



211 Nova Scotia awards Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia with the Believer's Award

For immediate release, January 9, 2023 – 211 Nova Scotia is pleased to announce that Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia has been awarded the Believer's Award.



The Believer's Award is presented annually and recognizes the contributions and efforts from an individual or organization who champions 211 Nova Scotia's mission and aims to positively impact the lives of Nova Scotians. The award was presented to Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia at a recent meeting of 211 Nova Scotia's Board of Directors, held at the Halifax Citadel National Historic Site.

Shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic was declared, 211 Nova Scotia identified an increase in the number of men seeking help as they struggled with the pressures and fallout from the pandemic. The Department of Community Services and the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women

partnered to address the increase in men reaching out for support. Building on their existing telephone support lines and counselling expertise, Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia was engaged around the possibility of establishing a helpline specifically for men.

"Our community partners reported that men were looking for support and had fewer resources to deal with the social isolation and job losses" says Nancy MacDonald, Executive Director of Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia. "We were hopeful that by providing an accessible 24/7, supportive, early intervention service for men who were struggling we could avoid or reduce family violence."

Because of the overwhelming success of the Men's Helpline which started taking calls in September 2020, the Women's Helpline and the All Genders Helpline were launched in June 2021. Each of the helplines offers free, confidential telehealth counselling services to individuals 18 years and older who have concerns for their well-being and safety or the safety of others.

"As the sole point of contact, 211 Nova Scotia has seen the tremendous impact of Nova Scotians being able to access 24/7 counselling through the Men's, Women's, and All Genders Helplines. Our data shows that Nova Scotians are facing an increased number and depth of challenges, and this coincides with a higher volume of calls to the helplines" says Mary-Jo Monk, Executive Director of 211 Nova Scotia.

In 2021, 211 Nova Scotia's Community Resource Navigators made over 2,500 referrals to the Men's, Women's, and All Genders Helplines. This number rose dramatically in 2022, with 9,800 referrals being made to the Men's, Women's, and All Genders Helplines provided by Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia. "We're so appreciative of Nancy MacDonald and the team at Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia. Their expertise on both the counselling and operations side of the organization is an asset as we forecast continued growth and demand for the helplines" says Mary-Jo Monk.

Nancy MacDonald notes that “when the Men’s Helpline first started, we would average a few calls in a 24-hour period. In December of 2022, with the All Genders, Men’s, and Women’s Helplines active, we were receiving on average over 35 calls a day. Callers have said the Helpline Counsellors are compassionate, understanding, knowledgeable, non-judgemental, and comforting. Callers have also shared that they feel better, calmer, and less alone after their call.”

“As 211 Nova Scotia looks to the future, partners such as Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia are imperative” continues Monk. “For 211 to be as inclusive, accessible, and comprehensive as possible, we need to continue to develop and strengthen partnerships that will help us serve all Nova Scotians.”

For further information, please contact:

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About The Believer’s Award:

The 211 Nova Scotia’s Believer’s Award was created in 2015, three years after 211 Nova Scotia was launched. Annually, this award is presented to an organization, or an individual having demonstrated leadership in their belief of, and support for, 211 and who, through that leadership, has contributed significantly to the growth and sustainability of 211 Nova Scotia.

The Believer’s Award nominees are chosen by the 211 Nova Scotia team and the recipient is selected by the Governance Committee. The Award recognizes the significant contributions and efforts of an organization or individual that positively impacts the lives of Nova Scotians. The recipients in the past have been Feed Nova Scotia, POSSE, the Directions Council of NS, NSHA, Community Sector Council of NS, and more.

About 211 Nova Scotia

211 Nova Scotia is a not-for-profit society that offers a free and confidential service that connects people in Nova Scotia to the programs and services they need. Through information and referrals, 211 Nova Scotia helps connect people to local community groups, non-profits, and government organizations. This can include information about mental health support, access to food, financial aid, employment resources, and more. Dial 2-1-1 for 24/7 support or connect via email at help@ns.211.ca or online at ns.211.ca.

About Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia

Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia (FSENS) was founded in 1969 but traces its roots back to the Great Depression. Through a person-centered approach, Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia provides professional counselling services and programs to individuals, couples, and families of all ages in a warm, welcoming, and non-judgemental environment. FSENS works closely with 211 Nova Scotia to offer the free and confidential Men’s, Women’s, and All Genders Helplines to Nova Scotians 24 hours a day, seven days a week.