

Minister of Community Services on facility tour

In November we welcomed the honourable Kelly Regan, the Minister of Community Services, to a tour of our facility at 9412 Commercial Street in New Minas. She had an opportunity to view our work areas and see some of the creative ways we've organized our space to accommodate several different tasks.

"We've had to be creative in our approach to physical space," Executive Director Jeff Kelly says. "We were happy to host the minister and demonstrate how we've overcome and adapted, given our limitations."

Among the sacrifices at the facility was converting the board room into a packaging area for Made with Local's Real Food bars. The popular bars are one of several products labelled, packaged, and shipped from this location, and the process creates ongoing work for about five people.

Regan began the tour with a demonstration of the rope mats we build for Riven Woodworks. Doug Fraser works on the rope mats and showed how making them is a challenge, but it can be mastered. "At first it was really hard," he says, "but I like doing them."



Minister Regan had a chance to see the variety of work we support with our various projects and services, including packaging hot chocolate mix for Just Us! Coffee Roasters Co-Op.



Executive Director Jeff Kelly (left) brought the honourable Kelly Regan, Nova Scotia's Minister of Community Services, on a tour of our facility.

The minister also got to see the weighing and packaging work we do in the basement for Omega Crunch and Just Us! as well as our Used Clothing and Woodworking programs. While she was not able to see our off-site programs – including our Commercial Kitchen and Michelin contract – she was impressed by the breadth of work options we manage to fit in our facility.

"It was a great experience for our team to showcase all the incredible things we do every day," Jeff says. "And of course, to imagine what else we could be doing if we had a new facility, something a bit bigger and all on one level."

Planning for a new facility is currently underway, but the immediate focus remains on creating valuable work experience opportunities that also benefit Valley businesses.



Growing our audience

Our social media audience has quadrupled since the start of 2017 thanks in large part to a pair of popular initiatives. In the spring, our Woodworking team unveiled a new product, our Pride Bench, painted to match the pride flag. It was an immediate success, with orders coming in from all over Nova Scotia. In fact, our Pride Benches can be seen adding colour to many lawns and parks, and we are ready to build many more in 2018.

Secondly, we held a giveaway for a chance to win a Special Canada 150 Edition picnic table. This initiative was a much larger success than we ever anticipated – it was shared over 2,000 times and viewed, incredibly, by more than 300,000 unique users.

These promotions have helped us recruit more than 1500 additional followers on social media. This will help us reach our community more efficiently and effectively, and we thank everyone who has helped by liking, sharing, and following our content.



THE
**FLOWER
CART** GROUP

Happy Holidays

*Baker's
Choice*
FINE FOODS

Baker's Choice Fine Foods is a social enterprise of The Flower Cart Group. We support adults with intellectual disabilities by providing valuable work experience training in a safe, professional environment. The purchase of every loaf of Baker's Choice bread helps us develop programs and services that many people count on every day.



Teresa Steadman:

"I always have so much fun working here with everyone"



Teresa Steadman has been working with The Flower Cart Group for more than ten years, joining us not long after she finished high school. When she first started with The Flower Cart Group, Teresa was trained and given some cleaning duties. She immediately enjoyed meeting people and working as a team. Since then she's found a lot of different ways to contribute.

"When I started here I wanted to do better work-wise," she says. "I didn't know anything about work but I wanted to learn."

And learn she has. Teresa has worked in almost every department at The Flower Cart Group, and she wouldn't have it any other way.

"I've done packaging (food bars for Made with Local and Used Clothing), bagging kindling, and I've painted washer toss games and picnic tables," she says. "I really like doing hot chocolate (for Just Us! Coffee Roasters Co-Op). I always have so much fun working here with everyone."

Teresa is proud of the work she does and she thinks The Flower Cart Group is a great place to develop skills

and pursue your goals. "I've always wanted to go to college and learn to work with children," she says. "I've got a long way to go, but that's always been a dream of mine."

While she admits to having made some great friendships and memories, she recognizes it is hard work. "Sometimes, when I'm working too fast I stumble. I just have to remind myself to take the time to do it right."

Teresa has also been able to represent her peers in a number of ways, including on the canteen committee, the health and safety committee, and in a brand new role on the communications committee. The latter will allow her to talk about the organization's marketing strategy and to give valuable feedback. "It's a chance to talk and share my ideas. I think it will be good, and it will also help with my reading."

As a flexible, enthusiastic worker willing to help in whatever way she can, Teresa does a great job living up to our motto, "Work with purpose".

See our Just Us! displays in Sobeys.

OUR BREW CREW



Our team has helped package, label, and distribute Just Us! products for several years. We are involved in every step of production.



We've had a longstanding partnership with Just Us! Coffee Roasters Co-Op . You could say we are a "great blend"! In our facility we package, label, and even mix many different products, including coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and organic sugar. This past fall we mixed and packaged 4 flavours of hot chocolate and assembled and filled displays. These display cases can be found in Sobeys stores throughout the Maritimes. Our participants love to see their work on display in the community because it gives them a great sense of accomplishment and pride.

work with purpose.

The Flower Cart Group