

Fun bowling event provides information on RESPs

by Richard MacKenzie

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Thursday will be a day to lace up the bowling shoes and learn more about the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre's (AWRC) Baby\$steps program.

Between 3 and 5 p.m. at Pins Entertainment Bowling Centre on Post Road, the program is hosting a free holiday bowl and pizza party for parents with young children.

AWRC's Baby\$steps program co-ordinator Tara Sutherland said the afternoon is a combination fun and awareness event.

"We wanted to do an event that would, first of all, appeal to parents with young children and make it really easy and comfortable for people to come together and learn about Registered Education Saving Programs (RESP)," Sutherland said.

"It (RESP) is not the type of thing that is on a lot of people's radars, particularly for some families where money is pretty tight. It's not always easy to come up with the funds to contribute."

But that is where this event can be a real eye opener, Sutherland added, noting there are government contribution and incentive programs a lot of people aren't aware of.

"We want to get the word out that there is a program that will allow people to open a RESP and get up to \$2,000 worth of government funding without a penny leaving their pocket," Sutherland said.

"Also, for those who are able to contribute and are in a better situation to do so, a lot of people don't know that there is up to \$7,200 in matched funding that is available per child. Basically the government will match the funds the parents put in by 20 to 40 percent."

Sutherland said it's important people register for the event so organizers can arrange the proper amount of pizza and treat bags they're putting

together for the children.

There is also the chance to win prizes including a \$25 gift certificate from Wal-Mart and a \$50 contribution to a child's RESP.

Registration can be done by calling Sutherland at the AWRC at 863-6221.

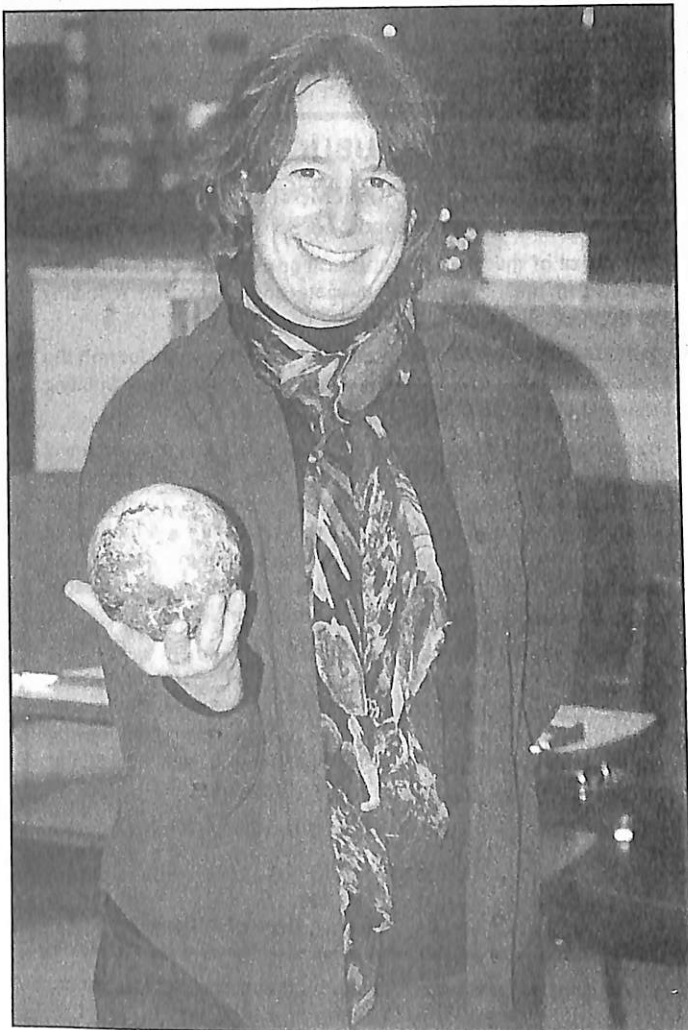
"And if I'm not in at that moment, you can leave your information at the desk to register as well," she said.

A representative from Service Canada will be on-hand to answer question about social

insurance numbers (SIN), a necessity for opening a RESP for your child.

Also available will be representatives from two local financial institutions to answer questions about RESPs or even open one on-site.

"We're really excited to have someone from Bergengren Credit Union and the Royal Bank who are going to be available," Sutherland said. "They'll be able to get this process rolling as long as parents are able to come with their SINs for their kids."



Antigonish Women's Resource Centre's (AWRC) Baby\$steps program co-ordinator Tara Sutherland is looking forward to a free holiday bowl and pizza event Thursday where parents can learn more about the program while enjoying an afternoon of bowling with their children. (Richard MacKenzie photo)