

## End Homelessness St. John's Member Biographies (2014-2016)

### **Shawn Skinner, Chair, End Homelessness St. John's**



Shawn Skinner, P. Mgr., has held numerous leadership positions in both the public and private sectors. He is currently the Director of Training for the Carpenter Millwright College in Paradise, NL, a non-for-profit training facility committed to providing skilled trades. Prior to this he served as the Senior Director, Business Development for Aecon Construction Group Limited – a leading North American heavy civil construction contractor.

Shawn was elected twice as a Member of the House of Assembly (2003-2011), Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, serving as the Minister of Natural Resources (2010-2011), Minister of Innovation Trade and Rural Development (2009-2010), Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment (2007-2009) and Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier (2005-2006). He has also served the people of St. John's as a City Councillor (1993-1997).

In the private sector, Shawn has owned and operated his own business for more than 20 years, specializing in training and skills development where he has helped people prepare for careers in business, information technology and health-related fields. Shawn remains active in community affairs. He has been a long-time Board member with the Boys and Girls Club, the Royal St. John's Regatta Committee, and is an Honorary President of the Benevolent Irish Society, and a volunteer with the Canadian Blood Services. Shawn also became the Chair of End Homelessness St. John's in 2013.

Shawn is a graduate of the Computer Studies Program at the College of Trade and Technology; he has a Certificate in Adult Education from St. Francis Xavier University and received his Professional Manager (P. Mgr.) designation from the Canadian Institute of Management in 1995. Shawn and his family reside in St. John's.

### **Elizabeth M. Davis, RSM, Co-chair, The Gathering Place**



Congregational Leader of the Sisters of Mercy of Newfoundland and Labrador, Elizabeth was first a high school teacher in four schools in Newfoundland (Codroy Valley, Holy Heart of Mary in St. John's, Bell Island and Brigus), then Administrator of St. Clare's Mercy Hospital (1986-1994) and President/CEO of the Health Care Corporation of St. John's (1994-2000). She is also pursuing doctoral studies in the Bible at the University of Toronto.

She has been a Board member of CIHI, Association of Canadian Teaching Hospitals, Medical Council of Canada, National Board of Medical Examiners (USA), Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, Catholic Health Association of Canada, Regis College, Canadian Biblical Association, Trudeau Foundation & Dalhousie University's Management Program for Physicians.

She has received honorary degrees (Doctor of Laws) from Memorial University of Newfoundland and the University of Manitoba, has been appointed as a Member of the Order of Canada, an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, has received the Bread and Roses Award from the Canadian Federation of Nurses' Unions, and *Alumna of the Year* for Memorial University; has been inducted into the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador, and has received the *Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal*.

## **Tammy Davis, Executive Director, United Way of Newfoundland and Labrador**



Tammy has worked in the non-profit sector throughout the country for over 20 years. After beginning her career in Newfoundland with Memorial University as the recipient of a McConnell Fellowship in Institutional Advancement, Tammy spent 12 years gaining a wealth of experience in various positions within the sector. In 2007, Tammy returned to St. John's to accept the position of Executive Director with United Way of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Tammy is passionate about the community and the difference that we can each make to improve the lives of others- particularly in the areas of human and social services. As a native Newfoundlander, Tammy believes this province has the potential for great things and is excited to be a part of that journey. In her career, Tammy has held various fundraising and marketing positions within the non-profit sector in areas including Sports & Recreation, Healthcare, and Education.

In 2005, Tammy was introduced to the United Way movement through her work as a Strategic Markets Advisor with United Way of Calgary and Area's Strategic Giving Group. While with United Way of Calgary and Area, Tammy grew to truly understand United Way's unique position as a community impact organization, and was keen to be involved in the building of the movement in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Tammy holds a Diploma of Applied Arts in Journalism and a Bachelor of Arts degree. Tammy is currently the President Elect with the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Newfoundland and Labrador chapter, a member of the Board of Directors with Crime-stoppers NL, a member of the Community Advisory Board for End Homelessness St. John's. In her free time, Tammy is a voracious reader, and enjoys exploring and photographing her home province so she can share its beauty with those not fortunate enough to live here.

## **Aisling Gogan, Director, Poverty Reduction Strategy, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador**



Aisling is Director of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), a Government-wide strategy overseen by a committee of 10 ministers and has a 10 year goal of transforming Newfoundland and Labrador into a province with the least poverty. During her 14 year career with Newfoundland and Labrador's public service, Aisling has worked in a number of positions, including as Cabinet Officer, Director of Career, Employment and Youth Services and of the Workforce Development Strategy with the Department of Advanced Education and Skills and Director of Research and Planning with the Women's Policy Office.

Prior to joining Newfoundland and Labrador's public service, Aisling worked as a self-employed social program evaluation consultant with a focus on training, social assistance, labour market, and youth programs. This included work on the evaluation of many federal and provincial employment and training programs across the country, as well as the evaluation of fisheries adjustment programs such as Northern Cod Adjustment and Restructuring Program (NCARP), The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS), the federal Department of Fisheries and Ocean's Early Retirement and Groundfish Licence Retirement programs, and the impact of EI changes on the Gulf Snow Crab industry. Aisling also taught Political Science at Memorial University for 10 years.

## **Ann Marie Johnson, Senior Development Officer, Service Canada**

Biography and photo pending

## **Cynthia King, Director, Income and Social Supports, Department of Advanced Education and Skills**

Cynthia King has been a social worker for over 23 years, and is currently Director, Income and Social Supports at the Department of Advanced Education and Skills. She spent the first 17 years of her career at the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation: as a front line social worker in the Tenant Relations Program for 8 years on the west coast of the province and in St. Johns; and then as manager of several housing programs, including the Provincial Home Repair Program (PHRP), Community Based Housing Program, Tenant Relations Program, and the Affordable Housing Program. Cynthia has been with Advanced Education and Skills since 2009 when she joined the department as Regional Director, Avalon before moving to her current role as Director, Income and Social Supports a year ago.

## **Bruce Pearce, Community Development Worker, End Homelessness St. John's**



Blending a passion for social justice and the environment, Bruce works to develop solutions for healthy, sustainable communities. Since 2002 he has been the community development worker for End Homelessness St. John's, guiding local planning and investments under Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy – and in 2009 his committee helped found the Newfoundland & Labrador Housing & Homelessness Network. Bruce is former President of the Canadian Housing & Renewal Association, Canada's national voice for affordable housing, and helped lead efforts to create a pan-Canadian network of communities working to end homelessness. He's also a member of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, the Mobilizing Local Capacity to End Youth Homelessness initiative, and the National Learning Community on Youth Homelessness. He holds a Masters in Environmental Studies from York University and a Bachelor of Journalism from

Carleton University. Between 1988-1998, he was executive assistant and policy advisor to municipal and provincial elected officials in Toronto. Arriving in St. John's, NL in 1998, he pioneered a youth-led home energy efficiency social enterprise with the Conservation Corps Newfoundland & Labrador.

## **Sheldon Pollett, Executive Director, Choices for Youth**



As Executive Director of Choices for Youth, Sheldon is responsible for overseeing the development of programming that meets the needs of youth in the St. John's (NL) metro area. Since beginning his tenure in 2001, the organization has expanded to include a shelter for homeless young men, an outreach and youth engagement program, supportive housing programs, an intensive support program for youth with complex mental health issues, training and employment programs and programming in support of pregnant and parenting young families. Under his direction the organization has also succeeded in establishing a construction industry based social enterprise.

Sheldon has led the organization to become a national leader and partner in identifying best practices in the design and delivery of services to youth. This has included forming significant partnerships across the country. This has led to a series of adaptations of proven program models to better serve youth in NL. Sheldon is Co-chair of the National Learning Community on Youth Homelessness and a Board member of A Way Home – A National Coalition to End Youth Homelessness. He is also a member of the Advisory Committee for the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, and a Board member of Raising the Roof.

On a provincial level, Sheldon is a member of the Minister's Advisory Council on Mental Health and Addictions (Department of Health and Community Services) and Vice-Chair of End Homelessness St. John's.

## **Colleen Simms, Director, Mental Health & Addictions, Department of Health and Community Services**

Biography and photo pending

## **Gail Thornhill, Director of Supportive Housing, Stella's Circle**



Gail is the Director of Supportive Housing at Stella's Circle, a leading non-profit community organization and an Incorporated Ministry of The United Church of Canada in Newfoundland & Labrador. Stella's Circle provides services to adults who face barriers from fully participating in the community. These barriers could include mental health challenges, poverty, homelessness, criminal justice involvement and unemployment. The mission of the organization is to transform lives by offering real homes, real help and real work.

Gail has a Masters in Social Work and has worked in the housing and homelessness sector for 17 years. At Stella's Circle, she oversees the supportive housing team which offers tenant relations, wellness programming and a variety of safe and affordable housing options. Stella's Circle has 76 housing units and works in partnership with 35 private landlords. Gail also oversees Naomi Centre, an emergency shelter for young women. Annually, the Centre offers temporary accommodation, advocacy and case management services to more than 120 women and responds to 2000 requests for service.

Part of Gail's role includes community capacity building. She serves on the boards of Cochrane Community Outreach and Performance Centre, End Homelessness St. Johns, and most recently completed a term with The Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network. Gail also provides training, mentorship and support to eight Housing Support Workers located in various locations of rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

## **Gail Tobin, CEO, Iris Kirby House**



Gail has been with Iris Kirby House (IKH) for just over fifteen years, joining the Organization in 1999 in the area of Human Resources Management. In 2006 Gail became Executive Director and today holds the position of CEO.

Over the last six years, IKH has seen rapid growth, especially in the areas of increased emergency sites, programming/services and public awareness. Gail feels very accomplished to have assisted the organization through this phase, all in an effort to meet the needs of society and those presenting at their doors.

When not working she enjoys spending time with her husband of nearly 32 years and her family, especially two grandsons of two and half years old and 1 year old. Gail says now that she is concluding a major capital project at the IKH's emergency shelter on Waterford Bridge Road, the timing may be right for her to pick up the pieces of a deferred MBA program.

Gail's volunteer contributions include serving as Chair of the NL Housing & Homelessness Network, and on the Executive of the Transition House Association of NL's Board of Directors. Gail is delighted to be a part of End Homelessness St. John's and is very excited of the good work that will come to fruition through a concerted approach.

**Judy Tobin, Manager, Non Profit Housing, Community Services Department, City of St. John's**



Judy has worked in community service fields serving youth and adults since the early 1990s. When she completed her post-secondary education in 1993 she began working at Emmanuel House, a program of Stella's Circle. She held several front line positions within Stella's Circle over 18 years. One of these positions was Tenant Relations Officer, in which she worked closely with a team of people who helped find and secure housing for mental health consumers. Prior to the creation of the Housing Resource Team at Stella's Circle, Judy was a hands-on housing resource for Stella's Circle clients. Working there enriched her knowledge and experience of working with a diverse, marginalized and vulnerable population. Working in the community, she became familiar with navigating systems, while collaborating with many community partners and groups in St. John's.

In 2012 Judy became the Senior Housing Officer in the City of St. John's Non Profit Housing Division. During this time, the City of St John's became the Homelessness Partnering Strategy Community Entity (CE) for St. John's, providing community development, coordination and administrative services for End Homelessness St. John's. Judy oversees the City's CE agreement with Service Canada, in collaboration with End Homelessness St. John's, and her Division became part of the new Community Services Department in 2013.

**Madonna Walsh, Manager, Affordable Housing, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing**



Madonna Walsh has been employed with Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC) since 1986 in a variety of areas including, Finance, Administration and Corporate Communications. Since 2009, Madonna has been with NLHC's Program Delivery Division as Manager of the Affordable Housing Program and Provincial Homelessness Fund. She is currently also a member of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Affordable Housing, End Homelessness St. John's, and the Homelessness Partnering Strategy Rural Advisory Board.

Madonna has a Bachelor's Degree (Majors Sociology & English) and Certificate in Business Administration from Memorial University.