

**Catholic Women's League of Canada
Nova Scotia Provincial Council
Education and Health Annual Report
2018**

This Annual Report summarizes the important work carried out by Councils in the Education and Health Standing Committee in 2018. Thank you to the Councils and Chairs of the Education and Health Standing Committees who did wonderful work in the many endeavors they undertook in this Standing Committee. Twenty-Seven Councils used the online reporting system to present the activities and initiatives undertaken by Councils. Councils feel important information may not be captured or as personal in the work that is being done in the Councils due to the nature of the online reporting system.

Catholic Education

Councils are actively involved in many aspects of Catholic education from children and youth centered Catechesis to adult faith formation through various Bible studies and programs offered in their parishes or diocese. Although religious education is not available in schools, Councils are working closely with schools to support children and youth by providing school supplies, breakfast and lunch programs. Many CWL members are involved with sacramental preparation programs in parishes by volunteering as catechists and assistants. Councils support and provide funds for summer camps for under privileged children, Vacation Bible school and NET Ministries.

Literacy and Continuing Education

Members have been very supportive of working and assisting others in their communities to improve their literacy and English language skills. Many have been involved with mentoring new immigrants and tutoring them as they learn to speak English and acquire new literacy skills.

Scholarships and Bursaries

Councils make available funds for bursaries and scholarships to elementary, high school and mature students to financially assist them in furthering their education. Financial support and donations were provided by Councils to Coady International, the National Bursary Fund and NET Ministries. The Marguerite Burns and Alice Eagan Hagen Bursaries are available annually to members. Most Catholic women can access these funds to further their education however many women do not take advantage of these available bursaries.

Wellness and Sickness/Disease

All Councils are actively involved in supporting many national health organizations such as Canadian Cancer Society, Heart and Stroke Foundation, Alzheimer Society of Canada, Arthritis Society, Multiple Sclerosis Society, Relay for Life, Kidney Foundation to name a few. Councils provide financial support as well members participate by providing volunteer services in their communities to these organizations. Local organizations such as foodbanks, Salvation Army, ALS, Terry Fox Run, Hope Cottage are also supported by individual members and Councils. Many Councils held information sessions with guest speakers who spoke on a wide range of topics on all aspects of health and wellbeing including exercise, falls and trips, dietary needs and challenges.

Palliative care and assisted dying are a concern for Council members. Councils participated in the “12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care” by arranging for events and prayer spaces in their Parishes. Neighboring churches were invited to attend these events where all were welcomed and supported as personal stories and experiences were shared. Palliative care information was available and goodwill offerings were collected and given to local palliative care/hospice facilities. Councils held living rosaries, provided prayer blankets and a time for refreshments and fellowship. Many Councils feel that Palliative Care is a very important cause and want to ensure that the increased awareness and focus remains and is not diminished

Mental health and being present to persons struggling from mental health issues is of great concern to all Councils. Several Councils have taken steps to become more knowledgeable and aware of the mental health issues in their communities. Councils have expressed the need to maintain the continued focus and awareness of mental health issues in 2019.

Environment

Councils are very concerned about the many issues impacting the environment and the importance of them to members. Councils promote recycling, reduction in the use of Styrofoam and plastic water bottles, reduced paper use, the use of green bins for organic waste and have assisted with roadside cleanups. Climate change is a concern to all Councils who inform their members on aspects of what climate change is and how it affects us. Members have been made aware of topics such as renewable energy and wind turbines. Members have participated in the International Earth Hour Vigil when lights are shut down and digital lives are put on hold for one hour.

Councils have written letters to various levels of the government requesting the support of Resolution 2018.02 to establish a national standard of testing and labelling products marked as flushable. Councils are supporting the progress of resolutions by writing letters to the Prime Minister and Minister of Health, arranging for guest speakers and provided monetary donations. Some members attend seminars to further learn about the issues described in the resolution.

Genetics

Councils reported that there was very little activity in this area in 2018. Councils are not familiar with or have subscribed to the Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute newsletter to keep informed of the current issues in bioethics and genetic engineering. Councils’ knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of technological development in relation to the teachings of the Catholic Church was considered to be overall fair to good.

Other Comments

Councils are doing great work in supporting Education and Health in their parishes and communities. Members are knowledgeable and supportive of the many important initiatives undertaken by this Standing Committee.

Most Councils are satisfied with the information they are receiving however the following topics are of interest: mental health, women’s health issues and physical fitness for older adults. Some Councils have expressed that they would like these reports accessible at the beginning of the year to set targets for what to attain in that year.