

**Catholic Women's League of Canada
Nova Scotia Provincial Council
Education and Health Annual Report
2020**

This Annual Report summarizes the important and informative work carried out by Councils in the Education and Health Standing Committee in 2020. Thank you to the Councils and Chairs of the Education and Health Standing Committees who worked determinedly in the many endeavors they undertook in this Standing Committee despite the challenges of COVID-19. Twenty-Two 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 from all age groups, approximately 40-50% have been elected into the position and more than 50% were previous chairpersons of the Education and Health 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. As a result of the Catholic religion instruction in their faith communities, members have supported these programs. These activities include sacramental development with RCIA and Sacramental preparation in parishes by volunteering as catechists and assistants.

Councils have provided Crosses, Rosary beads and certificates to children receiving the Sacraments of First Communion, Reconciliation and Confirmation.

Councils have also supported Steubenville Atlantic which is an annual high school youth conference.

Cathy Petrie was the recipient of the yearly Marian Hepditch-Littlepage Prize. This prize is given by the Nova Scotia Provincial Council to a female Catholic graduate at the Atlantic School of Theology who is chosen by the faculty for her dedication to her faith and involvement in parish activities.

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. Unfortunately, with COVID-19, these programs have been cancelled with the onset of the pandemic restrictions but members look forward to resuming these activities.

Scholarships and Bursaries

Councils fund bursaries and scholarships to high school and university students assisting them financially in furthering their education. Promotional support and financial donations were also provided by Councils to Coady International, the National Bursary Fund, CCO and NET Ministries. Councils have indicated that less than fifty percent have promoted the National Bursary Fund utilizing the newly developed brochure or had members make application to the Fund. 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 financial support. Further promotion is required to assist members in becoming knowledgeable that these resources are available.

Wellness and Sickness/Disease

Many Councils are actively involved in supporting 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.

Members have taken action on resolutions related to Education and Health through letter writing to MLA and MP's. Sample letters were provided to assist with topics of interest.

Councils were encouraged to participate in National Hospice Palliative Care week. Although 47% of the Councils reporting in one Diocese participated, it is felt that many members participated in the 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care personally although it is not reported. Palliative care and assisted dying are of serious concern for Council members. Councils have donated to the new construction of Hospice/Palliative Care facilities.

Many Councils feel that Palliative Care/Hospice Care and assisted dying are very important issues. Members want to ensure that the increased awareness and focus remains and is not diminished especially in light of the proposed legislative changes of Bill C-7. Palliative Care postcards were not distributed in 2020.

Mental health is another area of concern for members. The Mental Health postcard was not well promoted overall in 2020. Further work needs to be done in this area through promotion of individual members especially during these days of COVID-19 restrictions.

Members continued to be worried about the state of Health Care in the province particularly in light of the number of people who still do not have a Family Doctor. COVID-19 has continued to highlight this and other very important issues surrounding Long Term Care facilities. These areas are serious priorities for Council members.

Members continue to maintain their personal health by following Canada's Food Guide and other available online resources.

Environment

Councils continue to participate in the "Care for Our Common Home". Members are very concerned about the many issues impacting the future of the environment. Members addressed and participated in these issues by plastic reduction, waste cleanup, conserving water and energy. Councils kept the CWL Water Pledge Challenge alive through using less water by utilizing water from dehumidifiers and cooking for watering gardens and plants just to name a few everyday actions. Conserving water and planting trees to commemorate the 100th anniversary of CWL are just a few ways to provide a healthier environment.

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 such as United Nations Water day, Earth Day and Earth action initiatives.

Genetics

Councils reported that there was very little activity in this area in 2020. Several Councils were aware of the advantages and disadvantages of technology to alter genes in light of Catholic

teaching however more research and information is needed by Councils. Although several Councils are informed of the current issues, it was suggested that there be more information on various topics in the League magazine of this very important area. Some Councils follow C.O.L.F. and read the newsletters from the CCCB.

Other Comments

2020 was a difficult year. Councils have indicated that due to COVID-19, they did not meet or participate in many planned activities. Contact was made with members through email however many of our members are senior and do not have computers. Education and Health Chairpersons have affirmed their Council Chairs that even though not much contact was made with members due to COVID-19, members continue to do everything possible to make communities a better place to live for all.

Care for Our Common Home is an ongoing responsibility for all and is demonstrated daily by the commitment and love for God and Canada that all our members live by.