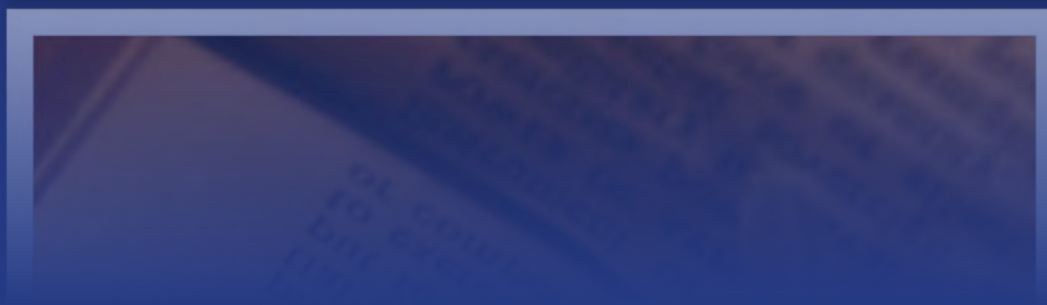


COASTERS ASSOCIATION INC

YOUTH SOCIAL PROGRAMS



Prepared by

Shelley Fequet - Basse Cote Nord en Forme Development Agent, Assistant Director of Programs

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Preface

The purpose of this document is to demonstrate the importance of having sustainable social programs available for youth living on the Lower North Shore. It is designed to give us the best understanding of the positive impacts social programs can have on our youth.

Sustainability is a concern across the board when it comes to programs and resources. Not only do social programs need to be available, but they also need to be maintained in order to instill healthy life-long behaviors. The Coasters Association has been working for more than 25 years for the betterment of the communities and residents of the “Coast” and understands how valuable these programs are for the young and to the region.

Sincerest thank you to all partners who have supported our initiatives over the years and we look forward to working together so that *our* Lower North Shore continues to be a *family* for us all...it really does take a village.

Shelley Fequet

Basse Cote Nord en Forme Development Agent



Introduction:

All youth experience a variety of issues while growing up, whether it be risks, challenges or stresses, neither family nor community can fully protect youth from such conditions. This is just a part of growing up. However, if youth are prepared to better overcome those adversities, then they are more likely to grow into successful adults. By providing youth with the opportunity to participate in programs, which stimulate positive development, young people have a better chance at a happy and healthy life.

Social programs are well-documented ways of affecting youth positively and increasing their chances for success. Social programs allow for greater opportunities for engagement and resources that support positive development, which are fundamental for all youth.

It is apparent that all youth should have equal chances to participate in enriching activities/programs. Unfortunately, this is not always the case for youth of the Lower North Shore. Lack of necessary funding, human resources and, in some instances, infrastructures severely impact the growth and sustainability of social programs for the youth in our isolated Anglophone minority communities. Social programs are most successful and impactful when all levels of stakeholders are dedicated to

developing opportunities that youth need in order to grow into healthy and successful adults.



Challenges for rural youth:

Generally, rural communities are viewed as picturesque with warm and generous residents who live at a slower pace than those in urban areas. However, this seemingly ideal environment can be unfavorable to youth. Due to the lack of social programs, that are either punctual or unavailable, the needs of the youth are widely know but, unfortunately, are often left unmet.

Feelings about living in rural, isolated communities are often complex for youth. Some view rural living as a positive experience, being surrounded by family and strong community ties, while others perceive it as a place to get away. The Lower North Shore has specific barriers or gaps in social programing.

- The limited number of infrastructures that can house various social programs are a problem for youth and the community. A lack of

recreational and leisure facilities can be linked to the increasing use of drugs and alcohol amongst rural youth.¹

- Exodus of the youth is an issue for the region. Whether they are leaving to pursue post secondary educations or due to the lack of employment opportunities, youth are not returning to the communities of the Lower North Shore. This concern goes way beyond low population numbers; it impacts the families, community vitality, businesses and schools.
- The tolerance of underage alcohol and drug use is an underlying acceptance for the communities of the LNS. “There’s nothing else to do” is a common response when youth are asked why they participate in this and other risky behaviors.
- Parents concerned about their children’s afterschool care miss an average of eight (8) workdays per year.² Working families struggle with the added stress and other mental health issues when youth are left unsupervised and have limited opportunities to participate in afterschool programs.
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) research shows that half of lifetime diagnosable mental illnesses begin before the age of 14.³ For youth who are socially isolated and do not have the opportunity to engage with peers, they feel a community disconnect and may have increased stress, anxiety or depression.
- There is an issue with the consistency in the social programs available to youth. This punctuality results in discouragement from the community and increases inefficacy.
- Due to inconsistent funding, providing the animation & training for Animators is an issue. Having reliable, dedicated Animators who believe in the youth, and are prepared, is the most important aspect in executing a success social program.
- Disabled youth are very limited in their opportunities for social inclusion. Whether it is accessibility issues or no funding available for Shadows or proper accompaniment during various activities, this

¹http://www.fusionyouthcentre.ca/corporate/images/impact/reports/Impact_ofAfter-SchoolPrograms_onRuralYouth.pdf

² <http://youth.gov/youth-topics/afterschool-programs/benefits-youth-families-and-communities>

³ <https://socialworklicensemap.com/shaping-minds-the-mental-health-benefits-of-after-school-programs/>

vulnerable population does not have equitable services they badly need



Benefits of long-term social programs for youth:

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. When it comes to our youth, social wellbeing means their capability to positively engage in the community in which they live. This includes their personal relationships, social support networks, and community involvement. A youth’s involvement in social programs is a pretty basic way to impact their social wellbeing positively and will subsequently impact their family and community ties.

Social programs include a variety of youth focused physical activity, educational, social, developmental and arts programming in communities across the Lower North Shore. The intent of social programs is to assist youth in developing skills that contribute to a healthy life through social and emotional development, creative thinking and physical activity. As

well, youth develop confidence in their abilities and a stronger connection to their families, peers and community.

- Research has shown that youth who participate regularly in social programs do better in school. Perhaps most importantly, evidence shows that academically at risk youth may benefit more from participation in afterschool programs than their higher achieving peer.⁴ Also, effective social programs can improve behavior in the classroom and reduce drop out rates.
- Regular participation in social programs will lead to positive youth development and will provide young people with the skills needed in order to deal with challenges that they may face in life rather than teaching them that evading is the best policy, which is not a realistic approach to life.
- The availability of social programs give youth options to fill their time with fun learning experiences outside of school hours. Time spent in regular structured and supervised activities/programs where youth can develop mentally, physically and socially will not be time spent participating in risky and criminal behaviors.
- Parents who are ensured that their children will have a safe environment to experience afterschool will have lower stress, improved mental health and will be more productive at work. This is beneficial to businesses and community.
- Existing social programs aimed at youth have the capacity to develop leadership skills, self-esteem and a positive outlook. This will lead to stronger mental health in young minds and increase community connection.
- The reliability of having social programs available to youth will allow for a constant resource for youth development. A resource that will help in youth development and community inclusion.

⁴http://arms.arps.org/news/past_news/community_partners_urged_to_support_afterschool_pr



Basse Côte Nord en Forme (BCNeF) – A social program best practice:

A. Background

Basse Côte Nord en Forme (BCNeF) is an initiative of the Lower North Shore Coalition for Health (LNSCH) and works in cooperation with community organizations and interested residents to provide opportunities and support for youth aged 0 to 17 years and their families to adopt active lifestyles and healthy eating habits which, hopefully, they will carry with them throughout their lives.

In 2008, the LNSCH submitted a project to Quebec en Forme which was approved, and it began engaging communities on the Lower North Shore. In January 2009, a pilot project was initiated in three communities (Harrington Harbour, Chevery and Bonne Esperance) and Animators were hired to carry out activities that promote healthy, active lives. In April 2010, three (3) additional Municipalities were mobilized (St. Augustine,

Gros Mecatina and Blanc Sablon) and additional animators were hired thus, ensuring that activities were carried out in all five (5) Municipalities on the territory.

The BCNeF movement follows the Quebec en Forme mandate and focuses on enhancing physical activity and healthy eating habits for youth ages 0-17, their families and their communities. Its vision is to encourage and involve residents of communities on the Lower North Shore to create and develop a lifelong *healthy, active lifestyle* for youth.

B. Highlights & Achievements

BCNeF is very proud of the work that the Animators have carried out in communities across the Lower North Shore over the last eight (8) years. The priority is to sustain and further encourage a healthy, active lifestyle and provide opportunities for our youth to flourish.

Some examples of what BCNeF has accomplished are:

Food & Fitness: BCNeF Animator in the Municipality of Bonne Esperance implemented a program that incorporates making a healthy snack and participating in physical activities. The 5-10 year olds make a healthy snack, discuss why it is important to eat well and then play a fun game that gets them moving.

Healthy options @ canteen: BCNeF Animator in the Municipality of Blanc Sablon has worked with the school and the Nutritionist to create a booklet of healthy recipes that will be used to ensure that healthy food choices are available at the canteen during all school sporting events. Also, it was decided that healthy options would be available at all community events where the school canteen is utilized.

Cooking skill development: BCNeF Animator in the Municipality of Gros Mecatina has worked with the school to implement an afterschool activity which helped high school student develop cooking skills and to make healthy meals, which were sold to fund raise for various events. Elementary students were also introduced to healthy snacks, which they made, then discussed how healthy eating helps them perform better.

Revamping snack program: BCNeF Animator in the Municipality of St. Augustine has worked with parents and the school to take another look at the school snack program. Now, the school is offering healthier options and making healthy food choices available for all students.

After school programing: BCNeF Animators in the Municipality of Golfe St. Laurent (Harrington & Chevery) have worked with youth, parents & community partners to create after school activities that focus on fun & physical activity. Activities vary and very much corresponds to the needs of their community.

Supporting community partners: All BCNeF Animators have worked with groups and organizations within their communities to support ongoing activities. Over the years, BCNeF has supported youth centers, sports and leisure committees, schools, breakfast and snack programs and day cares, amongst others.

Involvement & participation: All five (5) municipalities on the territory are feeling the positive impact of the BCNeF initiative, with the involvement from thirty-eight (38) volunteers. More than three hundred (300) youth, in eleven (11) communities, are benefiting and are experiencing the importance of a healthy & active lifestyle. Seven (7) jobs were created for Animators who are invested, believe in the positive outcome and understand the need that BCNeF addresses on the Lower North Shore. The communities are more engaged and healthier because of social programs like BCNeF and that is a result that needs to continue.

C. Budget

BCNeF has been made possible through the efforts of the LNSCH and the funding from Quebec en Forme. Currently, it requires \$160,000.00 to run the BCNeF initiative on the Lower North Shore:

Salaries	Development Agent - \$36,400 + \$5,720 (benefits)	\$42,120.00
	Animators (6) - \$84,600 + \$13,110 (benefits)	\$97,710.00
	Total salaries	\$139,830.00

Travel		\$1,700.00
Rent & Utilities		\$5,940.00
Other	Finances, training, publicity & promotion, office supplies, postage, photocopy	\$12,530.00
Total		\$160,000.00

BCNeF Development Agent - Allocation of hours per week:

10 hours – Direct support for Animators

- Follow up, weekly/bi weekly check in, problem solving, etc.

10 hours – Meetings/conference calls

- Representation on various regional committees

15 hours – Administration

- Reports, application development, collection and compilation of data, promotion, etc.

35 hours

** Please note that all BCNeF Animators have 1 hour per week designated for administrative tasks (completing reporting documents) and the remainder is allocated to animation of activities, as QeF specified the Animator focus to be on the implementation of activities and not administrative tasks.*

When QeF began investing funds on the LNS, it was with the understanding that communities will be able to continue with healthy, active lifestyle activities once QeF funds had ended. All regional partners have a responsibility to improving the lives of children and youth, particularly in challenging social and economic times. This often requires that partners fiscally invest in programs and services that provide opportunities for youth & their families.



Solutions for sustainability:

A simple question we need to ask ourselves is ... does participation in social programs make a difference? The answer is yes. Research has shown that youth who are active in social programs gain a multitude of positive benefits in a lot of areas – health and wellness, education, prevention, social and emotional.

In order to achieve positive outcomes in youth there are three (3) factors that are needed. First, youth need access to and participate in long-term social program. Secondly, there needs to be quality programs and staffing. Lastly, it is vital to have strong partnership on a community and regional level, when partners come together to fully support community driven social programs, then the benefits are limitless.

- **Partnerships** with organizations or groups with established infrastructures support social programs by offering space to carry out programs and activities for youth, families and community. Many infrastructures on the LNS are under utilized and can be much more useful to the community other than being accessible for a few hours a day or standing empty.

Recommendation: Partnership agreements signed for use of infrastructures to hold activities.

- **Regional and community investment** is a must. All regional partners have a responsibility to improving the lives of children and youth, particularly in challenging social and economic times.

Recommendation: Contribution to sustaining social programs for youth is written into annual budgets of regional organizations with a youth mandate.

- **Animation** is one of the most important aspects that social programs can provide to the community. Investing in the Animators that carry out the activities with the youth. They will be a positive role model, outside the home, and should be provided with training and resources to provide the best opportunities for the youth.

Recommendation: Training for Animators prioritized and training opportunities identified.

- **Core funding** would be the ideal. It would allow for the delivery of social programs with more efficiency and with the flexibility to be adapted to the needs of youth, families and the community. Without the constant struggle to secure funding, social programs can focus on helping youth lead healthy, successful lives.

Recommendation: Applications and grants submitted to various provincial and federal government departs (Ministère des Famille, Canadian Heritage, Health Canada, etc.) to secure long term funding for youth social programs.

Long-term sustainability is the only way that social programs can benefit our youth, their families and their communities for years to come. To have the best chance at success, our youth have to be empowered and as leaders in their communities, it the responsibility of all partners to help see this through. The continuity of the Basse Côte Nord en Forme program depends on it.



Survey Results

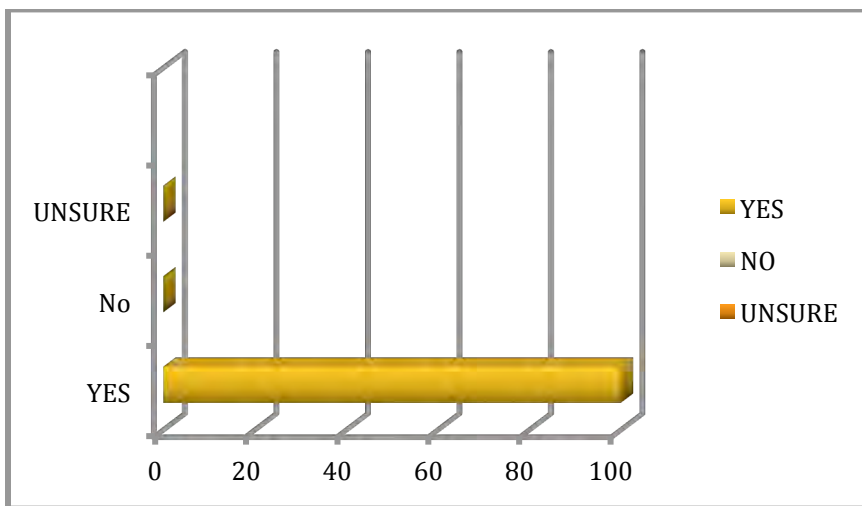
A. Community & Partners

In 2014 a survey was carried out to assist in evaluating the impact of BCNeF on the Lower North Shore. Thirty-two (32) surveys were sent out to Local Action Group members and partners; twenty (20) responses were received. All Municipalities are represented in the responses received.

Since the BCNeF initiative has been implemented in your community:

Has BCNeF improved physical activity opportunities for youth (0-17)? If yes, how?

Municipality of Cote – Nord du Golfe Saint Laurent (8)

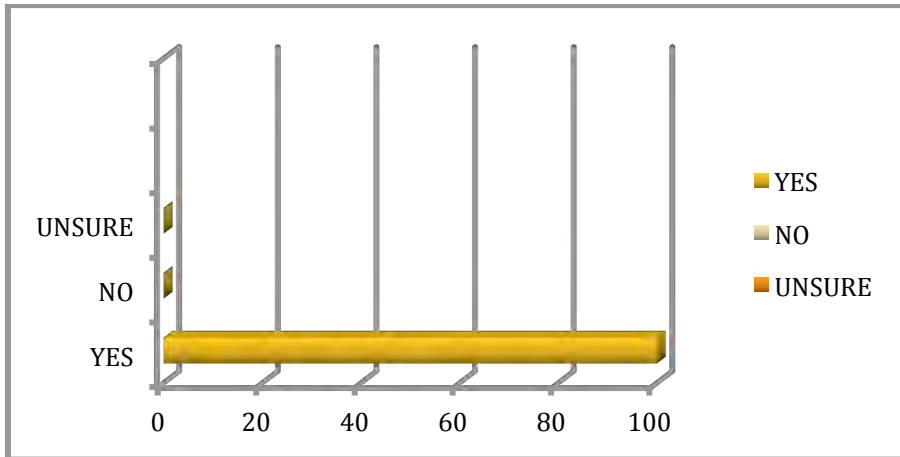


How:

- More physical activity.
- More weekly activities offered in the gym.
- By helping provide activities to our youth that they would not have the opportunity to participate in otherwise.
- Sports programs.
- Participation in organized physical activities such as volleyball matches, indoor and out door activities, etc.
- Increased continuity and diversity of programming and increased quality of program content.

- Each day, after school, the youth have opportunities to practice sports.
- More opportunities to participate in physical activities like night time gym

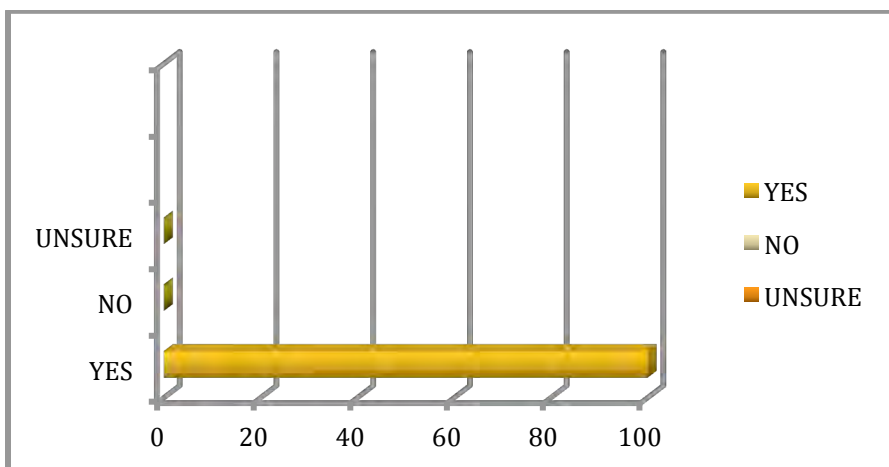
Municipality of Gros Mecatina (2)



How:

- The Animator has been available to provide more opportunities and get youth involved, works closely with organizations and committees to plan and provide more activities that are enjoyable to youth while being physically fit.
- Helps with activities already in place.

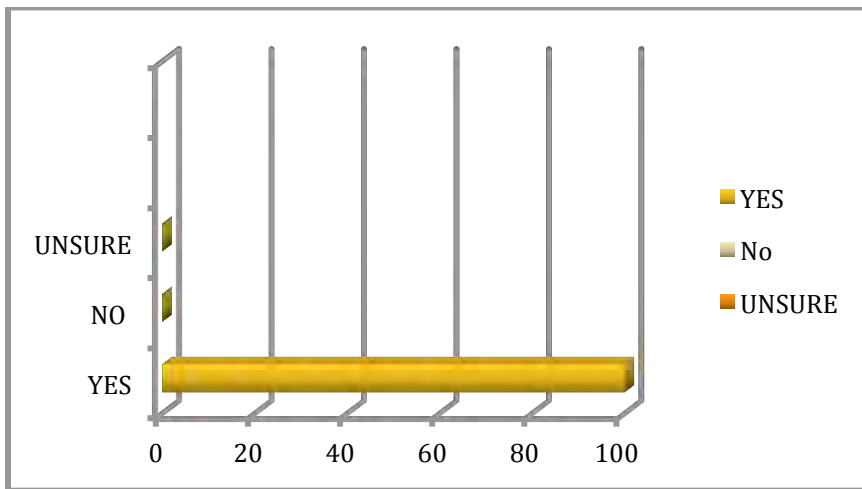
Municipality of St. Augustine (3)



How:

- Children are more alert and active.
- Improvement for the younger age groups, especially during school with lunch hour and after school activities.
- This generation of children have come to depend on motorized transportation, less time is spend walking or cycling to destinations. With BCNeF offering a variety of fun activities, children participate without thought of it being “a chore” or “work”.

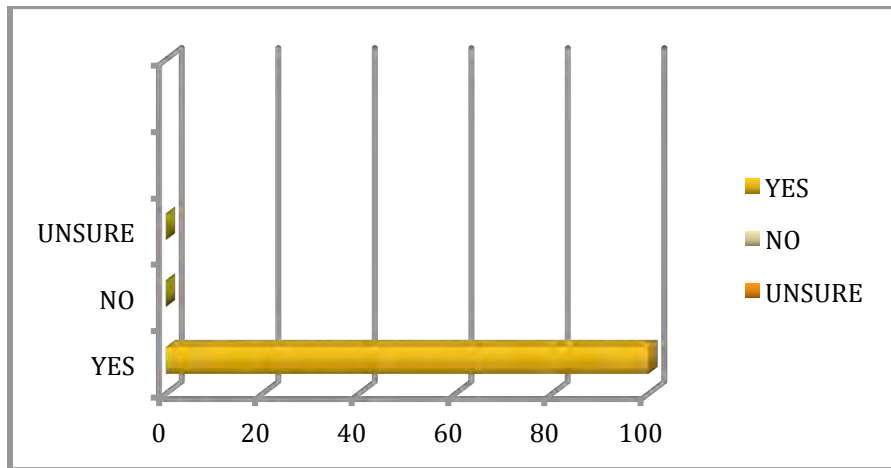
Municipality of Bonne Esperance (3)



How:

- Having gym time for children during the evenings has made a huge difference.
- Children have more opportunity to take part in activities and the regular schedule helps families develop healthy habits.
- With the activities being at the school, the kids have access to all types of sporting equipment.

Municipality of Blanc Sablon (4)

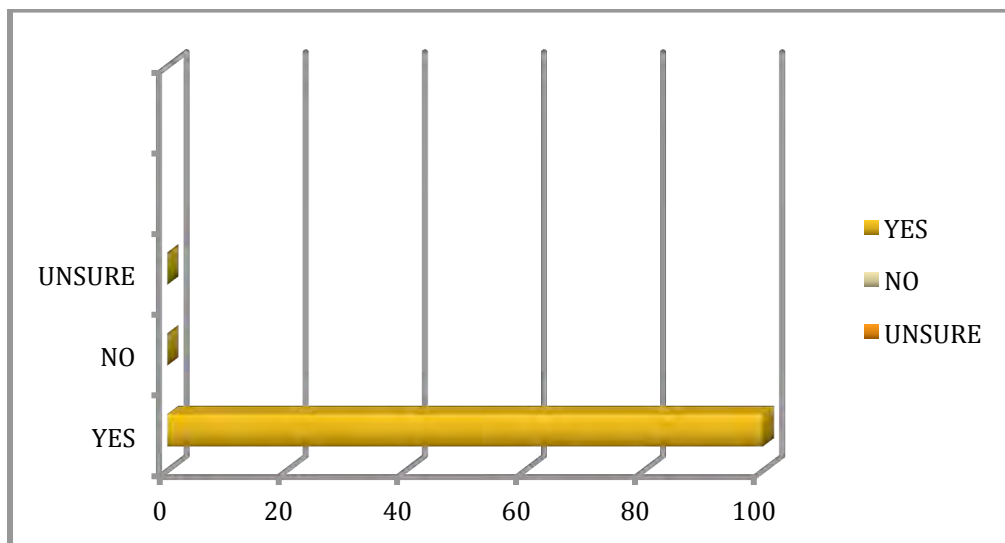


How:

- By providing structured activities everyday.
- Many opportunities to get on the move.
- More structured activities.
- By creating new opportunities for the children to move with their friends or parents.

Has BCNeF improved healthy eating habits for youth (0-17)?

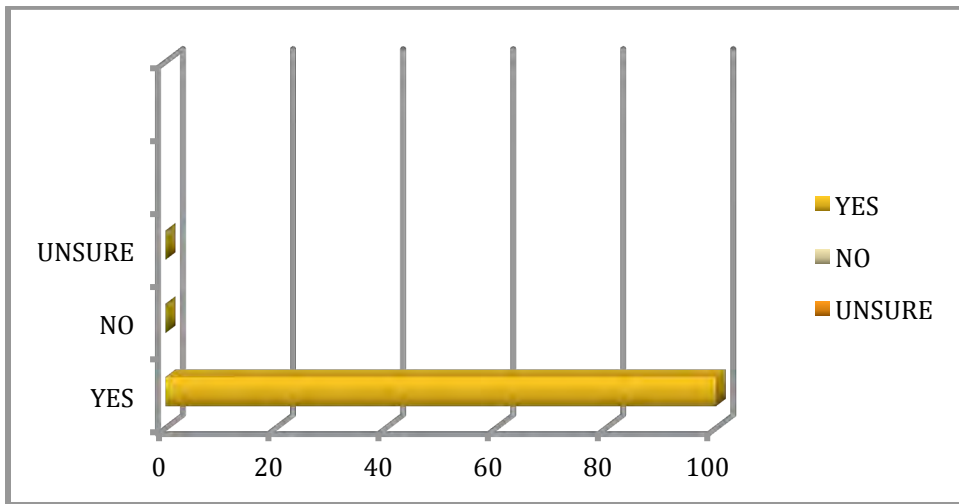
Municipality of Côte-Nord du Golfe Saint Laurent (8)



How :

- By helping with the Breakfast for Learning program, showing & offering healthy snacks.
- Helping to offer healthy snacks each morning at school.
- Increased continuity and quality of the program.
- Youth realize the importance of a healthy breakfast before going to school.
- Having BCNeF involved in our healthy snack and sports programs has helped stress the importance of eating healthy and having a balanced diet.
- Youth are trying new and healthy foods.

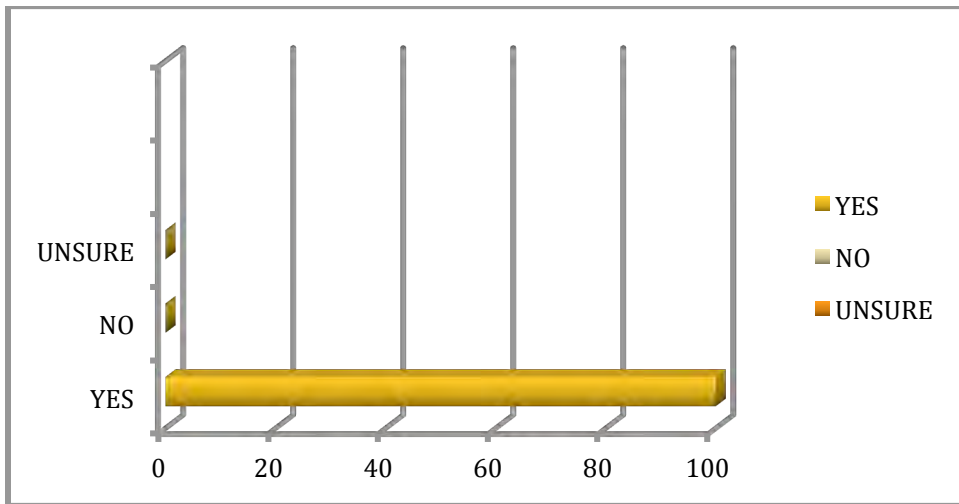
Municipality of Gros Mecatina (2)



How:

- BCNeF is a huge benefit to our Breakfast for Learning program and to any healthy eating activities we hold.
- We have seen and noticed youth making healthier choices.

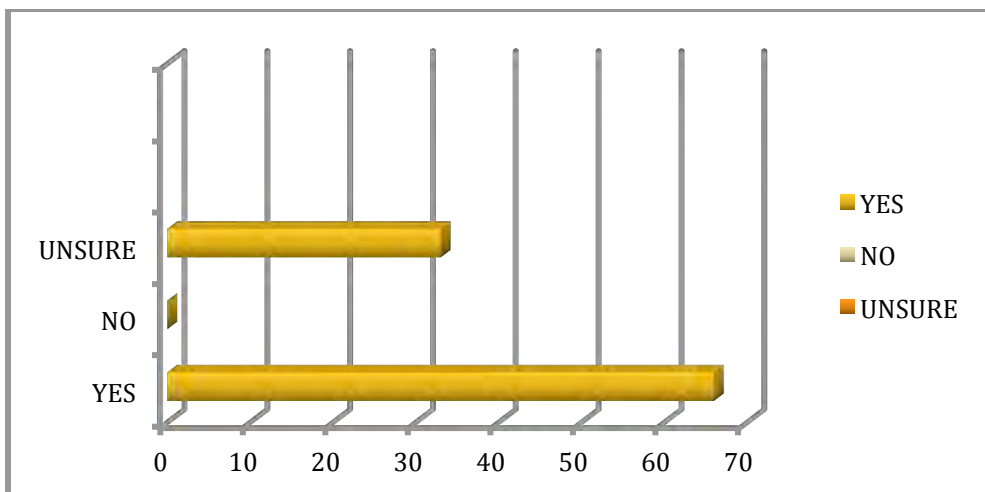
Municipality of St. Augustine (3)



How:

- Youth have become more conscientious of the choices they make between healthy foods and junk food. From a parents perspective this is a learning curve that the individual plays more attention to as they mature – with BCNeF setting the foundation. This is a service that, I believe, is a huge investment that the youth will carry into adulthood.
- I have noticed improvements over the past few years in school, but I think there is still room for improvement.

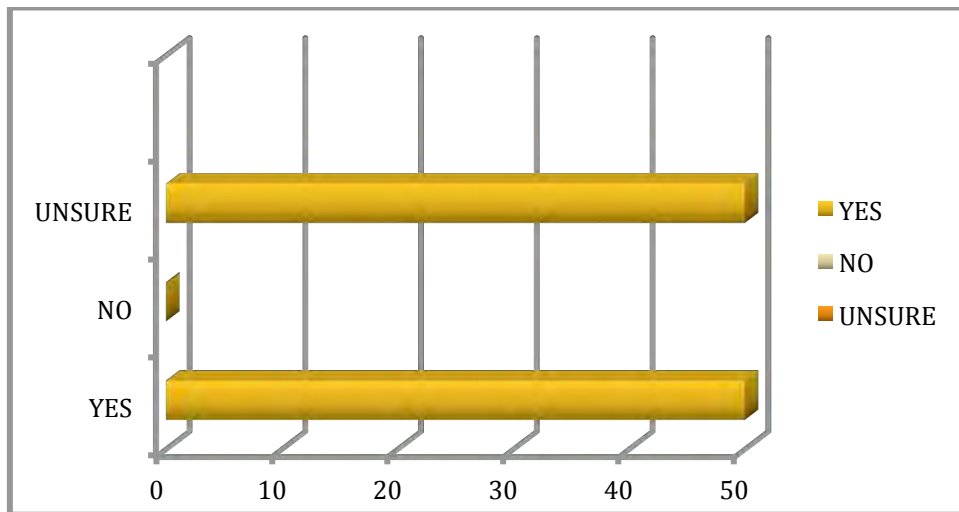
Municipality of Bonne Esperance (3)



How:

- When attending activities, no junk food is allowed – only healthy foods and drinks.
- BCNeF has helped families try new foods and learn how to eat healthier.

Municipality of Blanc Sablon (4): 50% - Yes, 50% - Unsure

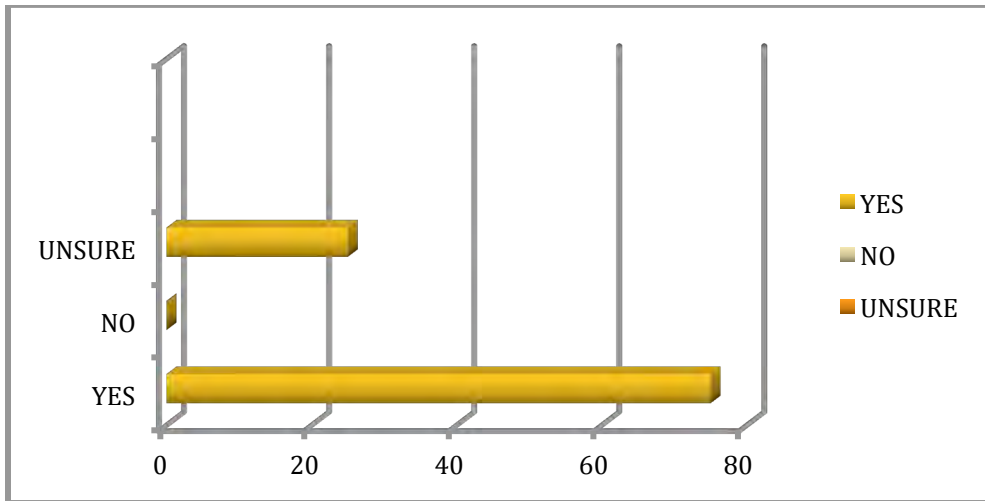


How:

- By giving healthy snacks, cooking with them and teaching them about the 5 food groups.
- More kids are drinking water & milk at events.
- The Breakfast Club encourages healthy eating habits

Does youth, who participate in BCNeF activities, show improvements in healthy lifestyle choices?

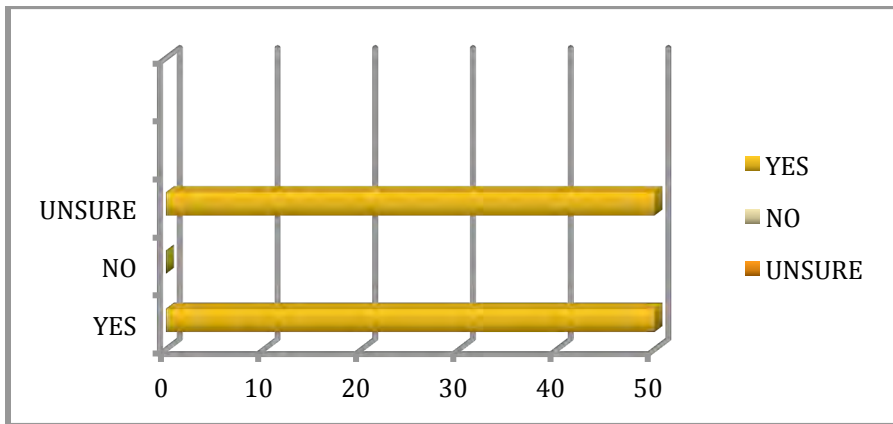
Municipality of Côte-Nord du Golfe Saint Laurent (8)



How:

- Kids are very active.
- Many of our youth have become more active, are more careful of what kinds of food they put into their bodies and, as a result, tend to not “shy away” from daily physical activities.
- At the end of the winter, elementary students begin to take active transport to school (i.e. bikes). Some work still needs to be done with secondary students, who continue to use motorized transportation.
- Students are more consciences about healthy choices.
- Eating fresh fruit/ healthy snacks daily.
- At school, with healthy snacks, youth do not bring as much junk. At home, youth want to practice and improve the sports they like with BCNeF.

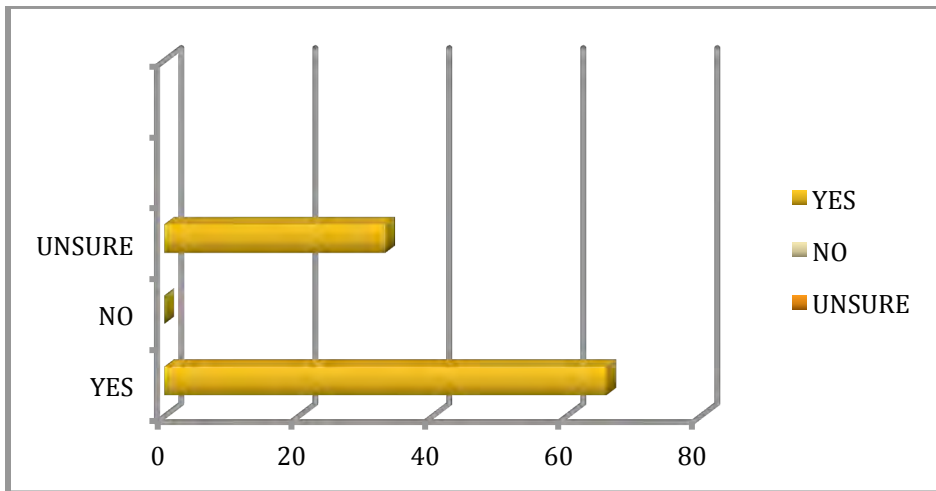
Municipality of Gros Mecatina (2): 50% - Yes, 50% - Unsure



How:

- During activities that are held at the community center there is a large increase in water and sports drinks being purchased. Youth are using the rink and arena more for not only hockey, but just to be active.

Municipality of St. Augustine (3)

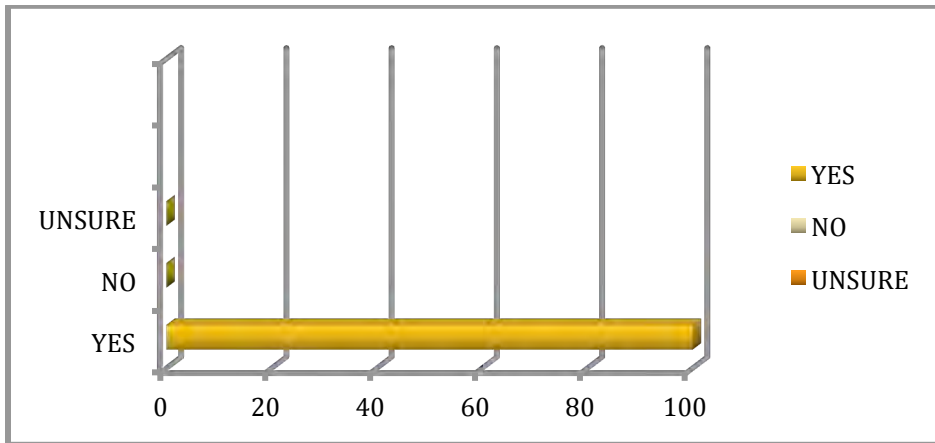


How

- Students are riding their bikes and walking regularly and playing various sports/games outside.
- Some improvement in eating habits at school, but not necessarily in walking to school. Unsure about the impact of BCNeF on student choices outside of school time.

- To my knowledge, yes on a low to medium level. The longer the presence of BCNeF in the communities the more educated the youth will become, therefore, making healthier choices.

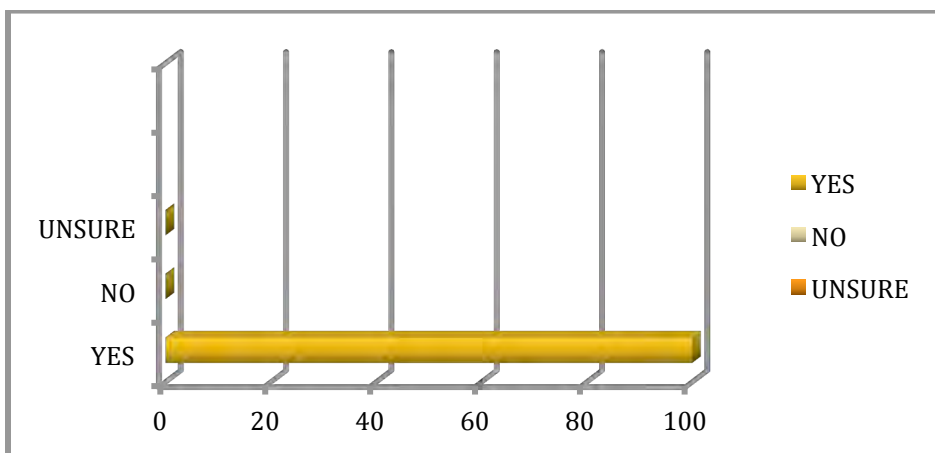
Municipality of Bonne Esperance (3)



How:

- Some youth has shown improvement in that they ride their bikes after school.
- There has been a huge improvement in youth living healthier lifestyles. We are seeing reduced drug and alcohol use and increased student success.

Municipality of Blanc Sablon (4)



How:

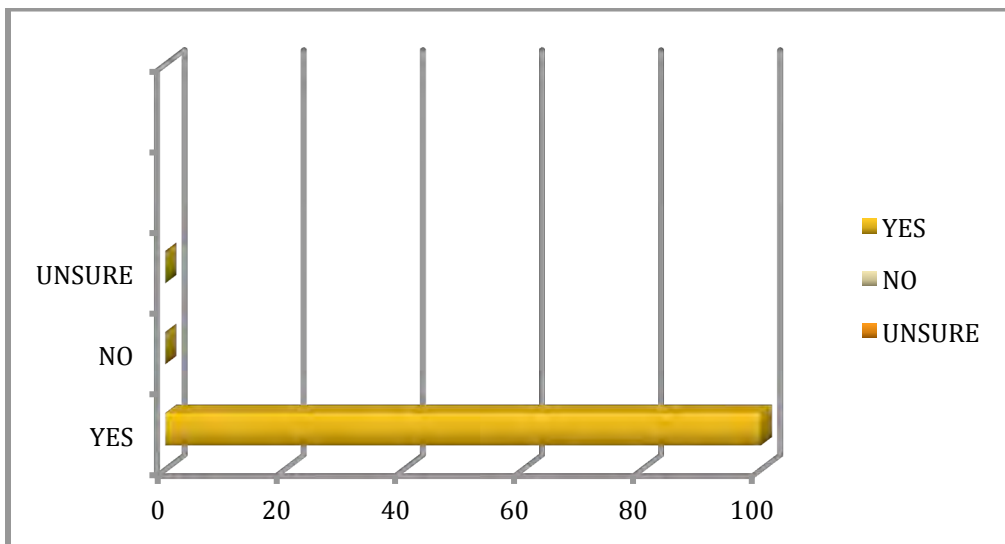
- Increase in youth drinking chocolate milk at sporting events instead of Gatorade.
- More youth walk to school.
- Youth drink more water, try more fruits & vegetables and participate in more activities.

B. Animators

In 2014 a survey was carried out with BCNeF Animators (5) in order to assist in evaluating the impact of BCNeF on the Lower North Shore.

Since the BCNeF initiative has been implemented in your community:

Has BCNeF improved physical activity opportunities for youth (0-17)?

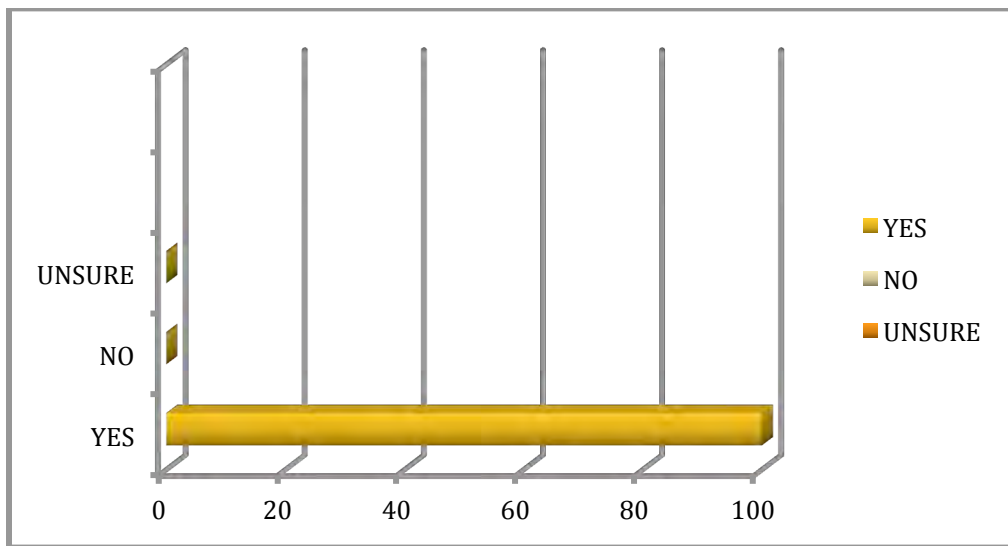


How:

- Youth would not have been able to participate in certain activities without the BCNeF Animator involvement.
- Without BCNeF, most youth would not be involved in physical activities outside of gym class.
- BCNeF activities help ensure youth activity preference is considered and that youth are more conscientious of the importance of being active.

- BCNeF Animators work with partners and improve access to activities for youth (i.e. coaching hockey, supervision for sports travel, KIDS Summer Camp, assisting Gym Teachers, organizing after school activities).

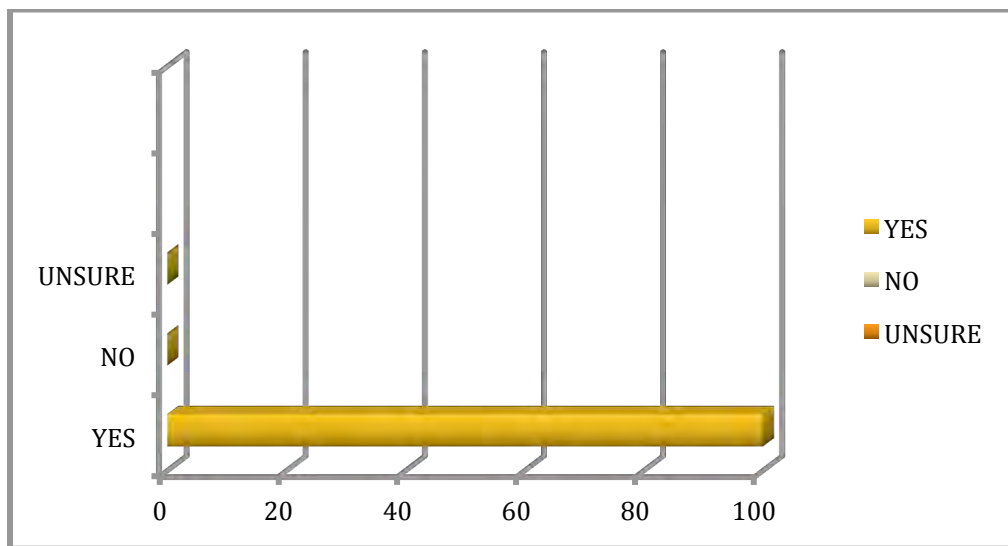
Has BCNeF improved healthy eating habits for youth (0-17)?



How:

- Youth are introduced to healthier snack options (i.e. smoothies)
- Through BCNeF, youth have been exposed to information about healthier choices and have begun adapting better food habits
- The improvement is the combination of the schools regulation on snacks, CISSS information, parent mindfulness and BCNeF.
- Any sporting event where BCNeF is involved, there are healthier food options available and youth often choose the healthier option (i.e. chicken wrap) over the usual food available (i.e. pizza).
- Youth are more aware of the benefits of not skipping meals and eating healthy.

3. Do youth, who participate in BCNeF activities, show improvements in healthy lifestyle choices?



How:

- Youth are choosing more fresh foods and less processed foods that before the healthy snack program started.
- It's been easier with some youth more than others, but there is a difference. For example; choosing an apple instead of a muffin, drinking more water, more walking, etc.
- To some degree, yes, but not without the parents and school's initiative. Some youth require reminders when making choices.
- There are many youth that need to embrace a healthy lifestyle, but BCNeF has definitely influenced many.
- Youth in grades 3 & 4 now have the chance to participate in track & field, because of the involvement of BCNeF, that otherwise would have had to wait until grade 5. They became interested and enjoyed it so much that will, hopefully, continue to participate for years to come.

Annexes

A. Lower North Shore Coalition For Health (LNSCH)

Mandate: The mandate of the Lower North Shore Coalition for Health is to improve access and social services for the English speaking communities of the Lower North Shore.

Mission: The Lower North Shore Coalition for Health creates and nurtures a network of relationships between community and public-sector leaders and resources in order to identify, prioritize, address and resolve health and social services access issues for communities of the Lower North Shore.

Goals:

- To develop and maintain a sustainable network consisting of residents, community organizations and public institutions focused on improving access to health and social services;
- To identify and prioritize health and social services needs and access barriers;
- To develop sustainable initiatives that improve access based on health and social services needs identified;
- To evaluate and communicate progress with residents, organizations and public institutions.

Members:

Name	Organization	Contact
Anthony Dumas	Coasters Association	418-379-2006 coasters@globetrotter.net
Marlene Gallagher	CISSS BCN	418-461-2144 marlene.gallagher.09cisss@ssss.gouv.qc.ca
Vincent Joncas	Commission Scolaire du Littoral	418-461-2810 vjoncas@csdulittoral.qc.ca
Lionel Roberts	MRC	418-379-2911 lionelmbe@xplornet.ca
Vicki Driscoll	CEDEC	418-461-3450 Vicki.driscoll@cedec.ca
Serena Etheridge	Quebec Labrador Foundation	709-931-2291 setheridge@qlf.org

Ghislaine Nadeau Monger	Local Table for Seniors	418-787-2291 orienta@live.ca
To be determined	Sûreté du Québec	
To be determined	Groupe Accessibilité	
Resource		
Johanne Beaudoin	Board member CISSS Cote Nord	418-461-2394 rjobeaudoin@globetrotter.net
Support		
Cornella Maurice	Advisor Coasters Association	418-379-2006 ext 223 coasters@globetrotter.net
Kimberly Buffitt	Director of Programs Coasters Association	418-379-2006 ext 226 hssnpi@globetrotter.net
Shelley Fequet	Assistant Director of Programs Coasters Association	418-379-2006 ext 229 shelley.fequet@coastersassociation.com

B. Local Action Groups (LAGs)

Local Action Groups were established to support and assist BCNeF Animators in developing, organizing and implementing activities that encourage healthy and active lifestyles.

Community/Municipality	Members
Harrington Harbour	Andrew Anderson Kelly Bobbitt LeeAnn Anderson Denis Poulin Mandy Rowsell Helen Morency
Chevery	Ana Osborne Sylvie Perron Darlene Rowsell Roberts Kathy Ann Nadeau Marius Mckinnon Jody Anderson

Gros Mecatina	Donna Robertson Kathy Green Monita Lavallee Fay Collier
St. Augustine	Osvaldo D'Ippolito Darrell Driscoll Lorette Gallibois
Bonne Esperance	Dean McDonald Kimberly Buffitt Shannon Keats Riess Bilodeau Eileen Schofield
Blanc Sablon	Darlene Jones Martine Joncas Rejeanne Marcoux Natasha Walsh Ashley Babin-Duguay

B. BCNeF Animators

Animator	Location	Hrs/wk	Email
Amy Griffin	Harrington	12.5	amy_clint@hotmail.com
Stephen Martin	Chevery	20	gefchevery@hotmail.com
Adeline Anderson	Gros Mecatina	20	adeline_anderson@yahoo.com
Olga Gallibois	St. Augustine	20	Olga.gallibois@hotmail.com
Chevonne Thomas	Bonne Esperance	20	chevonne@xplornet.ca
Karine Joncas Andy Lavallee	Blanc Sablon	10 10	gefblancsablon@hotmail.ca andylavallee@csdulittoral.qc.ca