

Volunteerism in Antigonish reflects 'spirit of community'

ANTIGONISH – Although she isn't cramming for spring exams, Brenda Rose spends a lot of time on the StFX campus at this time of year. The Cape George resident and her four-legged friend, Richard, make visits with students as part of their volunteer work with the St. John Ambulance therapy dog program, building on the reputation that canines – and their handlers – have established as providers of stress relief. "It is invigorating," Rose told The Journal of their experience interacting with young Xaverians, noting "how much you can learn" from them during those interactions at the Angus L. Macdonald Library and other venues. When she moved to the East Coast from Montreal in 2009, and settled along the water in Antigonish County, she quickly learned about the "spirit of community" here, which included a terrific sense of volunteerism. "It is contagious," Rose offered of volunteering, particularly somewhere like Antigonish. She also offers her time to organizations such as the Antigonish Community Fridge and Pantry and A Roof Over Your Head – which she said are doing "great work" for people in the community who are experiencing "economic instability." Noting her focus on "helping the community," Rose also reminded people not to underestimate the benefit of volunteerism when dealing with or warding off mental decline. Not surprisingly, she deflected praise for her efforts, while rattling off names of those giving tirelessly across Antigonish town and county. "There are a lot more who do more than I do," Rose said.....



Brenda Rose and her four-legged companion, Richard, volunteer with the St. John Ambulance's therapy dog program, which includes visits to the R.K. MacDonald Nursing Home in Antigonish. Contributed