

## A message from our CEO, Daniel Holland

“Be a barn-raiser” is both a great call to action and one of the chapter titles of former Governor General David Johnston’s recent book: *Trust*. Most of you would know of Dr. Johnston’s belief in the importance of communities and the support he gave to Community Foundations across the country. In one chapter, he states: *“When a spirit of barn-raising exists in a community, the community is a trusting one and, as a result, a strong and resilient one: all community members trust in the knowledge – grounded in generations of experience – that they will step up to help a neighbour in need, and that their neighbours stand ready to help them if and when their time of need arrives. And just as barn-raisers give with no expectation of an immediate return, they also give according to their resources and skills.”*

If you are reading this newsletter, you likely are a barn-raiser yourself. Our fund holders and donors are barn-raisers. Many of the volunteers who give their time in the local communities and organizations to which CFNS grants, are barn-raisers. All have heard and heeded the call to action. CFNS is moving into a new chapter of such barn-raising action; today, this month and in 2021!

Beginning in 2019 and throughout 2020, CFNS set out on a new course of action. There were many points of momentum over the last year. There were also big opportunities which resulted from events that were outside of our influence, control, or direct planning. In each of these, CFNS’s new intentional action-oriented approach thrived because of our unique capacity to step into a space and become a collaborator, convenor and enabler. These included: Rounds 1 & 2 of the Investment Readiness Program, the Nova Scotia Nonprofit COVID-19 Coalition, Rounds 1 & 2 of the Emergency Community Support Fund, the Portapique, NS *We Rise Again Fund*, the Fund for Gender Equality, as well as the uninterrupted attraction of other new funds and their respective granting to meaningful causes across the province.

Our January event, *“New Beginnings”*, highlighted a range of “good” that was done through CFNS and all of our stakeholders. The feedback shared with me reflected a Nova Scotian, authentic, visceral and energizing view of our impact points last year.

While 2020 was a year of tremendous activity, CFNS has also been engaged, over the last few years, in conversations of many different ideas. When the calendar turned, we began 2021 with a new wind in our sails. We are filled with more energy, momentum and positive activities than we could have hoped for. We are in discussions with new fund holders, we have expanded our Investment Committee, we are exploring early stages of a social enterprise project, new partnerships, a lead role in a new federal granting program called the *Canada Healthy Communities Initiative*, and more. All this in the first eight weeks of 2021! And, more evidence of barn-raising in action.

CFNS has truly turned the corner from being focused on conversations about ideas to conversations about actions - intentional actions. The last few weeks feel like new beginnings in ways only previously hoped for.

Sustainable, collaborative, and impactful actions by their nature must start as ideas that are explored, refined, and developed into something robust. Over the course of the coming months and years, we must be prepared to look at these actions as both laying the groundwork and building momentum through adaptation and learning. We will seek new initiatives and improve the current activities of CFNS, while remaining conscious of our fiduciary duties. The action we are taking can inform and guide.

Innovation is the wellspring from which our organization can selectively choose to expand the many ways in which we take action, barn-raise and positively impact the communities across Nova Scotia. I look forward to working with many of you to set the direction and in the implementing that direction for greater impactful action in the province.

Keep well,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Darius", is located at the bottom left of the page.