

Connecting Albert County

A Focus on Early Childhood Development

Getting our kids ready to read by Jennifer Shelby

The first book children receive from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library* is Watty Piper's *The Little Engine That Could*. With my first child, I thought, "I think I can, I think I can. That's a classic." With my second child, I realized this book was for the parents just as much as the children. Early literacy isn't easy.

The brunt of the "educational" books my spouse and I collected while pregnant with our first child consisted of repeating colours and shapes over and over again. Blue, blue, green. Triangle! Red. Orange, yellow, yellow, square.

I don't like those books. Reading them is torturous. They make me feel like the Rusty Old Engine from *The Little Engine That Could*: I doubt myself. I know early language skills are important. I know that it lays the foundation for learning every other subject. I know. But ... my sanity is important too, isn't it?

Don't worry, parents and caregivers, we're not alone. Albert County isn't just rugged coastline and rambling forests, Albert County contains a team of people ready to help us teach our kids. Beyond Dolly Parton's Imagination Library there's also Literacy Express, the Parent-Child Mother Goose Program, and

various events at the Hillsborough Library.

All these programs are free! Until March 31st, Tele-Drive will drive us and our kids to the library and any early literacy events for free!

After April 1st, you can still use Tele-Drive to get to these programs but at a low cost.

Continued on p. 3



February 2018 Supplement

Inside:

- Getting our kids ready to read: 1
- Early childhood literacy: 2
- Mother Goose in Riverside-Albert: 4
- Raising a reader in Albert County: 5
- Babies, toddlers & preschoolers in the library: 6
- A parent's guide to Tele-Drive: 8
- East Coast Kids Child Care & Learning Centre in Albert County: 10
- Supporters: 12

Subscribe to our free digital publication at

www. Connecting-AlbertCounty.org

* See details on page 3.

Connecting Albert County

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Our Mission: To connect rural Albert County through online and print communication.

Connecting Albert County (CAC)

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Janet Wallace

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The opinions in our newsletter and website do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the individuals who make up Connecting Albert County.

A gift of colour: We would like to thank Gary Steeves Insurance for their generous contribution of printing colour copies of our publications.

Why does literacy matter?

by Janet Wallace

This issue of Connecting Albert County focuses on early childhood development and literacy.

What does “literacy” mean?

Traditionally, literacy meant reading, writing and arithmetic. However “literacy is now understood as a means of identification, understanding, interpretation, creation, and communication in an increasingly digital, text-mediated, information-rich and fast-changing world,” according to UNESCO.

In simpler terms, literacy is not just knowing how to read, but where to go for information and how to interpret what you read.

Why is literacy important?

Literacy helps people stay connected with neighbours, friends, family and the world at large. It helps you understand books, magazines and websites. It helps you express yourself in letters, emails and text messages.

Literacy helps people find and keep jobs. Many jobs now require a certain level of literacy – even with manual labour, you might need to understand written directions, write receipts, and do research online.

Literacy helps keep you safe and healthy. Imagine the danger involved in not being able to understand the label on a prescription bottle or the warning sticker on an appliance. Also, literacy allows you to read about healthy lifestyle choices.

Literacy brings pleasure. For many people, reading a magazine or book is a treat. You can discover great stories and new worlds in novels. You can use cookbooks from other cultures to create exciting meals. You can learn new skills by reading how-to books. Reading is fun and fundamental to being able to participate fully in our society.

Literacy starts at birth. Exposure to nursery rhymes, books, and songs are all stepping stones to literacy. In this special issue of *Connecting Albert County*, we explore the many learning opportunities available to families in rural Albert County. Most of these programs are free, and, until March 31st, 2018, Tele-Drive Albert County will provide free transportation to any child and parent/guardian going to one of the early childhood development programs. A volunteer driver will pick you up from your house, take you to the program, and drive you back home again. Call 875-1190 to arrange a lift.

We are producing this issue (and Tele-Drive is offering the free rides) in partnership with Education and Early Childhood Development - Government of New Brunswick - NB Literacy Strategy with support from the Bennett and Albert County Health Care (BACH) Foundation and printing from Gary Steeves Insurance.

I hope you enjoy this issue and share the news about the excellent programs described in these pages,

Janet Wallace is the editor and coordinator of Connecting Albert County.

"Getting our kids to read" Cont. from page 1.

Curious, but not sure? Here's a breakdown:

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library will send our children a free book every month from birth until five years of age. They begin with board books (so fun for babies to look at and chew on!) and move onto paper books as your child grows. They are stories, not lists of colours and shapes, and each book contains a page of suggestions to parents on how to get the most learning possible out of each book, usually by questions and things to watch for. I love watching my kids' excitement over a package arriving in the mail addressed to them, ripping it open, and guessing at the pictures while they wait for me to snuggle up and read it to them. Find details at www.connectingalbertcounty.org/wellness/the-imagination-library-bringing-books-to-rural-albert-county or contact Dawn Parke, Imagination Library Coordinator, Anglophone East School District, 874-3812, dawn.parke@nbed.nb.ca.

Literacy Express is an hour-long drop-off program for children aged 3 or 4 on Tuesdays or Wednesdays, 10-11am from September to May. Located at Hillsborough's Train Museum, children pass a fun hour with their peers singing songs and doing crafts to match the theme of that week's book. Parents are encouraged to roam the village, visit the Hillsborough Library, and otherwise enjoy their brief hour "off." Learn more at www.connectingalbertcounty.org/wellness/the-literacy-express-and-the-little-library-that-can

The Parent-Child Mother Goose Program for caregivers and children from birth to 5-years-old is newly offered through Talk-With-Me Anglophone East at Forest Dale Home in Riverside-Albert. Starting January 29th and running until March 19th, the program will take place Mondays from 10-11am. Rather than books, this program focuses on oral storytelling and engaging children with gestures, finger plays, songs, and rhymes to explore their developing language skills. Registra-



tion is required. Call 856-3617 to register or see www.connectingalbertcounty.org/wellness/mother-goose-in-riverside-albert for details.

Babies in the Library is a half-hour program at the Hillsborough Library for babies 0-18 months and their caregiver. Stories, songs, rhymes, tickles, and giggles are all up for grabs on Wednesdays at 10:30am from January to February 7th. Parents are encouraged to call the library (734-3722) to register.

On Thursdays, the Hillsborough Library also offers **Storytime** for children from birth to 4-years-old (with caregiver), 2:00-2:30pm. This program will be running from January 11th until spring.

While you're at the library, why not browse the books and get your kids their own library card. See what kind of children's books *you* like. Reading books to our kids that make us want to pull our hair out isn't going to make them love reading. They pick up on those cues. So don't read those books. Find books that are fun for you too and read them those. If it's fun for us, it's naturally going to be more fun for our kids. Finding my favourite children's author (William Joyce!) has been a game changer for me.

Continued on page. 4

Mother Goose in Riverside-Albert

by Cynthia MacIsaac Rollin

Songs and rhymes for young children have been passed down for generations. Such nursery rhymes and songs are a fun way to teach children to talk and to get ready to read. Sharing rhymes and finger plays also provide a nurturing experience between caregiver and child. But did you know that a nationally recognized program on teaching songs, rhymes and storytelling to families is one of the many programs offered to parents through Talk With Me- Anglophone East?

The Parent-Child Mother Goose Program® helps parents and caregivers gain skills and confidence which enable them to create new and positive family patterns during their children's crucial



early years. The group experience for parents and their babies and young children focuses on the power of using rhymes, songs and stories to enrich language and communication skills. Nursery rhymes and songs can be used anywhere at any time. As such, they are one of our most transportable forms of play.

Parents and children gather weekly for an informal hour of learning rhymes, songs and finger plays. Focusing on the oral tradition, storytelling is also a prominent feature of the program. Parents and children are told a story during each session – giving them the pleasure of listening and learning through an enriched language experience. Depending upon the story and the ages of the children, participants can join in with repetitive lines or gestures.

In addition, parents and children can participate in the re-telling of a story as a means of practicing storytelling with the group.

The Parent-Child Mother Goose Program® has been provided in several communities over the past years with overwhelmingly enthusiastic participation. The program will be held Monday mornings in February and March starting in January at Forest Dale Home, Riverside-Albert. For details or to register, call 856-3617 or email TalkWithMeMoncton@nbed.nb.ca.

Cynthia MacIsaac Rollin, Rehabilitation Assistant, Talk With Me, Anglophone East School District, Dept. of Education and Early Childhood Development cynthia.macisaac-rollin@nbed.nb.ca

"Getting kids to read" Cont. from p.3.

Snuggle in. Giggle. Get lost in a good story. This way, when we're forced to read that *Fancy Nancy* book for the millionth time, or read our older child a bedtime chapter from their 937th *Rainbow Fairies* book, we've already found our groove, and so have they.

The Little Blue Engine knew what she was talking about. We can do this.

Tele-Drive Albert County, the Imagination Library and Literacy Express are all supported by the Bennett & Albert County Health Care (BACH) Foundation. To contribute to the foundation, see www.bachfoundation.com or call (506) 882-3100.

When she's not writing articles for Connecting Albert County, Jennifer Shelby can be found writing fantasy stories for children of all ages and helping her kids with chores on their imaginary dragon farm. You can learn more about her at jennifershelby.ca and read her (mostly) fiction blog at jennifershelby.blog

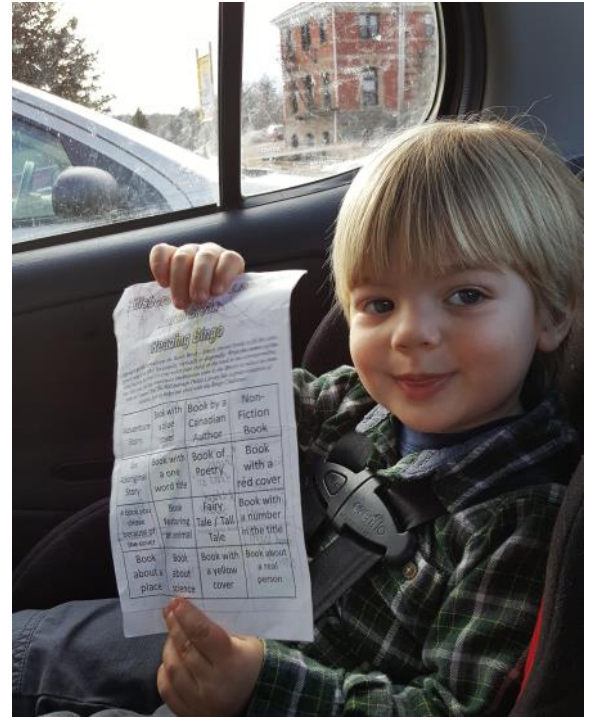
Raising a reader in Albert County

story and pictures by Erica Muise

My husband Ira and I were both fortunate to grow up in book-loving homes. When we had our son, Levi, in 2014, we knew we wanted to foster a love for reading and books at an early age. Being in a rural area, I wasn't sure how many programs we would have access to locally, but I was delighted to discover an abundance right here in Albert County.

The first program we immediately signed up for was the **Dolly Parton Imagination Library**. Levi receives 1 book a month (since birth), until he turns five years old. That is 60 free, varied, age appropriate books, delivered right to your door! This has become a special treat he looks forward to each month when he receives his new book in the mail.

We have also made use of the Talk to Me and Read to Me early language services programs offered by the Anglophone East School District. When I was pregnant we attended a **Communication Begins at Birth** course they offer, and we started Levi as an infant with the **Babies in the Library** program. We also participated in the **Parent-Child Mother Goose** program which is a wonderful program full of songs, rhymes, and reading. Levi had a free consultation session as well, with a speech-language pathologist through these programs.



Visiting the library is also something we do regularly, and we have participated in story time groups, special activities, and reading events. Levi loved filling out his March break Bingo card last year, as well as joining in the Canada 150 Summer Reading program.

This fall Levi was old enough to begin the **Literacy Express** program in Hillsborough, and he has enjoyed the literacy activities and play time with friends. It's common for him to ask to stop at the library when we are out and about. The library is a special place for him, and we've visited all the libraries in the greater Moncton area!

We also use the New Brunswick **Library Services by Mail**. We no longer have the Bookmobile option in the River-



Continued on page 6

Public libraries are strong advocates of increasing literacy for all ages. Besides the lending of books and other materials, they strive to help develop literacy skills, especially for young children and their families, through the programs that they offer. Throughout the year there are many programs available at your local library. Here in Albert County, the Hillsborough Public Library proudly serves our community and patrons from outside of Hillsborough through to Alma. We will offer many literacy programs in 2018.

Starting in January, we will be offering **Babies in the library**, a program that is offered for parents/guardians and children 0-18 months. The four weeks of sessions are designed for parents to engage and interact with their child, as well as other parents and children from the community. Each 30-minute session has a variety of activities from reciting and singing rhymes, hand/finger play and walkabouts. It is a great time for parents to learn new activities that they can do anytime with their child and that can be adapted as their child grows. During the session there is also a time for Baby meets Book, where a book will be read



aloud or where parents can choose a book to read to their child. All New Brunswick Public Libraries have a selection of board books designed specifically for babies and toddlers. The first Babies in the Library Session begins in **January 2018** with more sessions expected in the spring.

Continued on page 7.

"Raising a reader" Continued from page 5

side area, so because of our geographical location in relation to our closest library, we are eligible. I filled out a profile online for myself and Levi, and have books selected for us each month based on our preferences. They arrive monthly in the mail box. When we are finished with the books, we simply drop the bag back in the mail to be returned to Moncton. This is such a useful service, especially in these winter months when we don't get out as much! It's always exciting to see what books they choose for us.

Reading has become a daily enjoyment for Levi. We play games, read books, sing songs, recite rhymes, and tell silly stories, throughout our day. Bedtime is not complete without our reading and story time routine. Levi is famous for, "Just one more book, please Mom!" as I'm trying to get him to sleep. We try to incorporate fun literacy

activities and use expressive language in our everyday lives as much as we can. One fun reading activity I integrated into the month of December was an advent book pile. I wrapped holiday and winter theme books so Levi could open a new one every day before Christmas. I used books we already had, and also picked some up second-hand books. It went over very well and was a little something extra special each night, building up the anticipation to Christmas!

I would encourage you to get involved in these beneficial, free programs offered in our area. They are here for us to use. They offer wonderful ways to grow readers with strong relationships to books. Our family has enjoyed all the programs and services we have participated in, and we will continue to make use of any we can.

Happy reading!

Library. Continued from page 6.

The **Every Child Ready to Read** program has been developed to help parents incorporate five elements that help prepare children to read (i.e., talking, reading, writing, singing and playing) into their everyday lives. Children begin to develop language and other skills that they will need to read in infancy and continue to master the skills as they grow. As parents are their children's first teachers, there is never a time that is too early or too late to help develop children's literacy and pre-reading skills. The library will be offering workshops on Every Child Ready to Read **beginning in February 2018**. Parents/guardians are invited to attend with their children to participate during these sessions.

Next Step, Kindergarten! is a program that was developed by the Albert-Westmorland-Kent Library Region and has been implemented in 15 libraries. The program is five weeks of sessions (one per week) that cover a variety of topics, such as letters, numbers, shapes and colours. Each week the program consists of a story time, followed by literacy-building activities set up in stations. Parents accompany their children and help them work through the activities. During the sessions, items from the Welcome to Kindergarten™ bags are used to give parents examples of simple activities they can do with the items at home with their children. (The bags are provided by the Learning Partnership and given to all incoming kindergarten students

through the school districts.) It is a fun and interactive way for children and parents to work on their kindergarten readiness skills together. This program will be offered at the Hillsborough Public Library in **late May 2018**.

Visit the New Brunswick Public Library Service's website to learn more about our libraries and online resources that

are available to children and families. For information about the programs offered at the Hillsborough Public Library in 2018, please call the library at 734-3722.



East Coast Kids excursion. Picture by Karen Lindsay

A parent's guide to Tele-Drive

story and pictures by Jennifer Shelby

There's a point, deep in the isolation of a storm-heavy winter, when the toys have all been played with, the books have all been read, and the movies have all been watched. Coffee isn't enough to keep a parent going any-more. The kids have eaten all the leftover Christmas chocolate, discovered where we hid the permanent markers, and are redoing the living room walls with a series of sloppy stick figures.

You need to get out of the house and so do the kids.

This year, Tele-Drive is making it easy. Until March 31st, Tele-Drive will drive you and your children to the library and any early literacy event in Albert County for the low, low price of **free**. This includes Literacy Express in Hillsborough and the new Parent-Child Mother Goose Program in Riverside-Albert. Catch a ride to the Hillsborough Library to stock on books and movies, or to attend Storytime and Babies in the Library with other families and have fun.

A volunteer will arrive with a smile. Can it be? Another grown up! They'll wait politely while you wrestle the bulky beasts that are your children's car seats into their vehicle. Don't worry, you don't have to lug them around with you. Fasten them in once and there the car seats can remain until you're home again. With a little luck, your driver won't notice while you swipe cracker crumbs from the car seat into the snow bank. If they do notice, toss out a nervous comment about "feeding the birds" and try to forget it happened.

If you're lucky, your children will be nervous about this Strange New Person driving the car (who has been vetted by a Criminal Record Check) and sit in silence. You may feel the need to check on them many times to ensure they're still in the vehicle. I recommend stretching ahead of time to avoid pulled muscles.

Try to relax and make small talk with your driver, an Actual Adult you are not related to. They won't ask if camels can get hypothermia or



*Until March 31st, Tele-Drive will drive you and your children to the library and other early literacy events in Albert County for **free** in partnership with Education and Early Childhood Development - Government of New Brunswick -NB Literacy Strategy.*

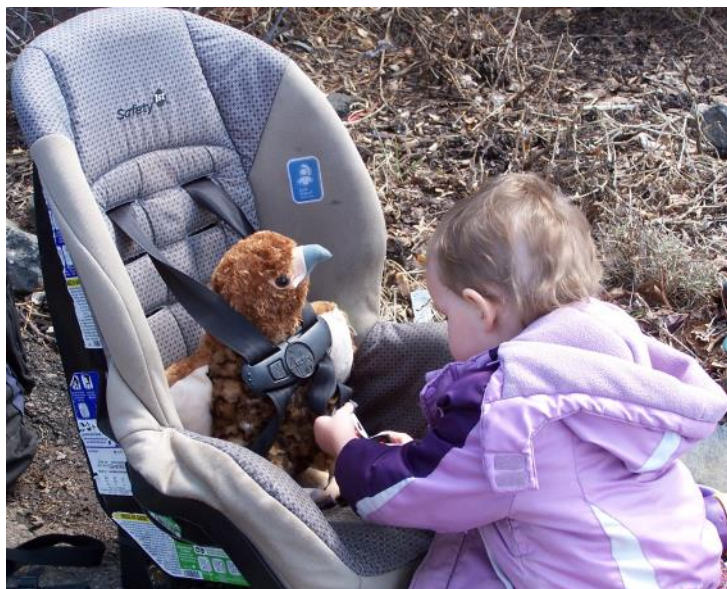
how leg muscles would work if they were arms instead of legs, not even once. Try not to cry for joy. You don't want to embarrass yourself.

When you arrive at your destination, unbuckle the kids, let the driver know how long you'll be, and let go. Have fun watching your children shake off their cabin fever. When it's time to go home, your driver will be there, their cape flapping in the wind. The cape is imaginary. Only you can see it. Please refrain from bringing it up and confusing your driver.

Expect your children to be chattier on the ride home. Children appreciate super heroes who

“Tele-drive” continued from p. 10

drive them to places of fun and may feel the need to share stories of the important events in their lives. It’s best to pay close attention as this may be your only chance to find out that the dog chewed on their toothbrush but they didn’t tell you because it was the Spiderman one and Spiderman is cool.



When you arrive home again resist the urge to hug your driver, unless they give their permission. It’s okay if you’re too embarrassed to invite them in because of the kids’ redecorating and the toys littering the floor. They probably have things to do. It’s also okay if you do want to ask them in for tea, but please warn them about the toy obstacle course first. For their safety.

While Tele-Drive is offering free rides to the library and to literacy activities until March 31st, 2018, their reasonable rates make them easy for families to consider using them for other activities as well. Their rates are based upon distance.

Call 875-1190 to arrange a lift.

Examples (all are from your home, to the destination, and back home again)

Alma area to Riverside-Albert: \$15

Alma area to Hillsborough: \$30

Alma area to Riverview/Moncton: \$35

Riverside-Albert area to Hillsborough: \$15

Riverside-Albert to Riverview/Moncton: \$30

Hillsborough area to Riverview/Moncton: \$15
Call for prices to Saint John or Sussex Hospitals or the airport.

Should your family need it, a wheelchair van is also available for Tele-Drive to use at a charge of \$0.60 per kilometer. Take the kids to their doctor appointments, grocery shopping, upcoming Winter Carnival celebrations, a friend’s birthday party, anything you can think of. You won’t be taking the service away from anyone else, I promise. Tele-Drive thrives on being used, so use it!

Not a caregiver, but wouldn’t mind donning an imaginary cape to help out families in your community? Drivers are reimbursed for their mileage, so why not call Tele-Drive and volunteer? 875-1190.

Tele-Drive Albert County, Connecting Albert County and Literacy Express are supported, in part, by the Bennett and Albert County Health Care (BACH) Foundation. To contribute to the foundation, see www.bachfoundation.com or call (506) 882-3100.

This special issue of Connecting Albert County and the free drives by Tele-Drive are provided in partnership with Education and Early Childhood Development - Government of New Brunswick - NB Literacy Strategy.

Need a high school diploma?

The South East Regional Adult Learning Board provides GED courses, equivalent to a high school diploma, for adults. Funding may be available. Classes are held at the Albert County Health and Wellness Centre in Riverside-Albert.

For details, call 882-1010, opendoorsged.ca

East Coast Kids Child Care & Learning Centre in Albert County



Image by Karen Lindsay.

Chipoudy Communities Revitalization Committee (CCRC) has worked with East Coast Kids to provide a Licensed Daycare Centre in Riverside Consolidated School (RCS). Since June 2017, they have provided a special space in our rural community for children to play, laugh and learn. CCRC's first step in ensuring that a daycare could open in RCS was to see that washrooms were constructed on the ground floor, near the preschool classroom. Anglophone East staff completed the work in time for the daycare to open for the summer of 2017.

Daycare for 2-12-year-olds is available full-time, part-time or after school. The cost varies, depending on the hours the child attends the preschool, or after-school program. Summer 2018 programming is being planned now; if you are interested, it is important to contact East Coast Kids soon to ensure your child's space.

Recently, the government of New Brunswick announced further funding to daycare centres

for subsidization of daycare for children of parents with less than a certain income. For the most accurate information, call Karen Lindsay; she will direct you to the paperwork required. The tuition subsidy is paid directly to the centre.

Children's lives are being enriched; parents are happy to

have access to quality daycare; staff members are happy to have long-term employment and the community is thankful to have this much needed service in our area. In fact, East Coast Kids is a licensed child care and learning centre for children from ages to two to twelve.

Contributed by CCRC

East Coast Kids

East Coast Kids is a licensed child care and learning centre for children ages 2- 12-years-old. They offer full-time and part-time day care, preschool, before and after school, and summer camps at their two locations (Riverside Consolidated School and Hillsborough Elementary School).

The Daycare Financial Assistance Program is available through funds from the Department of Social Development. You do not need to be on income assistance to be eligible for this program. For more information or to contact East Coast Kids or visit Social Development website at www2.gnb.ca or call their office at 1-866-426-5191, Monday to Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm.

East Coast Kids is also seeking full-time staff as well as summer students who will be going back to university or college in the Fall of 2018, See [Connecting Albert County's Jobs](#) page for details.

For details or to register, contact East Coast Kids at 506-962-5868, 31 School Lane, Hillsborough NB E4H 3B8, childcare@eastcoastkids.ca www.eastcoastkids.ca

Karen Lindsay

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The Bennett and Albert County Health Care (BACH) Foundation raises funds for the Albert County Health and Wellness Centre and community initiatives including Sistema-Hillsborough, Tele-Drive, Literacy Express, the Imagination Library, spin bikes in classrooms and Connecting Albert County. www.bachfoundation.com

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Gold Support

Tele-Drive Albert County Inc. Providing affordable transportation in rural Albert County. Find Tele-Drive on Facebook, call 875-1190, or email teledriveac@gmail.com

Silver Support

East Coast Kids Child Care & Learning Centre: Licensed, quality child care in safe, fun and educational environments. Come play, laugh and learn with us today! www.eastcoastkids.ca 962-5868

OMISTA Credit Union: Complete banking for people who want to bank local while making the place they live even better. www.OMISTA.com

Village of Riverside-Albert: The Village of Riverside-Albert is located on Shepody river, which flows into Shepody Bay, at the upper reaches of the Bay of Fundy. www.riverside-albert.ca

Bronze Support

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Jeff MacDougall, SouthEastern Mutual Insurance: 506-386-5500

South East Regional Adult Learning Board: opendoorsged.ca

