

Hospitality NL International Ambassador Award

Round da Bay Inn

We were excited to receive an award celebrating inclusion, diversity, equity and anti-racism. Those things are really important to us and we're always trying to learn and improve.

We meet so many interesting people in the tourism industry; we welcome guests from all over the world. They're here for different reasons – some to see the UNESCO Geopark sites, some for icebergs or whale watching, some to explore our beautiful part of the world. We want each of them to feel welcome here. More than that, we want them to know that we looked forward to them coming and gave thought to what we can do to help them have a great experience.

Until we met Nancy Reid, we had no idea how hard it is to go on vacation when you use a wheelchair. We were shocked – not only at how few places are accessible, but by how long it took to find which are. Nancy, who is the chair of the Coalition for Persons with Disabilities, and her husband stayed with us several years ago and offered to show us how we could make our inn better for people in wheelchairs. Some things were easy to change, like lowering our bulletin board, and making a section of our check-in desk lower. Some things were expensive and we were grateful to learn about Accessibility Grants. We received Government assistance for two of our projects – accessible public washrooms and paving an area of our parking lot by our ramp.

There are many types of disabilities, and we are trying to continually learn and make improvements. We'd love to see accessibility made a priority on our Peninsula.

Our Syrian friends have had a big influence on us too. We met them through a regular customer of ours, Diane, from Gander. We invited them to our Inn to see another part of Newfoundland, and over that weekend we became friends. They've been back the last 3 years to celebrate Eid here; it's been fascinating to learn about their culture.

We had a picture on our Facebook page of one of our celebrations; that's how another Syrian refugee found us this summer. She'd been searching for 3 years when she emailed asking if we could help her find a sponsor to bring her family to Canada. After talking to the Association for New Canadians, we realized this was something we could do. They're waiting for final approval and will be on their way here. We are fundraising to bring more families here and to renovate a home for them for their first year.

The most important thing for new Canadians to settle here happily is a warm welcome and support from their community. We look forward to their new ideas, new friendships, young families to help our Peninsula grow and become more vibrant.
