

## Welcoming warmth

# Session offers home heating options

by Heather MacAdam

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Bone-chilling temperatures were braved by many Saturday morning to attend an information session on efficiently heating homes during the winter months.

Those who attended the Welcoming Warmth information session at St. Ninian Place on Saturday morning also learned more about grants to assist them and about the Antigonish Emergency Fuel Fund.

Bridgette Revell, who works with Family Service of Eastern

Nova Scotia, was one of the volunteers involved with the day. She said this initiative came out of the Heat Poverty Action Committee, and Family Services is just one of the community agencies sitting on that committee.

The Heat Poverty Action Committee developed three sub-groups, she said, to work on specific areas – education, winterizing homes and the emergency fuel fund.

"Today's (initiative) comes out of the education committee and the goal was to give the community an opportunity to learn about how to save money heating their homes in the winter-time."

The event also gave people an opportunity to apply for the emergency fuel fund.

"There are volunteers here helping them fill out forms for government rebate programs, as well," she said. "We have public health providing information on nutrition on a budget and then we have a number of people helping with a children's table."

Free draws were also held for items donated by local business, and a hot breakfast was served.

The day had a fairly steady attendance, she added.

"We had a number of people come in right at 9 a.m., and we had a fairly steady group of people coming in and collecting



Volunteers Wyanne Sandler (left), Lucille Harper and "Lion Roger" Natarajan discuss some of the government programs available for those in need of assistance heating their homes during the Welcoming Warmth education session. (Heather MacAdam photos)

information."

However, a number of people suggested the turn-out may have been better on another day, as temperatures on Saturday were below -20 C, and even lower with the wind-chill factored in.

"It's pretty cold for people who don't have a lot of money and don't have a car – it's pretty cold for them to be out walking."

Some in attendance could also be heard telling stories about friends or family members who were unable to start their cars that morning due to the frosty temperatures.

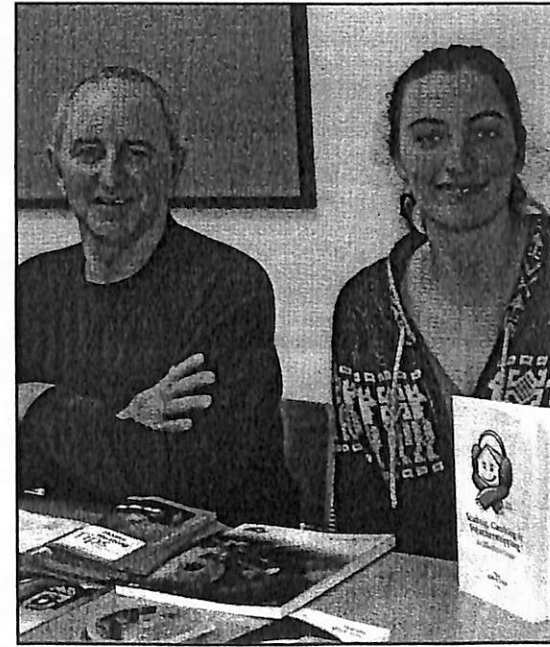
However, the current weather will also remind people of the need to think about heating their homes, Revell said.

This is the first time the Heat Poverty Action Committee held an educational session such as this, Revell said, adding the idea came up in October or November of last year.

"This is a first-time shot to see if it will meet the community's needs. Depending on the feedback we get from the community, I think we'll look at doing something similar again."



Kaitlyn (left) and Madison MacDonald enjoyed the activities at the children's table at the Welcoming Warmth education session at St. Ninian Place Saturday morning.



Mike MacDonald (left) and Julie Stinson braved bone-chilling temperatures Saturday morning to attend the Welcoming Warmth Session. The pair offered advice on how to winterize homes to make heating more efficient.