

COMMUNITY PARTNER DESCRIPTION:

Northwood, the largest not-for-profit continuing care provider in Atlantic Canada (and a registered charity), provides a full continuum of person-centred care options, including home care and adult day programs to independent, supportive, and assisted living, to 24-hour nursing care. Founded in 1962, our vision is, "People living life to the fullest, flourishing in a community of belonging, dignity and choice." Founded on a mandate of social justice, we use a community development model where our focus is creating a home where older adults thrive, rather than buildings where they receive services and care. Every day, we touch 6,500 people.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

We propose an action research project to define and describe the multiple meanings, possibilities and challenges of a dog-in-residence program for people who live in long-term care, their formal and informal caregivers and participating dogs. Currently, nursing homes, including Northwood, have pet therapy programs, resident cats or invite friends and family to bring cherished pets in for visits (on leash). **No facility in NS co-admits elder seniors together with their beloved elder dogs to long-term care.** This work will inform future research and development of a canine residency model for long-term care.

PROJECTED BENEFITS:

The impact on resident wellness & quality of life can be devastating if a loved animal must be rehomed or put down due to a transition to care. Exploring constructs for implementation of a model for canine residency in long term care will help us develop evidence-based policy conducive to successful reintegration of these relationships. Results will inform future advocacy work and hopefully, influence future public policy. Engaging community at the ground level enables us to explore the impact of these relationships as a social determinant of health.

NB: These are excerpts from the Community Partner's original proposal from 2018.