

**Catholic Women's League of Canada
Nova Scotia Provincial Council
Education and Health Annual Report
2019**

Submitted by RoseAnn Heatherington, Education and Health Chairperson

This Annual Report summarizes the important and informative work carried out by Councils in the Education and Health Standing Committee in 2019. Thank you to the Councils and Chairs of the Education and Health Standing Committees who did great work in the many endeavors they undertook in this Standing Committee. Twenty-Seven Councils used the online reporting system to present the activities and initiatives undertaken by Councils. Information collected from the reports show that generally members in this standing committee are between 65-75, have been elected into the position and more than 50% were previous chairpersons of the Education and Health Standing Committee. There are new Chairpersons that have accepted the opportunity to use their gifts and talents to serve in this standing committee.

Catholic Education

Although there is no Catholic religious education teaching in the Nova Scotia school system, Councils are actively involved in many aspects of Catholic education. Members are involved in children and youth centered Catechesis to adult faith formation through various Bible studies and programs offered in their parishes or diocese. These activities include personal involvement with RCIA and Sacramental preparation in parishes by volunteering as catechists and assistants.

As a result of the quality of Catholic religion instruction in their communities, Chairpersons have inquired how they may be able to support these programs. Councils are working closely in communities with schools to support children and youth by providing school supplies, breakfast and lunch programs, supervision for recess and field trips.

Literacy and Continuing Education

Members have been very supportive of working and assisting others in their communities to improve their literacy and English language skills. Many have been involved with mentoring new immigrants and tutoring them as they learn to speak English and acquire new literacy skills.

Scholarships and Bursaries

Councils fund bursaries and scholarships to high school and mature students financially assisting them in furthering their education. Financial support and donations were provided by Councils to Coady International, the National Bursary Fund, CCO and NET Ministries. The Marguerite Burns and Alice Eagan Hagen Bursaries are available annually to members. Catholic women can access these funds to further their education and faith formation however many members may not be aware and do not take advantage of this available financial support.

Wellness and Sickness/Disease

All Councils are actively involved in supporting many national health organizations such as Canadian Cancer Society, Heart and Stroke Foundation, Alzheimer Society of Canada, Arthritis Society, Multiple Sclerosis Society, Relay for Life, Kidney Foundation, Canadian Red Cross, Children's Wish Foundation, VON and local hospitals to name a few. Councils provide financial support as well members participate by providing volunteer services in their communities to these organizations.

Local organizations such as foodbanks, Salvation Army, ALS, Terry Fox Run, Hope Cottage are also supported by individual members and Councils. Members from one Council donated blood using the Partner ID in the Canadian Blood Services Partner Program.

Many Councils held information sessions with guest speakers who spoke on a wide range of topics on all aspects of health and wellbeing including several from the previous organizations identified.

National Hospice Palliative Care Day was well represented by the Councils reporting. Palliative care and assisted dying are of serious concern for Council members. Councils participated in the "12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care" by arranging for events and prayer services in their Parishes. Councils welcomed and supported members who wanted to share their experience with Palliative care. Palliative care information was available and goodwill offerings were collected and given to local palliative care/hospice facilities.

Many Councils feel that Palliative Care/Hospice Care is a very important issue and want to ensure that the increased awareness and focus remains and is not diminished especially in light of the legislative changes of Bill C-7.

Members are worried about the state of Health Care in the province particularly in light of the number of people with no Family Doctor. The closure of Emergency rooms, hospitals and doctors leaving Nova Scotia are also very important issues. They are also concerned about the need for Long Term Care facilities. These areas are serious priorities for Council members.

Environment

Councils are very concerned about the many issues impacting the future of the environment. Members addressed these issues by recycling, the reuse of material goods and reducing the use of Styrofoam, paper, water, plastic water bottles and bags within their homes and communities.

The CWL Water Pledge Challenge Campaign was very successful with many members. Creative water pledges were submitted by over 2000 members on how to conserve water encouraging family members to get involved. Water quality and use were topics of interest for Councils as Resolutions 2004.07 Water Use in Canada and 2001.04 Water Quality in Canada were reviewed.

Climate change is a concern to all Councils who inform their members on aspects of what important events are scheduled to increase climate change awareness locally and globally. There was active participation by members in the United Nations Water Day, Earth Day and the Earth Action initiative.

Genetics

Councils reported that there was very little activity in this area in 2019. Several Councils rated their knowledge of advantages and disadvantages of technology to alter genes in light of Catholic teaching as good however more research and information is needed by Councils. Councils are not informed of the current issues with bioethics or have subscribed to the Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute newsletter.

Other Comments

Councils are doing outstanding work in supporting the Education and Health Standing Committee in their parishes and communities. Members are knowledgeable and very supportive of the many important initiatives undertaken by this Standing Committee.

Councils are satisfied with the information they are receiving however more information in genetics might be useful to Councils.