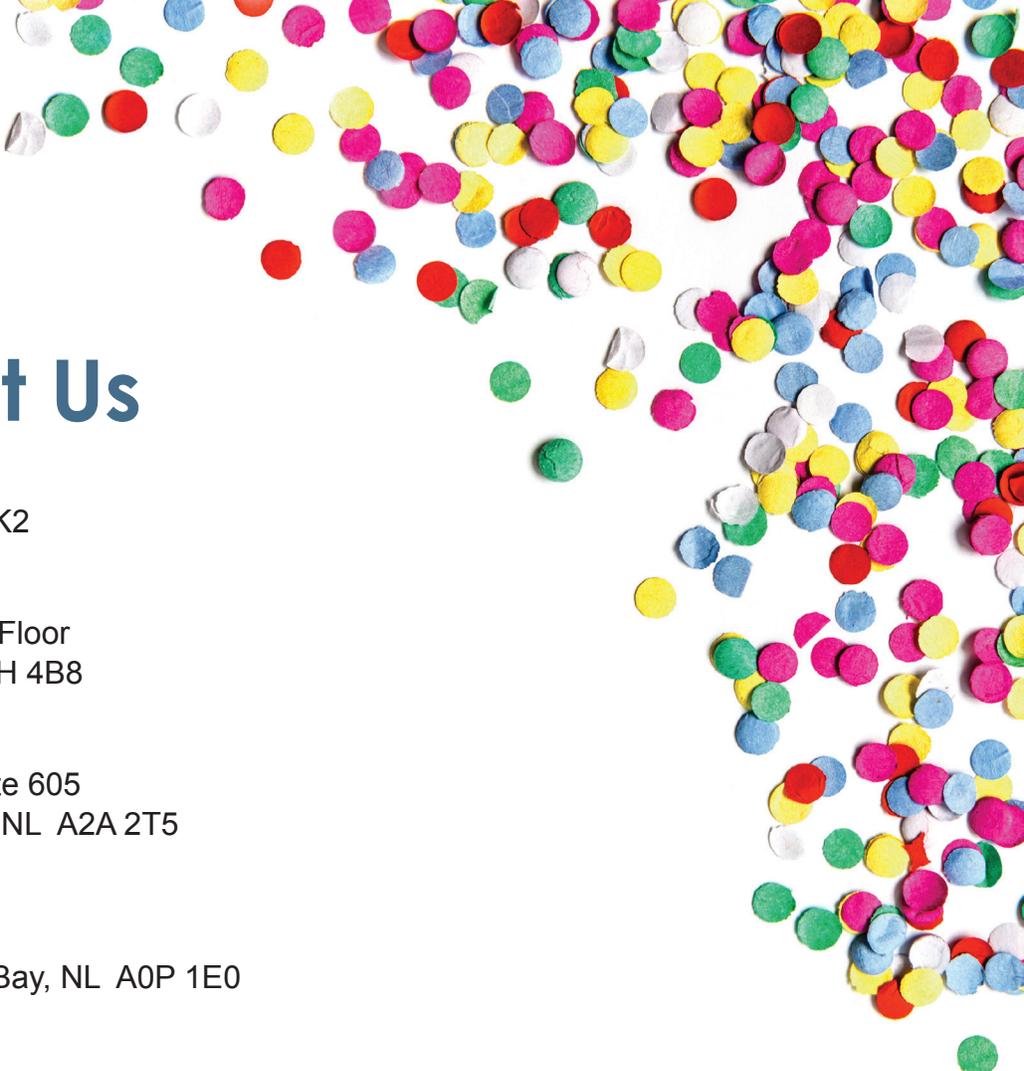
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**VISION LOSS  
REHABILITATION**  
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR