



Progress Report April 2019

Welcome Eric and Dan from Town Home Health and Danielle (Beth and Melanie) from Aquila Tours, to our \$1M pledge cohort.

Million Dollar Pledge projects:

- a) have policy implications,
- b) can be scaled throughout the region,
- c) are of interest to their employees, and
- d) address urgent issues faced by community.

A. Supporting and scaling education incubator at Milltown Elementary School. Results will be updated September (report cards)

Milltown Elementary began a Summer program to eliminate literacy and numeracy losses over the summer for children from low socio-economic families with multiple barriers. This program has formed the foundation of subsequent initiatives. Summer Slide program has effectively eliminated literacy and numeracy losses for elementary school children, yet in 2018, many kids still struggled (44% passed reading in June 2018).

As a result, additional programs were introduced in 2018/2019 with the support of the \$1M pledge. **Intensive tutoring** for 26 children who are more than 2 reading levels behind, making it nearly impossible to catch up in a regular classroom setting. Children stay after school for additional support. **At March report card, two children had improved 11 reading levels in 6 months.** Taking home, for the first time ever, a passing report card. Full analysis of results will take place in June with final report cards. Results will allow us to determine whether to repeat this program or discard and search for another solution.

Supporting Families

Children can only make it to school with the support of their parents. If parents are unwell, kids flounder. Two programs for parents were introduced to help the families who are struggling the most.

In Spring 2018, **Power UP** an intensive 10-week program was introduced with great success. 77% of children's attendance improved and 5 of 8 moms are working or in education programs (NBCC or GED). Power Up is being delivered with a second cohort of moms at this time. Because of the success in Milltown, a Power Up program will be delivered in Black's Harbour to determine whether similar results can be achieved.

A new take on an old idea: Family support worker. New Fall 2018, a family support worker was engaged to work directly with families with the most barriers and complex needs. This role is based on a position in Sussex that has been very successful helping families set goals to achieve economic self-sufficiency. Tanya is a mom who went through support programs and is now on the other side able to help others. She is perfect for this role because she understands the struggles and realities and also that they can be overcome. She challenges families using concrete goal planning and coaching, helping families take control and responsibility for their lives. One mom: **"I woke up this morning with a strange feeling I did not recognize...and then it hit me, this is happiness. I had not felt it in so long I didn't know what it was."**

Here's why we brought these programs to Milltown Moms and Dads

I started to isolate myself about nine years ago after I received a criminal record. I felt like people were looking down on me. My confidence was so low I was too scared to seek employment, out of fear of rejection. Three months ago, things started to turn around when I started working with my family support coordinator. She has pushed me out of my comfort zone and given me confidence. In a few short months I got help finding employment and now work at a local restaurant. The program helps me set and achieve goals. I have had debt following me for years now and I am finally paying it off with what I have earned! I have less than a year left on my criminal record now and I finally feel like I am moving forward with my life.

Imagine having to leave your home, your family, your country, all that you are familiar with to escape a war and then travel halfway across the world to a country where the language, the customs, the climate, the food are all different. R, her husband and five children arrived in Canada three years ago. Her first goal was to learn the language so that she could start to integrate in to the community. She quickly picked up the language and learned about the POWER UP program. It was an opportunity to practice her English and also to meet Canadian women. Unfortunately, R had experienced racism in our community which she believed was because people did not understand why she was here. This was a chance to share her story and build relationships. She finished the program with a long-term goal to find employment. Her first step was to write and pass the test for her driver's license which she did; she is now studying for her GED which she hopes to write (and pass) in March.

Tyson, a six year old boy, started coming to the Club last fall and had a really hard time. I was angry and did not trust anyone. The adults were telling me what to do and the other kids were annoying. I was so mad one day I lost it and Tina tried to calm me down. I did not mean to but I hit her in the head. I could not believe it, instead of yelling at me or kicking me out (like I wanted), Tina was glued to me. She was like a magician, some how she could tell when I was getting mad. She helped me see what she saw so I could know when I was getting mad and she

would tell me what I could do instead. This is called self-control and emotions. I would feel like a pop can when you shake it and Tina helped me figure out how not to shake the can. We just had a big party where the Club gives prizes and I got the Turn Around Award. This award is for a kid who makes a lot of good choices. I won this! The biggest thing I learned is that it is a lot easier to make friends when you are not kicking and screaming, and you make different friends, nice friends.

The sharing of best practices from other regions is central to the success of making sustainable social change. United Way and Milltown Elementary have worked together to identify the needs of families and to find programs that have delivered strong results

- Blacks Harbour Elementary is delivering Summer Slide and After school programs
- Milltown tried Power UP with school moms and saw great results
- Black's Harbour is delivering its first Power Up program in September
- We have isolated characteristics we believe account for success of Milltown projects and will test our assumptions

This Summer the Saint John Boys and Girls Club adapted their pre-existing Summer program to replicate Summer Slide with a few adaptations. 38 children participated. Early results show 90% maintained or improved their numeracy this Summer, some by as much as 25%!

Rather than create a new program we are scaling the 'secret sauce'. Here's some of that secret sauce.

School and community characteristics

- High proportion of poverty AND associated negative outcomes for children (e.g, academic performance, behaviour, addiction, domestic violence). More traditional summer programs are likely more appropriate in situations where you have students with low income but strong academic achievement.
- Community partner available and willing to deliver programs outside of educators' scope and to achieve economies of scale.
- Most children have very little to do during the Summer.

Educator's Leadership Characteristics and Beliefs:

- With the right support kids can succeed. I'm not willing to allow kids to fail.
- The role of the school and staff must be bigger than the building and curriculum.
- To achieve academic goals, families need support beyond emergency and basic needs.
- Data and results should drive decisions about what is offered.
- I want to learn from others and actively seek outside perspectives

What it Takes to Run a Summer Slide Program:

- Must have custodial staff on-side as the school is used in the Summer

- Principal is responsible needs to be available if needed
- Must have a partner who can deliver Summer Camp or internal competency to do so
- Must designate someone to coordinate logistics in the Spring:
 - Recruiting children and communicating with families
 - Working with service provider
 - Engaging education staff

2020: If we can achieve comparable outcomes outside of Charlotte County, we will explore partnership with a United Way in another Atlantic Province to replicate the program outside of our region.

B. Helping Youth Living in At-Risk Environments Complete High School.

In Saint John's priority neighbourhoods, only 1 of 2 teenagers graduate on time. With support, guidance and goals these teenagers can become the first in their families to graduate. TRC offers a supportive environment where staff work with teens to help them establish goals for the future and helps them apply for bursaries, find part time employment.

Targets:

- 70% of youth will attend the TRC at least 3 times per week (regularly). **Goal Exceeded: 79% (84 youth)**
- 75% of Grade 11 students who attend regularly will have Post Secondary Plans in place. **Goal Exceeded: 91% and 91% of grade 10 students**
- 82% of Grade 12 students who attend regularly will have employment plans. **Goal Exceeded: 100%, 92% of gr 11 students**
- 85% of Grade 9 students will successfully transition to grade 10. **Goal Exceeded: 100%**
- 72% of Grade 11 and 12 students will be on track to graduate on time. **Goal Exceeded: 100%**

When I was 15 years old, my mom started using drugs, quickly became addicted, and my home life became really chaotic. We ended up losing our home. I started missing a lot of school and was staying with my extended family, but there wasn't much stability. With the support from the \$1Million dollar pledge, I got much needed hygiene supplies, healthcare and transportation so I could start to get my life back on track. They worked with my school to help me catch up on

the work I'd missed. The staff also helped me realize that therapy could really benefit me. They knew I was anxious about going so they connected with me before and after each session to make sure I was ok. I do still struggle but I have gained self control and am learning to be less discouraged by things I cannot change. I now live with my dad full time. Even though I had to move, I feel self- sufficient and able to deal with these changes. I am now back in school full time, participating in school activities and doing sports.

*I'm 18. A girl. For 7 months in grade 12, I lived in a tent at Rockwood Park. I liked school but it was really hard to make it to my classes. I nearly quit. Then everything changed. I found the **Teen Resource Centre** and they found me a safe place to sleep and money to help me live. For once I could focus on learning instead of just surviving. They had weekly check-ins with me to make sure I had what I needed. They even got me a tutor. I am proud to say I graduated high school in June, the first in my family! The **TRC** even found me a beautiful prom dress, took me out for dinner at a real restaurant and came to my graduation ceremony. I'd never before felt so special and proud. I now have options for continuing my education and am certain that I'll never have to sleep in a tent again.*