

# Tantramar COVID-19 Task Force



(506) 939-4186

[enquiry.tctf@gmail.com](mailto:enquiry.tctf@gmail.com)



September 21, 2020

Dear residents of the Tantramar region,

It is our pleasure to share with you our community report, which coincides with the six-month mark of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The idea of forming a task force began on March 14, 2020, with a conversation between MLA Megan Mitton, Sackville Mayor John Higham, and volunteers from the community. Within a few weeks a mandate had been developed by the MLA, the region's mayors, and the Chief of Fort Folly First Nation; thus establishing the Tantramar COVID-19 Task Force with the mission to gather and identify groups and individuals who needed support through the pandemic.

## **The first six months**

The Tantramar COVID-19 Task Force has been working nonstop since the beginning of the pandemic to support and maximize the use of our community assets to respond quickly to needs surrounding food security, mental and physical health, youth and students, communications, business and economic impacts, along with the legal and financial implications for residents of the region.

We have worked collaboratively and apolitically with elected officials, non-profits, service clubs, municipalities, schools, and a host of other community stakeholders that include provincial civil servants, who have assisted us on various projects and initiatives.

We established six action groups that have been meeting regularly, conducting asset-based community development research and ensuring that the immediate needs of our at-risk populations are met.

Collectively, we have been able to resolve several issues arising from the pandemic by utilizing our local assets, both human and physical. We have created space for groups to come together, and as a result have collaborated extensively. We have brought new resources into our region to address longstanding concerns that have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

The list of projects we have undertaken is too long to list in a letter, so we have attached a graphic of the work of each action group.

We invite you to read the attached reports and contact us at [enquiry.tctf@gmail.com](mailto:enquiry.tctf@gmail.com) or 506-939-4186 if you have any questions.

## **The next six months**

What began as a task to assess the initial pandemic impact and address the immediate needs of a public health emergency has evolved for many of us into a transformative experience in community development. Our experiences on the task force have allowed us to imagine a new way to address

systemic issues around income security, food security, digital inclusivity, mental health, and physical health in the Tantramar region.

We do know that, barring any serious outbreaks of COVID-19 in the new year, the Task Force will be completing its initial mandate on March 31, 2021. In the next few weeks, we will be announcing phase two of the Task Force. The Task Force volunteers will still be in place if there is a second wave of COVID-19 in our region, to deliver food and assist stakeholders. However, we are in a much better place to deal with a COVID-19 outbreak in the region than we were in March 2020. We will be working towards a plan to transfer all of the capacity that has been built up in the past six months and transform it into a more sustainable model to help us deal with the COVID-19 recovery in the region.

### **Some words of thanks**

We want to express our deep appreciation to our MLA Megan Mitton, to our region's mayors and the Chief of Fort Folly First Nation, along with the many community stakeholders for their faith in us and for being so hands-on and involved in the work of the Task Force.

In many ways, as co-chairs of the Task Force, we were simply acting as air traffic controllers and our 12 co-chairs did the heavy lifting. The attached reports speak for themselves and show the truly inspirational work that has been happening over the past six months.

One of the reasons that the action groups were able to get so much accomplished was because of the work and dedication of the many Mount Allison University interns who worked hand-in-hand with us to do so much of the essential daily work. We cannot thank them enough.

There were many organizations who were instrumental in the successes of the Task Force, but we felt it important to highlight four key stakeholders: Mount Allison University, the Town of Sackville, the United Way of Greater Moncton and Southeastern New Brunswick, and the Rotary Club of Sackville. These four stakeholders not only supported the task with in-kind donations, but also were hands-on members and leaders in the Task Force.

Thank You! Merci! Wela'lieg!

Sincerely,

*Carolle de Ste-Croix*



Carolle de Ste-Croix and David McKellar  
Co-chairs  
Tantramar COVID-19 Task Force

### FIRST STAKEHOLDER MEETING

Goal: Virtually meet to make decisions about the TCTF.  
**Impact: Over a six month period, fourteen meetings were held. Stakeholders include Mount Allison University, the Town of Sackville, the United Way of Greater Moncton and Southeastern New Brunswick, the Rotary Club of Sackville, MLA Megan Mitton, our region's mayors, the Chief of Fort Folly First Nations and community volunteers.**

### ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TCTF

Goal: Gather and identify groups and individuals who need support through the COVID-19 pandemic.  
**Impact: Twelve co-chairs recruited and six action groups were formed (Mental Health, Physical Health, Economic & Business Impact, Food Security, Communications & Technology and Youth & Students).**

### VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

Goal: The Mayor & CAO of Sackville, MtA President & VP, MASU, TCTF, business owners, and volunteers answer community questions about the MtA-Sackville Bubble  
**Impact: Around 2,000 people tuned in via radio or Zoom. Eased community concern and was accessible.**

### DIGITAL INCLUSIVITY

Goal: Send a letter to the Premier of New Brunswick, addressing the need for action to be taken on issues surrounding digital inclusivity in the Tantramar region.  
**Impact: Began a conversation with the provincial government on technology and internet access in the Tantramar region and rural NB as a whole.**

### FULL-TIME POSITION

Goal: Fill the position of Communications and Volunteer Coordinator. Adapt from a student internship to a full-time position.  
**Impact: Hired Shannon Robinson, who began working on August 31, 2020.**

### COVID FUNDING

Goal: Promote funding that is available to businesses and individuals.  
**Impact: Better access to information about financial supports such as CERB which helped with the impacts of COVID-19.**

### SOCIAL MEDIA & CONTACT INFO

Goal: Create a Facebook and Instagram account for distribution of information online, as well as available contact options over the phone and by email for questions or requests for support.  
**Impact: Currently there are 72 posts and 154 followers on Instagram, and 585 followers on Facebook with posts reaching an average of 6,000 people. A separate Facebook page was specifically created for the Youth & Students Action Group.**

### FLYERS

Goal: Send out paper flyers in the mail to communicate more widely and accessibly than exclusively emailing or posting on social media.  
**Impact: Mailed 18,400 flyers that contained information about various topics related to the pandemic (delivered by Canada Post).**

### FINANCE & LEGAL

Goal: Create a temporary Finance and Legal Action Group.  
**Impact: Offered income tax support, legal, federal and provincial business support, and responded to enquiries. Created flyers on personal income tax updates, community volunteer income tax programs and more.**

### SECURED FUNDING

Goal: Secure funding for TCTF with United Way of Greater Moncton and Southeastern NB.  
**Impact: Obtained funding which allowed for the paid position of the Communications and Volunteer Coordinator, as well as mailing each action group's flyers to people in the Tantramar region.**

### VOLUNTEERS

The total number of volunteers recruited is approximately 196.

### PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE

Goal: TCTF co-chairs asked to join the provincial Community Resiliency Steering Committee for Region 7.  
**Impact: Developing an emergency resiliency action plan that incorporates our work into a larger provincial effort.**

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## TANTRAMAR COVID-19 TASK FORCE Phase 1 Community Report

### Tantramar COVID-19 Task Force



The Tantramar COVID-19 Task Force was founded in April 2020 with six action groups. The mission of the Task Force is to support and maximize the use of our community assets to respond quickly to needs surrounding food security, mental and physical health, youth and students, communications, business and economic impacts, along with the legal and financial implications for residents of the region. We have worked collaboratively and apolitically with elected officials, non-profits, service clubs, municipalities, schools, and a host of other community stakeholders that include provincial civil servants, who have assisted us on various projects and initiatives. The Task Force is not meant to replace existing organizations, but instead partner and offer project ideas that have the potential to actualize. Co-Chairs are Carolle de Ste-Croix (Director of Alumni Engagement) and David McKellar (board member of the Rotary Club of Sackville and the Tantramar Heritage Trust).

## FRESH PRODUCE FOOD BOXES

*In collaboration with: MASU & Community Food Smart*

Goal: Healthy food options for a low cost.

**Impact: MtA community can purchase a \$15 monthly food box. Task Force helps with assembly and delivery.**

## REGIONAL GROUPS

Goal: To be able to link with other groups and individuals around the province and region who are working on food security to share learning and resources.

**Impact: Ideas and resources were gathered that supported the work done locally.**

## HAND SANITIZER

*In collaboration with: Rotary Club of Sackville*

Goal: Provide hand sanitizer to businesses and not for profit groups.

**Impact: Sourced and delivered hand sanitizer to businesses and not for profits to support re-opening.**

## YOUNG FAMILY FOOD DELIVERIES

Goal: Identify school-age youth in need of food.

**Impact: Supported principals from Tantramar public schools to deliver food to recognized at-risk youth/families.**

## SUPPORT FOR SENIORS

*In collaboration with: Rotary Club of Sackville, Nursing Homes without Walls, Horizon Health, United Way*

Goal: Identify and support seniors experiencing food security issues.

**Impact: Prepared and delivered meals to seniors in Port Elgin and Sackville. Linked seniors with university students to address food security and social isolation issues.**

## COMMUNITY FLYER

Goal: Include information about available food and support for those without internet or social media.

**Impact: Mailed 4,600 flyers that contained information about grocery store & medication delivery, and prepared meals for seniors.**

## FOOD PRODUCERS/SUPPLIERS

Goal: Long-term food sovereignty in the Tantramar region.

**Impact: Took inventory of local food producers and suppliers. Next step will to be to support them in promoting their products to local residents. (Ongoing)**

## GREENHOUSE GRANT PROPOSAL

Goal: To support the grant proposal for a large greenhouse at Port Elgin Regional School.

**Impact: Letter written in support of the grant proposal. Result TBD.**

## GARDEN KITS

*In collaboration with: MacArthur's Nurseries*

Goal: To be able to distribute donated vegetable plants as well as other gardening supplies.

**Impact: Supported the Youth and Students AG project, which distributed garden kits to local residents and to community and school gardens.**

## MtA GROCERY DELIVERY

*In coordination with: MASU and Youth & Student Action Group*

Goal: To ensure that returning Mount A students in self-isolation were able to receive groceries.

**Impact: All self-isolating students who required deliveries were paired with a buddy and received deliveries as required.**

## FOOD DELIVERY SERVICE

Goal: To ensure that people in the Tantramar region were able to access groceries.

**Impact: Over 500 deliveries made in partnership with the Rotary Club of Sackville (from the Sackville Food Bank, local grocery stores, and on behalf of the Tantramar School Food Response Group). Grocery store deliveries ran until the end of June.**

## ABCD EXERCISE

Goal: Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) exercise to determine the food security assets available to assist in short and long-term food security response to the pandemic.

**Impact: Increased community awareness led to a 400% increase in subscribers to Community Food Smart program, local school-based food programs receiving funding. (Ongoing)**

# TCTF FOOD SECURITY Phase 1 Community Report

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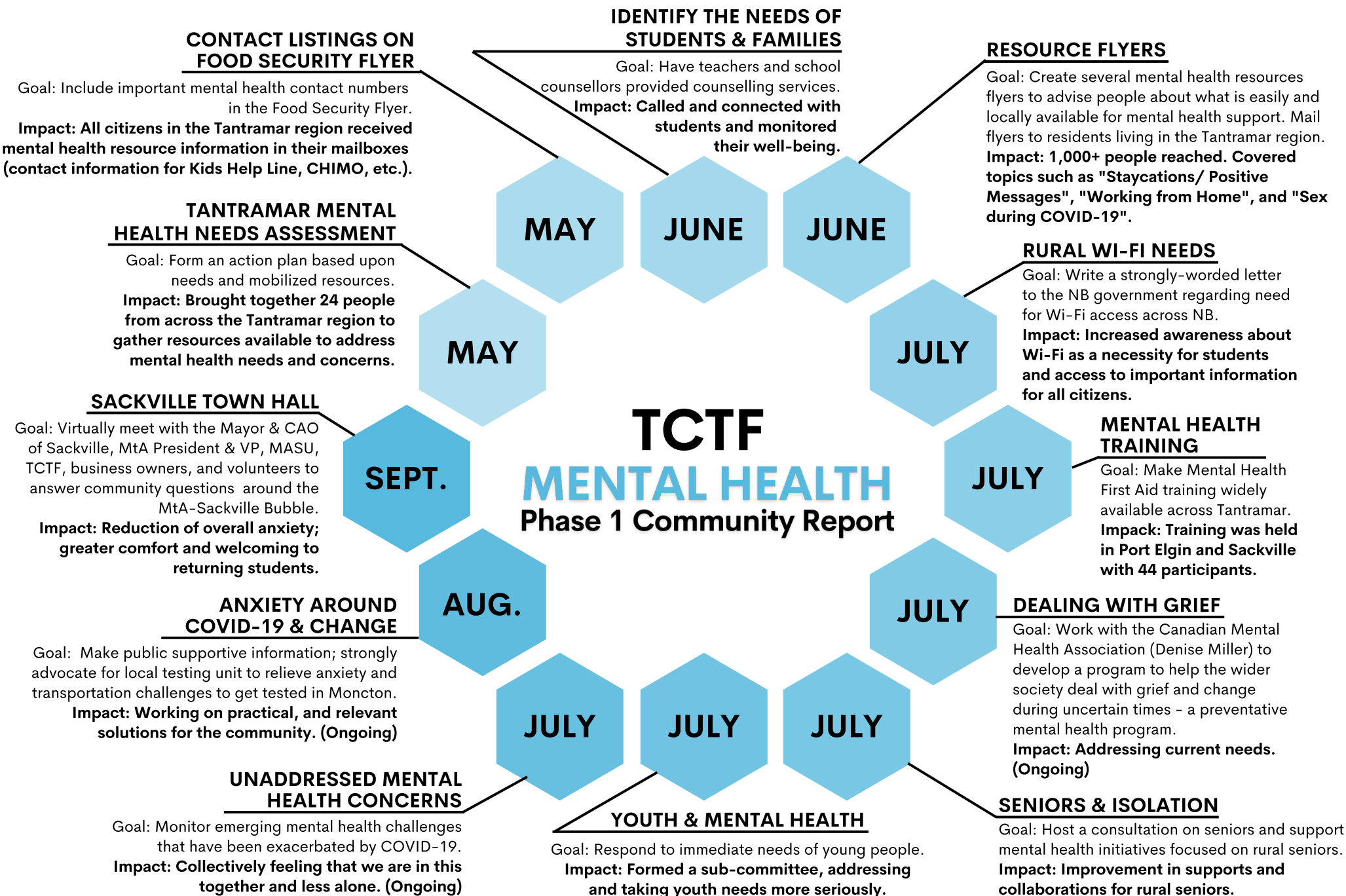
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The Food Security Action Group was founded in April 2020 as one of the many action groups on the Tantramar COVID-19 Task Force. The mission of the group was to support the coordination and development of community initiatives around food security. This committee is made up of representatives from local schools, service-groups, non-profits, and community volunteers. The group is not meant to replace existing organizations, but instead partner and offer project ideas that have the potential to actualize. All projects aspire to fill an identified need. Co-Chairs are Jessica Hughes (Director of Community Supported Education for Sackville 20/20) and Shayne Mann (Rotary Club member).



## Tantramar COVID-19 Mental Health



The Mental Health Action Group was founded in April 2020 as one of the many action groups on the Tantramar COVID-19 Task Force. The mission of the group was to identify and monitor mental health needs in the Tantramar region and offer solutions for the various mental health issues identified, in coordination with other action groups and community stakeholders. It has 17 community developers including mental health counsellors, teachers, and service providers, as well as citizens from around the Tantramar region. The group is not meant to replace existing organizations, but instead partner and offer project ideas that have the potential to actualize. All projects aspire to fill an identified need. Co-Chairs: Pat Estabrooks (Retired School Business Admin) and Margaret Tusz-King (Executive Director at Open Sky Co-operative Ltd.).

## THE YOUTH AND STUDENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Goal: Determine the needs of youth and students between the ages of 15 and 30 across Tantramar during COVID-19.  
**Impact: 135 youth and students informed us of their needs in seven areas of their lives; projects were founded from results.**

## CELEBRATING TANTRAMAR GRADUATES

*In collaboration with: designer Nadine LeBlanc, Rotary Club of Sackville*  
Goal: Create and release a community solidarity poster to celebrate the achievements of all Tantramar graduates.  
**Impact: 1,000 posters were printed and displayed in windows and storefronts across the Tantramar region.**

## OFF-CAMPUS FOOD DELIVERIES FOR STUDENTS IN SELF-ISOLATION

*In collaboration with: MASU*  
Goal: Created a buddy system to match student volunteers with students who need grocery deliveries.  
**Impact: All students who needed groceries during their quarantine had them delivered to their door.**

## YOUTH FOR TRANSIT

*In collaboration with: CECNB*  
Goal: (Project under development)

## YOUTH SPACES

Goal: Develop more spaces for youth in the Tantramar region, both physically and symbolically speaking.  
**Impact: (Multiple projects under development)**  
Developing a youth centre, creating a Youth Council.

## COVID SSN

*In collaboration with: Sackville Schools 20/20*  
Goal: Match university peer mentors with students in K-12.  
**Impact: (Project under development)**

## COMMUNITY CONNECT

*In collaboration with: Nursing Homes Without Walls, PEDVAC*  
Goal: Match seniors with university "buddies" for weekly cooking sessions.  
**Impact: 50+ seniors across Tantramar feel less isolated.**

## CHILDCARE SERVICES

*In collaboration with: Sackville Recreation*  
Goal: Offer a database of babysitters to parents in need.  
**Impact: Jobs created for youth, childcare need filled for parents across Tantramar.**

## GARDEN KITS

*In collaboration with: Horizon Health, MacArthur's Nurseries*  
Goal: Create garden kits for families.  
**Impact: Seven kits were delivered.**

## IDEAS FOR TOMORROW

*In collaboration with: Sackville Schools 20/20, CECNB, Rising Youth*  
Goal: Offer a workshop that turns youth ideas into actions.  
**Impact: Ten youth participated and were energized; two projects were founded.**

## ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Goal: Continue conversation about climate change during COVID-19.  
**Impact: (Project under development)**  
Developing an awareness campaign.

## LOCAL WEEK

*In collaboration with: The Town of Sackville*  
Goal: Encourage purchasing local.  
**Impact: A week-long celebration of local farmers by local restaurants.**

# TCTF YOUTH & STUDENTS Phase 1 Community Report

## Tantramar COVID-19 Youth and Students



The Youth and Students Action Group was founded in April 2020 as one of the many action groups on the Tantramar COVID-19 Task Force. The original mission of the group was to assist youth and students between the ages of 15 and 30 across the Tantramar region access the resources they needed during the COVID-19 outbreak. It has since turned into a group of 10-15 young community developers (high school students, university students, other youth and partners) who wish to address large-scale issues faced by Tantramar youth. The group is not meant to replace existing organizations, but instead partner and offer project ideas that have the potential to actualize. All projects aspire to fill an identified need. Original Co-Chairs were Hannah Ehler from Mount Allison University and Bergen Fraser from Tantramar Regional High School and current Co-Chairs are Hannah Ehler and Nadine Robinson from Mount Allison University.

## PROACTIVE PLANNING

*In collaboration with: Economic Development office at the Town of Sackville*

Goal: Hold weekly update meetings with local business owners to ensure economic development initiatives were well coordinated for the duration of the pandemic.

**Impact: Held 12 virtual consultation sessions between June-August with 8-12 business owners. Focused on ways in which a phased return to business and opening for students returning to town might work.**

## ABCD EXERCISE

Goal: Conduct an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) exercise in the region to determine the needs and issues faced by business owners.

**Impact: Connected the economic development interests of Sackville, Dorchester, Port Elgin, and the unincorporated areas of Tantramar.**

## YOUTH PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE

*In collaboration with: Cooperative Enterprise Council of NB*

Goal: The engagement of youth (15 – 30 years) in Tantramar through this federally-funded initiative. Advancing the use of new business initiatives, entrepreneurship, skills, and networks through virtual learning and radically new economic conditions in rural areas.

**Impact: Many Tantramar youth, including committee members, involved. Tantramar region included in overall funded initiative. Two student interns hired for the project.**

## SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Goal: Feature the TCTF in the NB Soil and Crop Improvement Association Summer Newsletter.

**Impact: Reached 75 members in the Tantramar region with contact information for farm operators looking for assistance.**

## ACOA MEETING

Goal: Update Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) on the economic impact of COVID-19 and how efforts can assist in recovery/business opportunities focused on education and training.

**Impact: Presented to the ACOA Vice-President. Supported on-going Sackville 20/20 initiative funding.**

## CHECK-INS

Goal: Check-in with local businesses upon reopening to in-person sales.

**Impact: Made over 30 visits to stores between June - August.**

## MODELS OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY

*In collaboration with: MtA Student Intern Hugo Power and TCTF Communications Intern Rohin Minocha-McKenney*

Goal: In-person session for concerned business owners based on other community models of economic recovery and development in the COVID-19 world.

**Impact: Held two sessions on marketing and commerce initiative. Created an inventory and contact list for Downtown Sackville.**

## RESPOND TO INQUIRIES

Goal: Formulate recommendations for economic and business inquiries.

**Impact: Five MtA courses were developed; farmer and small town interviews, were conducted; and economic recovery strategies were put in place for the reopening of businesses to returning students.**

## MAINSTREET SACKVILLE

Goal: Assist Mainstreet Sackville executive.

**Impact: Transitioned to an integrated approach for TCTF initiatives with Anthony Maddalena (new president).**

## SACKVILLE 20/20

Goal: Connect the TCTF to Sackville 20/20 to reinforce community-supported development, resilience, and sustainability.

**Impact: Over 30 residents and government officials attended the Sackville 20/20 annual general meeting, where \$25,000 in grants was issued for summer tutoring and educational support.**

## COMMUNITY ASSETS

Goal: Connect with Maple League communities (Antigonish, Wolfville, and Lennoxville) and share best practices on economic impacts, recovery, and community asset planning.

**Impact: Volunteers interviewed local officials on location and recorded coping methods.**

## ASSET-BASED PLANNING

Goal: Develop an asset-based planning directions for community partners moving forward.

**Impact: Communities working together on long-term economic recovery ideas and models. (Ongoing)**

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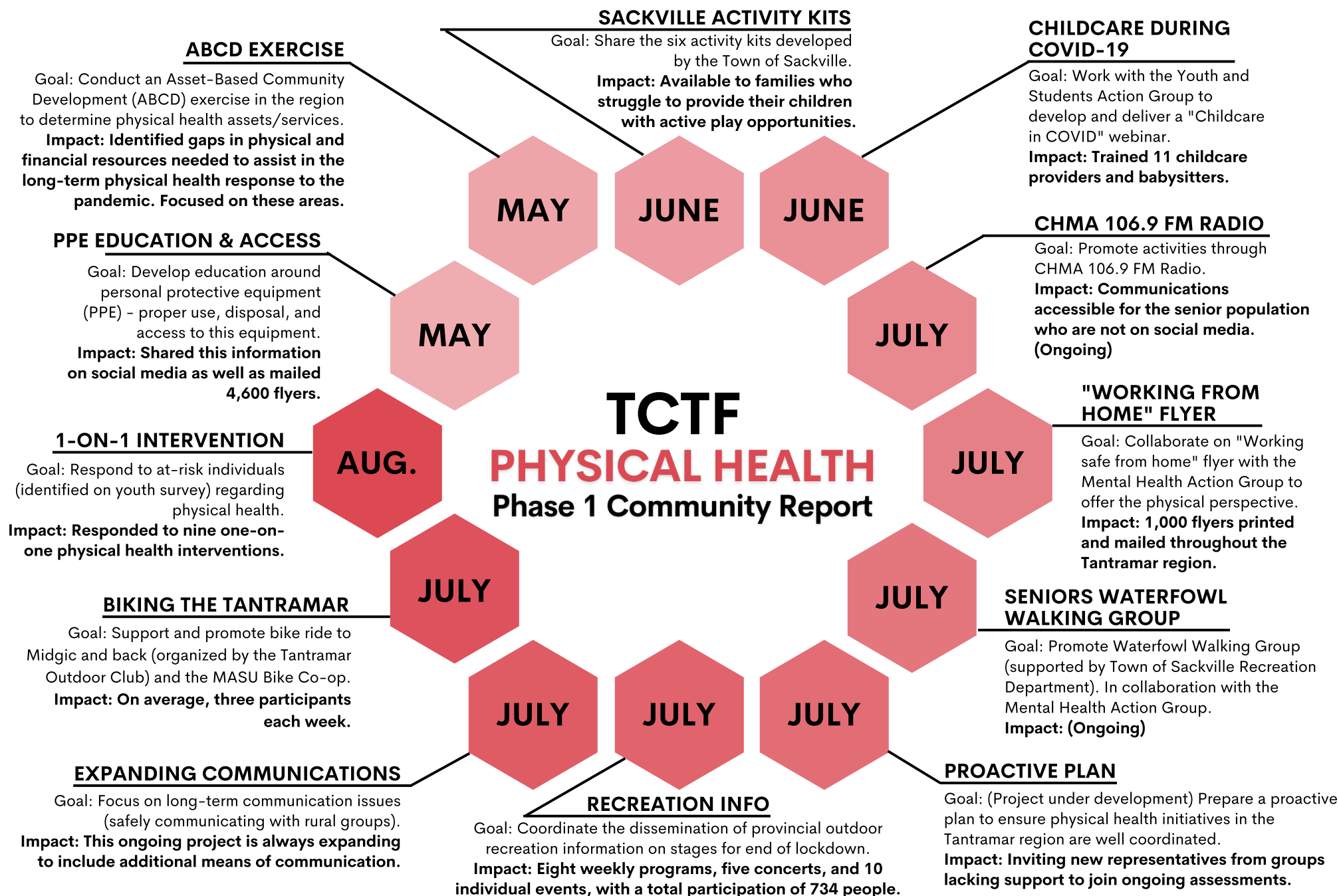
JULY

# TCTF ECONOMIC & BUSINESS IMPACT Phase 1 Community Report

## Tantramar COVID-19 Economic and Business Impact



The Economic and Business Impact Group was founded in April 2020 as one of the many action groups on the Tantramar COVID-19 Task Force. The mission of the group was to address short and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on the economic, business, and agricultural sectors in the Tantramar region. The members are a combination of business owners, municipal representatives, academics, and developers. The action group will support economic development and business initiatives to address these issues. The group is not meant to replace existing organizations, but instead partner and offer project ideas that have the potential to actualize. All projects aspire to fill an identified need. Co-Chairs are Dr. Michael Fox (Geography and Environment Professor at Mount Allison University) and Gwen Zwicker (past President of Mainstreet Sackville).



## Tantramar COVID-19 Physical Health



The Physical Health Action Group was founded in April 2020 as one of the many action groups on the Tantramar COVID-19 Task Force. The mission of the group was to identify needs and offer solutions for the various physical health issues identified by the TCTF action groups and stakeholders. The committee consists of nine members that are civil servants, seniors, and students from the Tantramar region. The group is not meant to replace existing organizations, but instead partner and offer project ideas that have the potential to actualize. The Physical Health Action Group collaborated with the Mental Health and Youth & Student action groups, as well as Sackville Youth Soccer Association, on various projects. All projects aspire to fill an identified need. Co-Chairs are Cindy Crossman (RN and educator at Mount Allison University) and Martia Webb (Rotary Club member).