



**Nova Scotia**  
**Annual Review**  
2017 – 2018

**cnib**  
a century of change

**100**  
years



**Future  
Guide Dog**



**Future  
Guide Dog  
CNIB  
GUIDE  
DOGS**



## 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 services in Nova Scotia.

In 2017, CNIB proudly launched a new brand for our rehabilitation services: **Vision Loss Rehabilitation Nova Scotia**. With a commitment to the highest standards of care, we help to enhance independence, safety, mobility and emotional well-being for Nova Scotians with vision loss.

We're also continuing to offer a range of **CNIB Foundation** programs, that are entirely dependent on charitable funding, that complement and enhance our rehab services.

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 Nova Scotian with vision loss has the opportunity to fully participate in life.

# Collaboration with health professionals and community organizations

Over the last year, CNIB Nova Scotia has strengthened its partnerships with community organizations, health care providers, educators and seniors groups to better connect people who are blind or partially sighted to the programs and services available in their region.

**Halifax Public Libraries** became the first CELA Member Library in Nova Scotia in April 2017, and the rest of the province joined later that year in November. CELA offered training through teleconferences and webinars to educate staff on registering patrons with print disabilities.

In collaboration with the **City of Halifax**, 37 staff received impact training in November 2017, which included crossing a street wearing a blindfold and using a long white cane. They also learned about accessibility in the built environment, common eye diseases, accessibility in the workplace, and how to offer assistance.



In partnership with **Dalhousie University**, five Clinical Vision Science program students attended an orientation as part of their Low Vision course in January 2018. They had an opportunity to meet with our vision rehabilitation specialists to learn about the services we provide to clients. The students also observed low vision assessments at our Halifax centre.

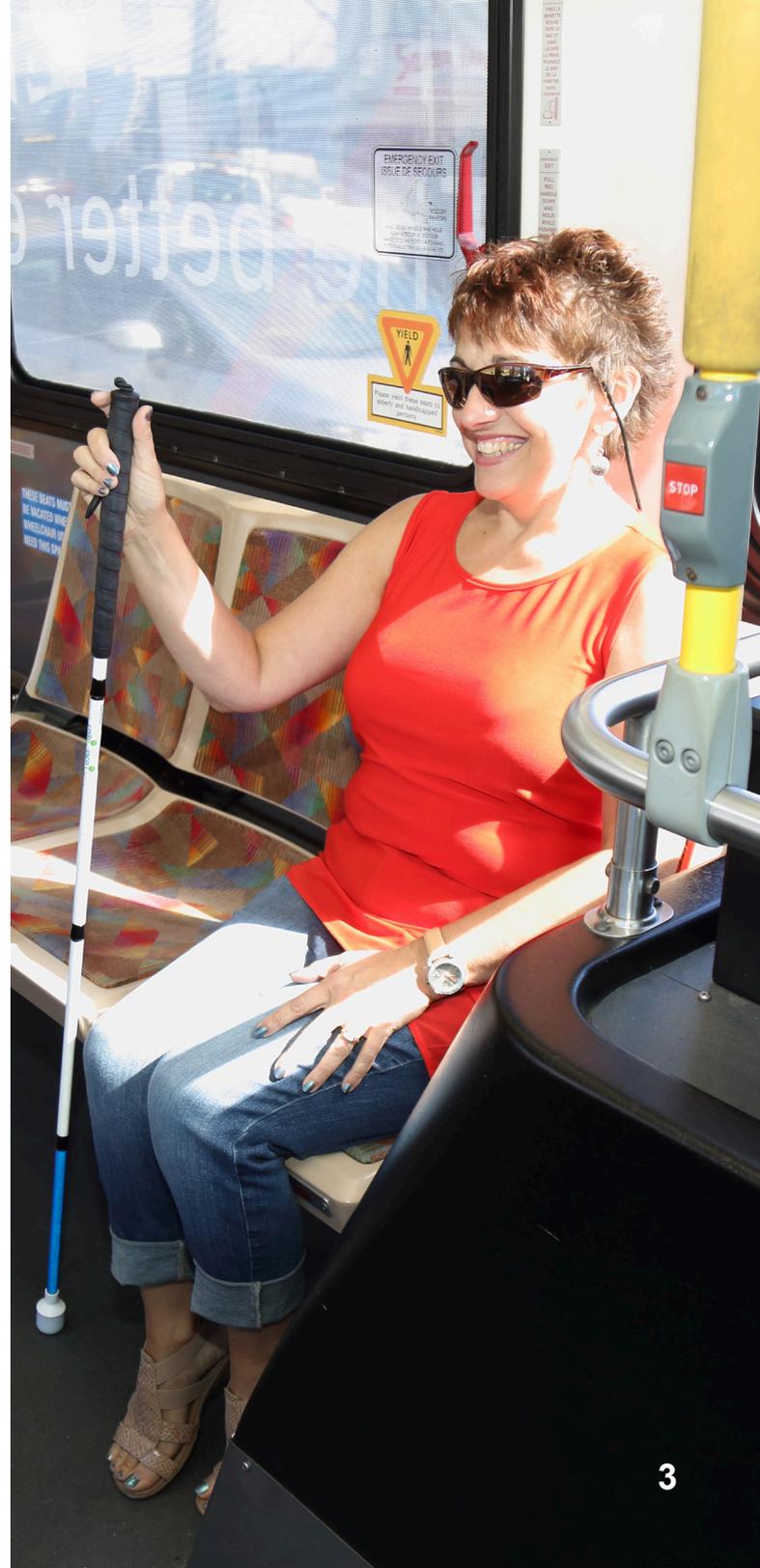
In January 2018, 28 dental hygiene students learned about best practices for serving their patients who are blind or partially sighted, and the sighted guide technique.

Over the last year, 54 **Halifax Transit** operators received training on best practices for serving passengers who have vision loss. The bus drivers practiced the sighted guide technique (a safe way to walk with a sighted person), and learned about different types of vision loss and guide dogs.

CNIB welcomed five students from the **School of Occupational Therapy**, who completed their eight-week, full-time placements at the Halifax centre. During their placements, the OT students learned more about CNIB services by observing low vision assessments, independent living, and orientation & mobility lessons. The students also planned and co-facilitated the Living Safe Program, and provided follow-up instruction to individuals learning orientation and mobility and how to use assistive technology.



**Occupational Therapy students Zack MacNeil and Alyssa Oickle completed their placements at CNIB Halifax.**



# NOVA SCOTIANS WITH SIGHT LOSS



Sight loss is a significant health issue in Nova Scotia, where approximately 151,000 people are estimated to be living with a vision-threatening eye disease. Among this group, approximately 13,000 have experienced serious vision loss and are partially sighted or blind.

The vast majority of sight loss in Nova Scotia 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):** **38,000 Nova Scotians**

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:**

**7,300 Nova Scotians**

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:**

**18,600 Nova Scotians**

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:**

**86,400 Nova Scotians**

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

## NOVA SCOTIA

Our specialists deliver services where Nova Scotians need them most: in their homes and communities, over the phone, online and at CNIB centres in Halifax and Sydney.

Vision rehabilitation therapy is funded through the **Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness**.



## Low Vision Services

For individuals with low vision, learning to use their residual sight can be life changing. Our specialists:

- provide information about eye diseases and explain how they affect vision in an easy-to-understand way
- teach individuals how to use lighting and colour contrast to maximize remaining vision
- help individuals select appropriate low vision aids and assistive technology – from specialty magnifiers to telescopes, iPads and apps
- teach individuals 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



**1,141 Nova Scotians** received vision rehabilitation services in 2017-2018

## 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 vision loss, adaptive technology (including cell phones with built-in accessibility features) and apps



## Orientation & Mobility Instruction

Learning to travel independently with vision 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

## Adjustment to Vision Loss Counselling

Counselling is critical for people coming to terms with their vision 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

**More than half** of the people who come to Vision Loss Rehabilitation Nova Scotia are referred by an ophthalmologist or an optometrist.





## Low Vision Clinic opens in memory of Marjorie Fountain

The Marjorie Fountain Low Vision Clinic officially opened in December 2017 at our Halifax centre – thanks to generous support from the Fountain family.

Our bold vision was to establish a state-of-the-art Low Vision Clinic within the centre – the first of its kind in Canada – that will enable vision rehabilitation specialists, working in partnership with ophthalmologists, optometrists and occupational therapists to better meet the needs of Nova Scotians with vision loss.

Fred Fountain cut the ribbon at the grand opening of the Marjorie Fountain Low Vision Clinic, with other members of the Fountain Family in attendance, as well as Drs. Nicoleta, Cruess and Mishra of the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences, Dr. Tanya Packer from the School of Occupational Therapy at Dalhousie University, John Rafferty, President and CEO of CNIB and VLR Canada, and Pamela Gow-Boyd, CNIB's Vice President for the Atlantic region.

# FOUNDATION PROGRAMS

Nova Scotia is home to more than 13,000 people who are blind or partially sighted – and it is more important than ever that CNIB continue delivering programs that focus on improving quality of life for Nova Scotians who are blind or partially sighted, and creating a more inclusive, barrier-free society.

**Thanks to the generosity of our donors, CNIB Foundation programs:**

## **Reduce the incidence of depression and isolation associated with sight loss.**

Our **Peer Support Programs** ensure individuals with vision loss have ongoing opportunities to connect either one-to-one or attend monthly peer support groups, where they can share their experiences, challenges and practical tips.

Our **Vision Mate Program** matches individuals living with vision loss with specially-trained volunteers who assist with a variety of activities, including reading mail and shopping, as well as enjoying social activities together – like playing cards and going for walks.

## **Unleash the power of technology.**

Our programs connect people of all ages with the cutting-edge technology that will transform their lives, such as smart phones with built-in accessibility features, and apps that read print, describe objects and help people navigate through their community safely.



**Our Knitting Club – a popular recreation program – includes beginner knitters who are learning how to knit with the help of CNIB volunteers as well as long-time knitters – some of whom have rediscovered their love of knitting after losing their sight. In September, the group went on a road trip to a yarn shop in Wolfville.**



**Campers, ages 8-10, enjoyed a fun-filled week of activities in July 2017 that helped to enhance their orientation and mobility skills, independent living skills, team building and self-confidence without even knowing it! Activities included: goalball, judo, first aid, and visits to Hatfield Farm, a trampoline park, mini golf, and much more.**

## **Prepare young Nova Scotians with vision loss for the future.**

Our **Children and Youth Programs** include a summer day camp and family fun days where kids can just be kids, while learning life skills, developing leadership skills and making new friends. We also help students transition from high school to post-secondary education or employment.

## **Change lives forever with a guide dog.**

**CNIB Guide Dogs** includes training and equipment, food and veterinary costs. CNIB also advocates with guide dog handlers to increase public awareness and break down barriers that infringe on their rights.



Halifax Transit invited six guide dog puppies to practice boarding a bus at the Burnside Transit Centre. The session helped reduce anxiety associated with using public transit, as the pups were exposed to different sights, smells and sounds on buses.

## FUTURE GUIDE DOGS STEALING HEARTS IN HALIFAX

Starting in January 2018, guide dog puppies began arriving in Halifax. At approximately eight weeks of age, the puppies were placed with volunteer puppy raisers, whose job it is to provide basic training and socialization to prepare them for situations they may face as working guide dogs.

CNIB Guide Dogs are Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers and mixes of the two breeds. Known for their intelligence and steady, friendly nature, these breeds make excellent guide dogs, as they are eager to please.

When the pups are 12 to 15 months old, they'll begin six months of intensive training with a certified guide dog instructor. When a dog completes its training successfully, it's matched with a person who becomes their handler. They will work for up to nine years together before the dog retires.





Over 100 guests gathered at Halifax City Hall on March 21 to celebrate a century of CNIB. Guests included clients, donors, supporters, volunteers and staff.



CNIB volunteers Carolyn Naylor and Linda Lawlor blew out candles on the cake.

## Centennial Celebration Halifax

In celebration of CNIB's centennial, more than 100 Nova Scotians with vision loss, donors, supporters, volunteers and staff gathered at Halifax City Hall on March 21 for a flag-raising ceremony, followed by a birthday party with entertainment provided by Juno award winning singer/songwriter Terry Kelly.

## Sydney

On March 23, more than 20 Cape Bretoners attended a flag-raising ceremony at City Hall, followed by a reception with birthday cake to mark CNIB's birthday.

## PHILANTHROPY

### We couldn't do it without you!

Every dollar raised and each donation received helps us to build and expand our charitable programs in communities across Nova Scotia. However one chooses to support CNIB, funds raised are making a significant difference in the lives of individuals with vision loss from Sydney to Yarmouth – and many communities in between.

In February 2018 more than 160 individuals attended our eighth annual Dining in the Dark fundraiser in Sydney. Our guest speaker, Mary Munson (pictured below), shared how she came to be a CNIB Vision Mate Volunteer to Marguerite Caldwell, and how she benefits from this amazing program as much as Marguerite does! At the event, over \$14,000 net was raised for our charitable programs that enhance the lives of Cape Bretoners with sight loss.





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

Jack & Marjorie Todd Foundation

Halifax Protestant Infants' Foundation

Kingston Lions Club

Evening Star Chapter #28

Chebucto Life Members Club

Scotiabank

Michelin Tire

Waterville

Kings Mutual Insurance Company

Toromont Cat

Stefmore Incorporated

J G Heathcote Medical Inc.



# MEET NOLAN CHISHOLM



Nolan Chisholm's life changed in an instant on Father's Day 2017. While mowing the grass using a ride-on lawn mower, a piece of debris flew out from underneath, ricocheted off his house and struck him in the left eye. He immediately knew something was wrong but remained calm, shut off the mower and went inside to explain what happened to his parents.

Now 16-years-old, Nolan is completely blind in his left eye after suffering a globe rupture – when the outer membrane of the eye is penetrated by a blunt trauma. He wears a scleral shell, which is a prosthesis to cover the eye.

Many individuals think eye injuries only occur in industrial settings – involving machines or chemicals – but more than two-thirds of eye injuries take place outside of work environments. This is why Nolan is urging Nova Scotians to wear safety glasses when working around the yard.

“If I could change anything about that day, the first thing I would do is wear safety glasses,” says Nolan. “It’s such a simple way to prevent accidents like mine, but people assume because they’re at home they can’t be harmed.”

He also says he should've scanned the yard for rocks and other debris before mowing it – but anything else may not have prevented what happened.

Nolan's love of playing sports hasn't changed since losing his sight. He's had to make some adjustments, like keeping his head turned while he participates in sports, as his peripheral vision has weakened. "Minor stuff," says Nolan.

Nolan has remained optimistic since being blinded in his left eye – a trait his family considers a key attribute in the success of his rehabilitation. He's excited to share his story and raise awareness about eye safety. When not dirt biking, Nolan can be seen mowing the grass on his ride-on lawn mower – and wearing safety glasses, of course.

## CNIB's Eye Safety Program

CNIB's eye safety workshops educate organizations and their employees about eye safety in the workplace, with a goal to build a culture of safety and reduce the costs of workplace eye injuries.

In response to an increase in eye injuries among young workers ages 15 to 24, CNIB delivered its Eye Safety Program to 90 skilled trades students at Nova Scotia Community College campuses, and 10 students enrolled in NSCC's Achieve Program. CNIB also provided eye safety workshops to 194 workers in industrial workplaces across the province.

Our Eye Safety Program is funded by the **Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education** and the **Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia** – recipients of CNIB's Outstanding Community Partner Award in 2017.

## Heartfelt Thanks

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

### CHAIR

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**VISION LOSS  
REHABILITATION**  

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**NOVA SCOTIA**