

Participant Planning Group Formed



In November 2018 The Flower Cart Group hosted the first Participant Planning Group meeting. The group consists of nine participants and was formed to provide an opportunity to discuss issues that affect their lives and work. The group is responsible for creating the agenda for the monthly participant meeting, and each member volunteers to present an agenda item.

Agenda items typically include Occupational Health & Safety updates, reports from People First Kings County and news from the Executive Director. Thanks to the Participant Planning Group, participants can be more engaged in daily operations and empowered to speak their mind. It is a meeting for them, planned and delivered by them.

The meetings also serve to help participants build confidence and self-advocacy skills, as well as contribute to the sense of community among participants of The Flower Cart Group.



Darcy Marshall says he's glad to be a founding member the PPG: "It's good. I like that we get to ask a lot of questions."





Valley Community Learning Association

VCLA has worked with The Flower Cart Group and its clients for several years, offering programming designed specifically for learners with intellectual disabilities. These programs have direct benefits for clients working on employment readiness or community employment programs.

Learners come to VCLA with a variety of learning goals. In some cases learners are working on very basic literacy while others may be considering the GED as a possible outcome. Life skills instruction and personal development upgrading are key ingredients of this program.



Literacy classes like this one offer clients an opportunity to grow reading and writing skills, build confidence, and make progress on individual goals.



Daniel Vidito has been working with The Flower Cart Group as a Michelin Contract Worker since September 2006. He came to VCLA in September 2017 to join the 1-to-1 tutoring program. VCLA's tutor coordinator, Kathie Sheffield, matched Daniel with a tutor, Trevor Lloyd.

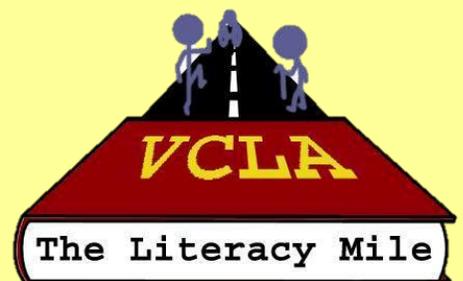
Literacy classroom instructor Roz Speed and EA Jennifer Pennell round out a great team that has helped Daniel progress.

"I think everything is going great!" Daniel says. "If someone is thinking of getting tutoring with VCLA, I'd say 'Come check it out!' The supports are very good and people here are easy to get along with."

VCLA's 15th Annual Literacy Mile

May 4, 2019 1pm-3pm at 49 Cornwallis Street in Kentville.

The Literacy Mile is an opportunity to raise awareness of and support for the literacy needs of Annapolis Valley residents. You can help VCLA build and walk the mile! Gather pledges or support us through your purchases. There will be hot dogs and refreshments for sale, a silent auction, 50/50 draw, live music, activities and games for the whole family. All proceeds raised will go toward supporting local literacy and English as an Additional Language programming.





Tina Corbin (left) and Marlene Coleman make about 8000 real food bars each week.

The What's Cooking? Commercial Kitchen has been producing Real Food Bars for Made with Local for several years, and for Marlene Coleman and Tina Corbin, two contract workers in the kitchen facility, it's an opportunity to do something they believe in.

"It makes me proud to know we're helping people eat healthier," says Marlene. "It's nice to see something we've worked so hard on when we go to the grocery store." Indeed, Made with Local products are now found at most grocers in Atlantic Canada and beyond.

Marlene has spent the last five years working for What's Cooking? and she wouldn't have it any other way. "It's my dream job. We have a good team. I can always count on others."

One of the people she counts on the most is her friend and colleague Tina, and the two of them have been leading the Made with Local production team even as the popularity of the bars has skyrocketed. "We used to do 800 bars a week, now we do 8000", says Tina with a proud grin. She admits that some

jobs are harder than others – rolling out the Sticky Squirrel bars is a particular challenge - but says "it's excellent. I wouldn't want to do anything different."

What's Cooking? offers both Tina and Marlene the flexibility to shape their work schedule around their needs. They are both caregivers to family members, and they couldn't be successful without an understanding employer who can adapt and overcome barriers. Marlene and Tina were both looking for meaningful, challenging work, and they found that and more with What's Cooking?

"The people I work with, they're the best part," Tina says. "We're just like family, they're like my sisters. It just doesn't feel like a workplace, it feels like home."



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Put a ring on it

Did you know that The Flower Cart Group makes dried apple rings that are sold at Stirling Farm Markets? They're a convenient snack full of nutritional benefits. Dried apple rings are loaded with fibre, which is essential for healthy digestion. They are also a good source of potassium and contain iron, Vitamin C, and Vitamin A, but if you've tried them you know the best part of Stirling apple rings is they're delicious!

work with purpose.

The Flower Cart Group

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