



**ANGLOPHONE SOUTH (ASD-S)
COMMUNITY AND PALS SCHOOLS**

Update January 2023

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PALS - An Overview

PALS (Partners Assisting Local Schools) is a program that creates and facilitates beneficial partnerships between neighbourhood schools and local businesses, community groups, service agencies and educational institutions to provide an enhanced and enriched school experience for our youth.

PALS was established to help break the cycle of poverty for students living in identified priority neighbourhoods in Saint John, New Brunswick. The founding partners of PALS are Mr. James K. Irving, Chairman of J.D. Irving, Limited and the Saint John Education Centre of the Anglophone School District - South, New Brunswick.

PALS combines initiatives that focus on academic achievement, enrichment, experiential learning, and a positive school environment. By working together, the school and its partners make a positive impact on the life of a child and the future of the community. Although poverty reduction remains the central focus of the PALS initiative in Saint John, partnerships are developed for a variety of reasons, a testament to its adoptability and adaptability as a model in the province and elsewhere.

School staff and administration, along with community partners, develop strategies to meet the identified needs of students living in poverty. These strategies are developed, implemented, and evaluated for their effectiveness in meeting these needs. It has been important from the beginning that initiatives and goals of each PALS partnership align with school, district, and provincial education plans.

Contributions of partners take the form of **time** - for the participating employee volunteers; **financial support** – for such things as uniforms, band instruments, transportation, books, etc.; and **exposure to new experiences** – for students to have opportunities to broaden their general knowledge base and to provide exposure to the world outside of their neighbourhood.

PALS partnerships have opened new doors for students, helped support school staff as they work with students to shape new standards of behaviour and encouraged students to think and explore the broad spectrum of possibilities available upon completion of high school.

Many students from this population had not contemplated completing high school just a few short years ago, much less continuing their education at the post-secondary level. This has changed.

“If I graduate.” has been replaced with “When I graduate!” - a small but significant change.

Where it Began – An Idea, Commitment and Caring

In 1997 Mr. Bill Gale contacted a group of local business leaders to discuss the challenges associated with intergenerational poverty in Saint John, NB. As a result of that first meeting, the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative (BCAPI) was established. The group recognized that a comprehensive understanding of the reasons for this issue and professional guidance on possible avenues of intervention was needed. Consultants were commissioned. Deloitte and Touche completed a report for BCAPI in April 2000.

The Deloitte report identified three major challenges that contributed to a vicious cycle of poverty: teen pregnancy, low-income single parent families, and students dropping out of school. The research showed that efforts needed to be focused on young children if a positive difference was to be realized.

Recognizing that J. D. Irving, Limited was situated in the heart of one of the Priority Neighbourhoods, Mr. James K. Irving approached the local school district (originally School District 8, now Anglophone School District-South) to help in whatever capacity was deemed appropriate.

A commitment to end the cycle of poverty for children in Saint John by both Mr. Irving and the Anglophone School District-South laid the foundation for the establishment and continued support of PALS.

For many children attending the schools serving priority neighbourhoods in Saint John, NB poverty is a way of life. Without intervention, they will have a lower standard of living, poorer health, and live with higher rates of crime than the average Canadian.

Priority neighbourhoods are identified by high poverty rates, high percentage of single parents, and low levels of education and labour force participation. These areas benefit from additional social and community services.

Poverty remains one of society's greatest costs, dramatically increasing government health and social expenditures. It will continue to limit many of those without a high school education from entering any workplace requiring skilled employees.



For most, these conditions will not change unless something intervenes to help break the cycle of poverty. This is the backdrop for the beginning of the PALS program.

The First PALS Partnership

The first PALS partnership began at Prince Charles School. Before classes began in September 2001, all employees at the school (teachers, office staff, maintenance staff, education assistants, support staff, and administration) met with Mrs. Bev Henneberry, Director of Education, Mr. J.K. Irving, representatives from J.D. Irving, Limited, and Mrs. Deborah Fisher, PALS Coordinator for a day-long planning session.

The group discussed the students' needs, their concerns for the students, and their experiences with the students at the school. As they began their search for change, they developed a vision defined through consensus.

The vision had a simple rationale. If students wanted to be at Prince Charles, they would come to school, stay in school, and learn. If teachers and staff wanted to be at Prince Charles, they would continue to commit to the school as they helped students build self-esteem, learn, and thrive. If community members helped at the school, a sense of community pride would develop and grow.

With students, staff and teachers wanting to be at Prince Charles, the school staff was confident they could create the positive school environment essential for learning. Academic success would and did follow.

This partnership continued quietly for five years as a blueprint for further partnerships that spread to six other schools serving priority neighbourhoods in Saint John.

PALS became a model for the establishment of the Community Schools program in New Brunswick in 2007.



“Making a difference in the life of a child can have a powerful impact, not only on that young person, but also on the future of our community. If our work together for young people serves as a model to make a difference in other schools in our community, that would be the best reward of all.” James K. Irving

Mr. James K. Irving, Co-founder of the PALS Program, takes part in Marigolds on Main at Prince Charles School in Saint John, NB.

Community Schools

Establishing Community Schools in New Brunswick

The Community Schools program was officially launched by the Minister of Education, Kelly Lamrock in June of 2007. To celebrate this announcement, provincial and municipal representatives joined students, district personnel, school administrators and PALS partners at Hazen-White/St. Francis School, Saint John.

The original 7 PALS schools (Prince Charles, Hazen-White/St. Francis, St. John the Baptist-King Edward, Centennial, Lorne, St. Patrick's, and Glen Falls) were chosen to become the first 7 Community Schools in the Saint John Education Centre. The help of the community was engaged, and partnerships were established to provide these schools with the supports they needed to address the needs of the children and their families.

In coming months, districts and schools across the province were given the opportunity to become designated as a Community School and with this each school was given a School-based Coordinator and each district given a Community Engagement Coordinator.

Since 2007 the number of Community Schools in the Anglophone South School District has expanded to 15 being serviced by 13 Community School Coordinators. Provincially there are 67 Community Schools. The model looks quite different in each district and varies from school to school.

PALS and Community Schools in ASD-S work hand in hand, and it is often difficult to distinguish between the two. (For example, all Community Schools in the Saint John Education Centre are PALS schools but not all PALS schools are Community Schools.)

Since 2007 the number of Community Schools in the Saint John Education Centre has expanded to 9 and in Anglophone School District - South to 15. Provincially, there are 67 Community Schools. The model looks quite different in each district and varies from school to school.

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What is a Community School?

Community Schools are hubs that help transform traditional schools into centres of opportunity for children, youth, families, and communities before, during and after regular school hours.

They provide support by connecting community resources and a wide range of programs and services to the schools and the children they serve.

At a Community School, parents and community members work in partnership with educators to support the school as a centre of learning with a focus not only on academics but also family supports. The welfare of the children and their families is the primary focus.

District Community Engagement and school-based Community School Coordinators are key to establishing and maintaining these partnerships and supporting the programming and initiatives needed to develop a successful Community School.

In ASD-S the District Community Engagement Coordinator, the Community School Coordinators and PALS coordinators work very closely to establish and maintain partnerships, develop and provide programming, and meet student needs.



Growing the PALS Program

In the first five years the PALS for Prince Charles Partnership had a positive impact on virtually every facet of school life – academic achievement, enrolment, school spirit, student behaviour, social skills, student motivation, sports activity, cultural awareness, and pride in being part of the Prince Charles community.

During this time, other partnerships began with the 7 schools serving the Priority Neighbourhoods, the first being Irving Oil with St. John the Baptist King Edward. Other businesses and community groups quickly became involved and word spread around the province.

The NB Business Council approached PALS, JDI and the school district to share their experiences to date, and partnerships soon began in other areas of the province.

As the expansion of the PALS program continued and these first 7 schools became identified as Community Schools, other schools in Greater Saint John approached the school district to see how they could become involved and establish PALS partnerships to work with their schools.

These other schools felt that they too served students living in poverty, perhaps not with the same level of need as those serving the priority neighbourhoods, but with needs, nonetheless. They recognized that some of their children would also benefit from mentorship and further positive role models. PALS continued its spread to several other schools in the district, some with dedicated partnerships and some who benefitted from Global Partnerships, partners who worked with more than one school.

The St. Stephen Education Centre of the Anglophone School District-South also became very interested in the PALS program and the In-School Mentorship Program of Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS). The district had conducted a study based on the 40 Developmental Assets and had determined that there was a great need for mentorship programs for their students. As a result, local businesses were engaged to become PALS partners with identified schools and BBBS expanded their programming to support mentorship for youth in the region.

Since its inception, the number of PALS Schools in ASDS has expanded to over 30, provincially to over 40, has been modelled in other provinces, and continues to grow (Halifax has been developing the PALS program over the last year).



Expanding the Model to High School

PALS and Community schools serve students from priority neighbourhoods and initially existed in the Kindergarten to Grade 8 schools. It became increasingly evident that there was a need to expand to the high school level, to continue the supports established to meet the needs of children living in poverty.

There are numerous challenges facing students transitioning from community-based PALS schools that serve priority neighbourhoods to larger, more heterogenous high schools. The need for PALS at the high school level was to help mitigate these challenges.

Based on experience at the K-8 level, it was obvious that a dedicated coordinator would be required, so in 2011, a PALS High School coordinator, Susan Tipper was hired to spearhead the PALS experience at the high school level. In 2021 Michael Whelton joined the team to help expand the PALS En Route to Success program to Saint John High School.

During the 2011-2012 school year a pilot was developed at St. Malachy's Memorial High School. Programs that had been offered at the K-8 schools were introduced at the high school. Breakfast was provided, school supplies, mentoring and tutoring to name a few.

As the school year progressed it became clear that students at the high school level in a heterogenous environment were very conscious of being singled out because they were poor. The supports that mirrored those at K-8 schools were not very successful at this level so had to be adapted to still address the needs of the students, but very discreetly.

Toward the end of the initial year, discussions were held to determine if PALS was making a difference at high school and the answer was clearly no. More appropriate interventions were required and as a result, the PALS En Route to Success program was launched and further initiatives developed.

The PALS En Route to Success program aims to engage struggling students from priority neighbourhoods to: graduate from high school in a timely manner; develop marketable skills; pursue one of the Six Destinations upon graduation; and become responsible/contributing members of the community.

People Are the Key to a Successful Partnerships

The schools and communities where we partner are faced with many challenges. Students often come to school without their basic needs being met. When a lack of finances does not provide for adequate shelter, clothing or food, the intergenerational nature of these circumstances often affects children's ability to see life beyond where they live.

These challenges also provide opportunities to look at new ways for the community to help. Partnering with their neighbourhood school can provide much needed support to the children on many levels, and volunteers are key to the success of these partnerships.

Employers may contribute people resources by freeing up employees to volunteer during their work week (generally an hour or two). These volunteer PALS work in partnership with the school staff to create significant positive changes in the lives of the students, in the school environment, and in measurable academic improvements.

Providing extra people support to the students and staff, whether directly with the children or behind the scenes, is invaluable.

Some of their volunteer activities include:

- Mentoring through the Big Brothers Big Sisters In-School Mentoring Program
- Supporting early literacy by volunteering for the Elf program
- Coaching after-school sports
- Participating as reading or math buddies
- Overseeing extracurricular activities
- Serving breakfast
- Accompanying students to events
- Organizing after-school clubs
- Encouraging social skills
- Demonstrating healthy life choices
- Acting as role models
- Helping behind the scenes
- Providing cultural enrichment
- Offering career guidance/job-specific expertise
- Engaging high school students in work experiences
- Delivering career-focused lectures
- Assisting with post-secondary student placements, and so much more!



Financial Support Plays an Important Role

Some of our PALS Partners may not be able to spare employee time during the work week but may still like to be involved. Assisting a school financially can sometimes be an option.

For instance, many schools do not have the means to provide for additional enriching educational experiences for their students, or some students may not have the means to take part in activities requiring a financial commitment.

In response to a needs assessment undertaken by the school staff, partners may choose to help by providing funds or in-kind support to:

- enable initiatives in the following areas: academics, physical space improvements, extra-curricular enrichment, and basic necessities.
- augment or create opportunities to ensure all children are able to access events or activities associated with going to school.
- assist school parent groups in their efforts to provide additional resources for the school.
- create opportunities for schools to provide field trip experiences beyond what the school budget accommodates.

Financial and in-kind donations are received from partners for such things as:

- Food for breakfast/lunch programs
- School supplies
- Clothing (sneakers, coats, etc.)
- School ground enhancements
- Uniforms
- Books for students
- Books for libraries
- Professional development for teachers
- Opportunities for students to attend summer camps
- Co and extra – curricular class trips
- Support of schools taking part in the Soap Box Derby
- Technology for schools – computers/smart boards etc.
- Library upgrades



PALS partnerships are true partnerships. Although sponsorship continues to be a valued contribution to schools, PALS and community partnerships are about relationship-building and as such are quite different from the traditional sponsorship model.

Benefits of Partnerships

Students:

- Improved literacy rates
- Improved attendance
- Overall rise in academic achievement
- Students being exposed to possibilities beyond what they knew pre-partnership
- Increased pride in school, school spirit
- Sense of ownership and involvement
- Increase in feelings of self-esteem
- Sense of belonging in the community



Staff:

- Access to more resources – people, volunteers, materials,
- Sense of team – they do not feel they are in it alone
- Trust – it took time to build trust between schools, partners, and the community. School staff could not quit, and it meant so much when partners and volunteers decided they would not quit!

Community:

- Parents more involved in their child's education
- Decrease in community problems: Example - calls re family disputes, vandalism, etc.
- Pride in their community school
- Improved engagement of both children and their families

Business:

- For business leaders, a PALS partnership is one of the most efficient and effective ways to contribute to real community change. These partnerships are making a significant and direct impact on the inner-city poverty around them, and they have engaged with the community to be part of that change.
- Employees return to work feeling positive and satisfied with their contribution.
- Volunteer employees enjoy sharing in the children's lives and appreciate the children's successes.
- Contributes to a sense of pride in the workplace.
- Aligns with corporate philanthropic mandates.

Supports for Schools, Students, and Families

Family support

- Literacy/Numeracy programs
- Pre-School Programming
- School barbecues/ Family dinners
- Community Breakfasts
- School supplies/Clothing closets

Holiday support

- PALS Holiday Hampers – partners supporting more than 200 families yearly
- Holiday dinners at schools
- Gifts/pyjamas/clothing etc. for students
- Christmas Bags appropriate for high school students are assembled and delivered to students who are in need. PALS supplements this program with a cash donation

Kids On The Go Bus – 600+ co-curricular/extra-curricular trips annually

- Used primarily by the Community Schools of the Saint John Education Centre, ASD-S
- Also available to other PALS schools K-12
- Co-curricular trips during the week
- After school sports seasons for several schools
- Evening, weekend, and summer activities for the students
- All activities are school-related
- Approximately 10,000 students on trips each year

Mentoring (company employees and community members act as mentors)

Big Brothers Big Sisters Programs

- In-School Mentoring
- Big Bunch
- Go Girls
- Game On
- Teen Mentoring

Tutoring

- Elf (company volunteers)
- Individuals tutor at schools

Nutrition Programs (available to all students in various forms at all grade levels K-12)

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Snack
- Cooking clubs
- Backpack weekend programs
- Food Banks

PALS and Community Partnerships during Covid-19

Everything our partners do is in partnership with ASD-S, supporting our educators and school staff in their important work with the students and families.

Partners

- Community School coordinators (or Principals in other schools) have been engaging with their partners keeping them involved and updated on school happenings – very important in these times.
- Several new partners have been recruited and they are helping with new initiatives and supporting established ones as well.
- The schools are hopeful they will be able to have volunteers back in their buildings – this is just a hiatus, and their volunteers are often helping in other ways
- We are approached often as partners ask “How can we help?”

Nutrition Programs – Food Security

Across ASDS schools have been working diligently with partners, community groups, and food banks to ensure the students and their families are receiving nutritional donations of food and meals, etc., especially during times of at-home learning.

Specific efforts have been made to deliver food items to family homes or to provide opportunities for families to access food support offsite at community locations. School staff and partners have worked together to make this happen.

Support before the holidays was greater than ever.

When students are in school, nutrition programs have been successfully modified as per Provincial Covid Guidelines.

Schools with PALS Partnerships (Community Schools are underlined.)

Saint John Education Centre

1. Bayview School
2. Beaconsfield Middle School
1. Bayview (in preliminary stages)
3. Centennial School
4. Forest Hills School
5. Fundy Shores School
6. Glen Falls School
7. Grand Bay Primary School
8. Hazen-White/St. Francis School
9. Harbour View High School
10. Inglewood School
11. Island View School
12. Lakewood Heights School
13. Loch Lomond School
14. M. Gerald Teed School
15. Millidgeville School
16. Prince Charles School
17. Princess Elizabeth School
18. St. John the Baptist/King Edward
19. St. Malachy's Memorial High
20. Saint John High School
21. Saint Rose School
22. Seaside Park Elementary School
23. Westfield School

Hampton Education Centre

1. Belleisle Regional High School
2. Belleisle Elementary (in preliminary stages)
3. Hampton Middle School
4. Sussex Elementary

St. Stephen Education Centre

1. Black's Harbour School
2. Fundy Middle and High School
3. Milltown Elementary School
4. St. George Elementary School
5. St. Stephen Elementary School



PALS and Community Partners in ASDS

St. Stephen Education Centre – to be compiled

Hampton Education Centre – to be compiled

Saint John Education Centre (to be updated)

- Achieve Literacy
- Advantage Auto Glass
- Advocate Printing
- Al Gagnon Photography
- Amalgamated Transit Union
- Anglophone South School District
- APEGNB (Association of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists) Saint John
- Atlantic Super Stores
- Atlantic Towing
- BASE Engineering
- Bay Ferries
- Bayview Credit Union
- BCAPI
- Beats and Bytes
- Bee Me Kidz
- BellAliant
- Best Buy
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Boys & Girls Club
- Breakfast Clubs of Canada
- Breakfast for Learning
- Brunswick Pipeline/ Emera
- CAA
- Calvary Temple Church
- Camp Glenburn
- Canadian Military
- Canadian Tire Jumpstart
- Canaport LNG
- Carleton Kirk United Church
- CBCL
- CFM
- The Chamber, Saint John Region
- Inside Out Nature Centre
- InterAction School of Performing Arts
- Chandler Sales
- Chateau de Champlain
- City of Saint John
- City of Saint John Leisure Services
- City of Saint John, Office of the Common Clerk
- Cleves Source for Sports
- Coast Tire
- Cooke Aquaculture
- Co-op Stores
- Costco
- Courtney Bay Tenants Association
- Credit Counselling Services
- DealerMine
- Delta Saint John and McCor Management
- DFS Inc. Architecture & Design
- Dillon Consulting
- DMK Marine
- Dominos Pizza
- Downey Ford
- Duke Creative Collective
- Dunham's Run
- Dykeman Hardware
- East Side Food Bank
- Elementary Literacy Inc. (Elf)
- Elections NB
- Emera
- Evergreen Creations
- Exit Realty
- FERO
- Investors Group
- IODE
- Irving Equipment
- Fluor
- Friendly's and Pizza Shack North
- Fundy Bay 50+ Club
- Fundy Bay Sand and Gravel
- Fundy Engineering
- GNB
- Golden Gloves Boxing
- Grand Bay Baptist Church
- Grand Bay Church of the Resurrection
- Grand Bay-Westfield Guardian Drugs
- Grand Bay-Westfield Home Hardware
- Grand Bay-Westfield Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy
- Grand Bay-Westfield Sobeys
- Gulf Operators
- Gunter Business Machines
- Hatheway Pavilion at Lily Lake
- Hickey Brothers
- Hillcrest Baptist Church
- HMCS Fredericton
- Hooper Studios
- Horizon Health Network
- HRDC
- Hughes Surveys
- Imperial Theatre
- Indigo
- Industrial Security Limited
- INK Graphics
- Inner City Youth Ministry
- Innovatia
- Irving Nature Park
- Irving Oil
- Irving Paper

- Irving Pulp & Paper
- Irving Shipbuilding
- Irving Tissue
- Irving Wallboard
- J. D. Irving, Limited
- JDI Sussex Woodlands
- J.T.R.
- Keel Construction
- Kelly Services
- Kennebec Manor
- Kent Building Supplies
- Kent Line Agency
- Key Industries
- King's Church
- Kingsway Care Centre
- Kiwanis Clubs
- KPMG
- Knights of Columbus
- Kustom Auto Sound & Accessories
- Lake Utopia Paper
- Lawson & Creamer
- The Learning Partnership
- Lions Clubs Greater Saint John
- Living SJ
- Loch Lomond Villa
- Mariner Partners
- Master Promotions
- McAllister Place
- McInnes Cooper
- MC Ventilation
- Michaels
- Midland Transport
- Mitchell McConnell Ins
- Morris Music
- NBCC
- NB Insurance Board
- NB Museum
- NBPUB
- NB Southern Railway
- Nick Nicole Community Centre
- ONE Change
- Parkland Saint John
- Pathways to Education
- PC Children's Charity
- Plasticraft
- Point Lepreau Generating Station
- Port Saint John
- Portland United Church
- P.R.O. Kids
- Promise Partnership
- PRUDE
- QM Construction
- RBC Branches
- RiverCross Church
- Robertson Construction
- Rockwood Park
- Rothesay Netherwood School
- Rotary Club
- Royal Canadian Legion
- Royal Hair Design
- Royal Kennebecasis Yacht Club
- RST Sunbury
- Saint John Airport
- Saint John Astronomy Club
- Saint John Carpentry Centre
- Saint John City Market
- Saint John City Transit
- Saint John Community Centres
- Saint John Cricket Club
- Saint John Energy
- Saint John Fire Department
- Saint John Milk Fund
- Saint John Neighbourhood Associations
- Saint John Police Department
- Saint John Riptide
- Saint John Sea Dogs
- Saint John Tools Library
- Saint John Water
- Salesforce
- Salvation Army
- Saputo
- Scotiabank Branches
- Select Printing
- Shelby Gallant - Independent Tupperware Representative
- Shimpokai Judo
- Shining Horizons Therapeutic Riding Association
- ShurFit Automotive
- Sistema NB
- Sisters of Charity
- SJ Community Loan Fund
- SJ Community Newspaper
- Sobeys Stores
- Stantec
- Staples
- Starkey's Garage
- St. Joachim's and St. Ann's Church
- St. Luke's Church
- St. Pius X Church
- Steve Zaat Music
- Stewart McKelvey
- Stew's Cleaning Services
- Studio Dance School
- T4G
- T. D. Waterhouse
- T. S. Simms
- Tabufile
- TD Station
- Teed Saunders Doyle
- Teen Resource Centre
- Telegraph Journal/ Brunswick News
- Thandi's Restaurant
- Thistle-St. Andrew's Curling
- Timber & Steel Furniture
- Titus Bakery
- Tony Battilano Basketball
- Town of Grand Bay-Westfield
- Trinity Church
- Tropical Shipping
- Turnbull Home
- UNB Saint John
- United Church Ministries
- United Way
- Universal Truck and Trailer
- Vito's
- WalMart
- Wengaro
- West Side Business Association
- Wyndham Hotels and Resorts
- Xerox
- YMCA of Greater Saint John
- Y Service Club
- Youth Enhancement Program Inc



THANK YOU!