CONNECTING COMMUNITIES THROUGH SHARED DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

with real Nova Scotian partner case studies via

PLAY FINDER

Presented by Laura Duggan, October 14 2026

Session Overview

Communities recognize the value of recreation, investing significant time and resources into programs, facilities, natural spaces, equipment, and events, yet opportunities often remain underutilized as access is fragmented across organizations, municipalities, and platforms - creating barriers to participation and limiting their collective impact.

This session explores how shared digital community recreation infrastructure is strengthening collaboration, supporting recreation professionals and community volunteers, improving access, and generating meaningful data to inform planning and investment.

Through real-world Community Access case studies from Nova Scotia, participants will discover how connected communities are creating network effects that make recreation easier to discover and access within and across county boundaries while laying the foundation for provincial and national collaboration.

Why

Our communities are rich in opportunity.

Nova Scotia is a wonderful place to live and visit, with countless natural assets, quality facilities & built environments, strong leadership in sport and recreation, passionate staff at local businesses & non-profits, and an incredible network of collaborative volunteer-led organizations.

Recreation is already a network - our systems aren't.

THE PROBLEM

Recreation plays a vital role in healthy, connected communities - but finding and managing local opportunities is far harder than it should be.































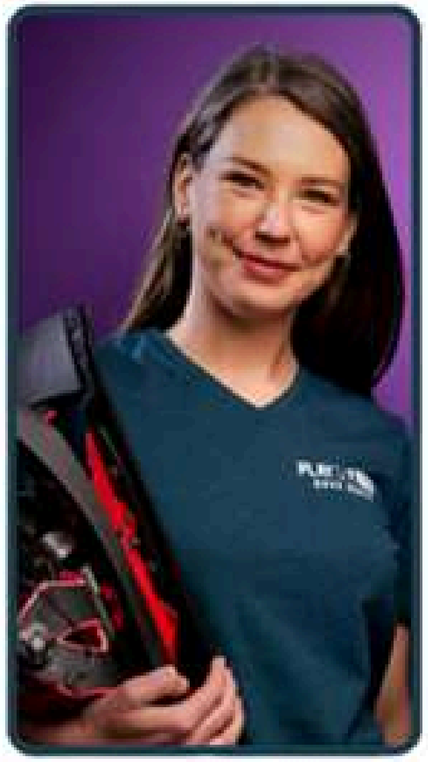
FRAGMENTATION & FRUSTRATION

Families search across websites, apps, social media, flyers, and word of mouth. Meanwhile, municipalities and community organizations rely on disconnected systems and time-consuming administrative processes.





Background



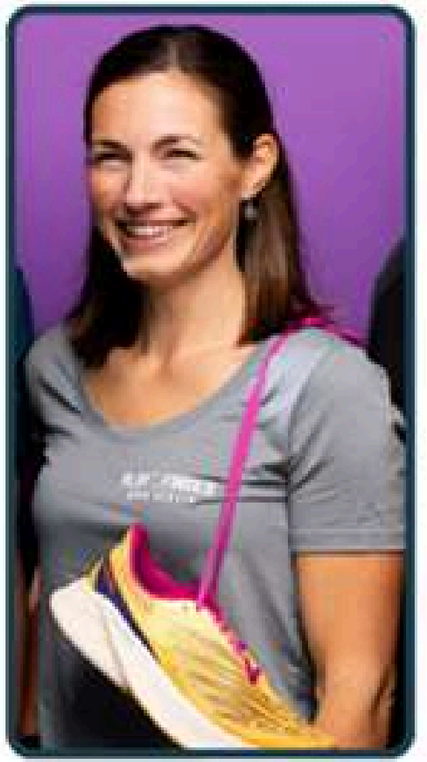
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Behind the platform is a passionate local team committed to rural community development. Our mission is rooted in access and inclusion - we believe every organization, regardless of size or budget, deserves tools that make their work easier and their communities stronger. Combined, our core team of co-founders represents 45 years experience in the recreation/sport sector, 90 years of volunteerism, and over 150 years of rec/sport participation!

What are stakeholders saying?

Challenges we hear from communities across Nova Scotia

- Families struggle to find and access programs siloed across organizations - information is spread out, making navigation confusing for residents, (especially newcomers), and visitors
- Small community organizations lack capacity, tools, and visibility - little to no budget for tech
- Municipal staff & volunteers are overextended managing fragmented disconnected systems
- Facilities operate below full potential and access is challenging due to unclear entry points, complex and inconsistent booking processes, and ineffective promotion
- Municipalities lack consistent data to support planning and inform decision-making

Families don’t think about access on an org by org basis, they just think, “What Can I do?”

MISSION

To provide a shared community navigation tool, and the supports needed via a collaborative framework, to increase and enhance access to information, opportunities, and resources, that result in positive experiences and the full benefits of recreation, for all Nova Scotians.

VISION

“It’s Easy to Play in Nova Scotia”



PLAY FINDER ANTIGONISH

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Antigonish County | Laura Duggan | Logout

Find Your Way To Play!

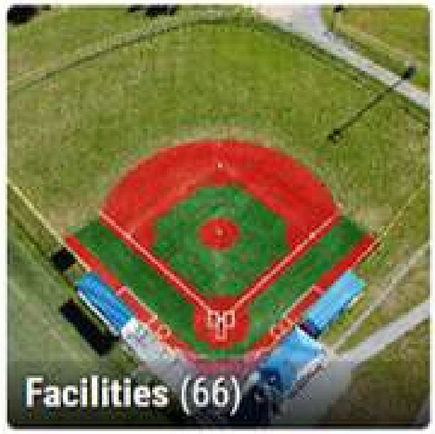
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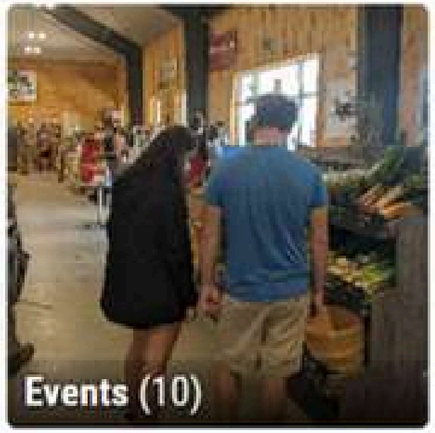
Setup PlayFinder Profile for custom options, or start a search via keyword (above) or quick links (below)

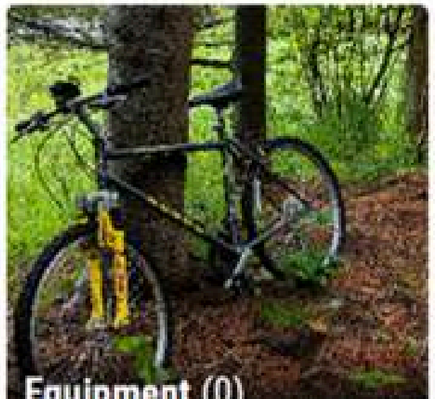
PlayFinder System Updates 2026-10-12

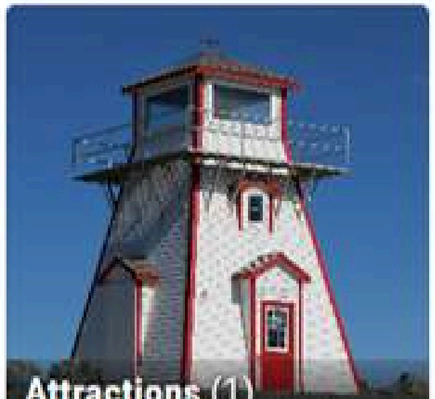


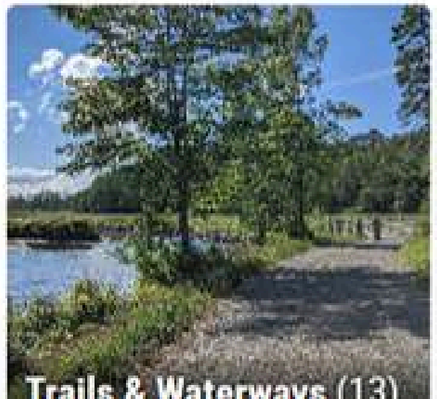


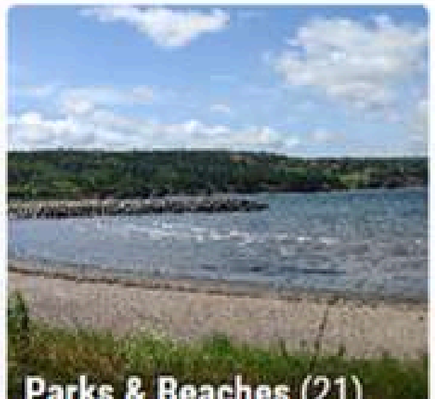


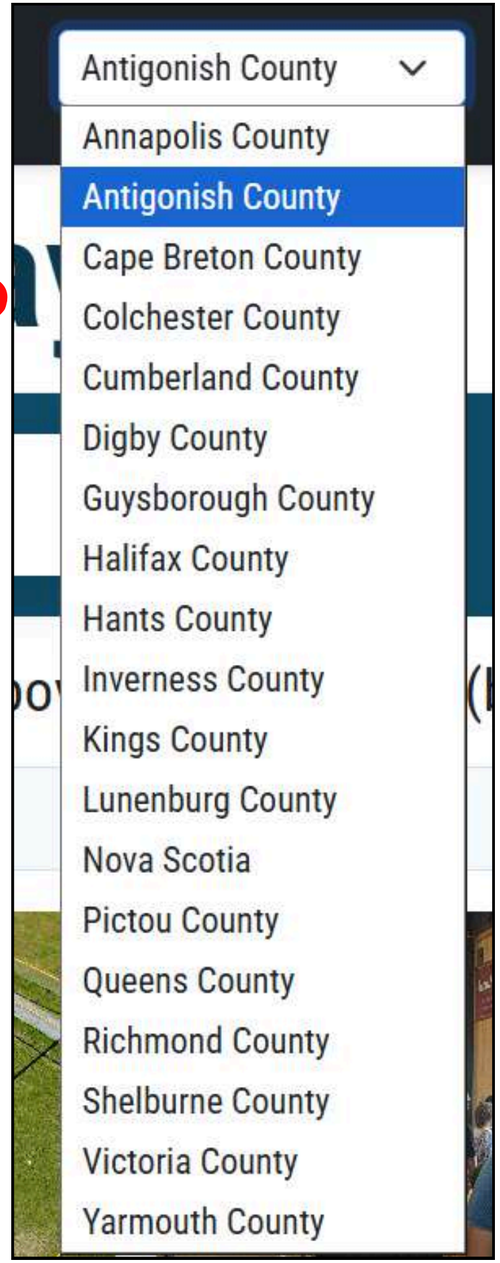












CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

We provide shared digital infrastructure for recreation - connecting families, community organizations, facilities, and municipalities through one easy-to-use platform.



PROBLEM



Just ask Jill Manyhats

Disconnected inefficient recreation and sport management systems are costing municipal staff and volunteer organizations time, revenue, frustration, and community participation.

INTRODUCING PLAYFINDER

PlayFinder brings that entire ecosystem together across Communities.



SOLUTION



PLAY FINDER

Shared community navigation tool consolidates management and creates a single participation entry point to ease and enhance access to information, opportunities, and resources, resulting in positive experiences and the full benefits of recreation for all.

Community Navigation Platform

PlayFinder connects it all at one clear access point, making it easier for residents/visitors to discover and engage with what's available near them.

- Provides a single, trusted hub for discovering all local activities with entry points like registration, memberships, facility booking, equipment loan, trail info/maps, etc.
- Gives community organizations easy-to-use tools to promote programs and manage operations
- Streamlines workflows so municipal staff & volunteers can save time and reduce admin strain
- Simplifies bookings and visibility so facilities can increase usage and revenue potential
- Generates valuable data and insights to support evidence-based municipal decisions

Modular Suite of Tools

- Online Recreation Directory of “Destinations”
- Event Promotion
- Program Registration, Memberships, Communications
- Online Payment, Financial Tracking
- Equipment Inventory & Loan/Rental Mgmt
- Facility Scheduling & Booking
- Volunteer Management, Officials Management
- Powerful Data at every level

Coming Soon!



Fundraising



Ticketing



Much more!

Contribute Suggestions

PlayFinder is collaboratively developed with stakeholders - they tell us what would they want to see the platform do to best serve their community.

We encourage sharing feedback for improvement - ideas big and small!

What Makes PlayFinder Different?



- Unique systems approach replacing siloed approach



- Purpose-built by, with, and for stakeholders - proven fit



- Team expertise, commitment, and connections



- Meaningful and Sustainable Strategic Partnerships



- Social Enterprise



- Community Access Model*

Social Enterprise

A business that pursues a social, cultural, or environmental mission and re-invests profits to maximize that mission. In a single word, our mission is ACCESS.





Community Access Model

- **Supported county-wide, region-wide, or province-wide access:** Not just for use by individual orgs and municipal units, organization(s) can pay /cost-share to offer all organizations and facilities access to the suite of PlayFinder tools and local support. Examples of Antigonish & Pictou Counties.
- **Inclusive and collaborative:** No financial risk to community groups encourages enthusiastic and consistent participation and engagement across the entire community. Cross-org collaboration is easier. Participation numbers in activities increase as a result of the shared promotional space.
- **Reduces barriers:** Simplifies access to resources for organizations, staff, and residents alike. Manage everything from one account across numerous communities! Volunteers feel supported.
- **Amplifies impact:** Builds a connected network of programs, facilities, schedules, automated communications, and community opportunities - the level of integration amplifies benefits.

COMMUNITY ACCESS

Our Community Access Model allows a municipality or regional partner to invest on behalf of a community, giving eligible local organizations access without individual software fees. Together, they can manage programs, registrations, payments, facilities, equipment, memberships, communications, and community information—all in one connected system.



Levels of Impact

Provincially: Membership management and method of providing benefits for RecNS, consistency for users across jurisdictions with everything on one account.

Municipal Units: Organizational effectiveness resulting in increased impact.

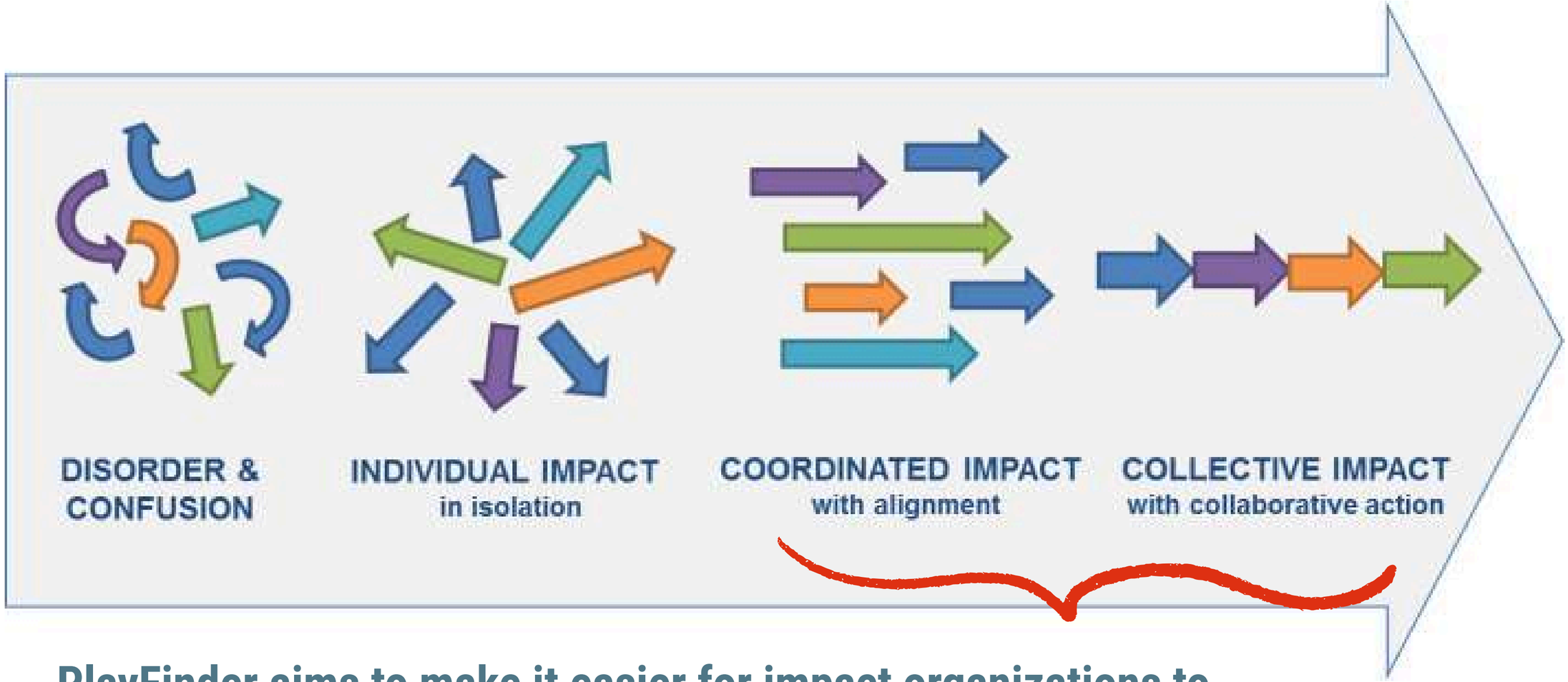
Community Organizations: Sport & Recreation Groups, 4H, Service Groups, Trails Associations, Libraries, Tourism, Event Promotions, etc.

Community Facilities: Public booking - Arenas/Rinks, Community Centres, Community Use of School Spaces, Gyms, Courts, Fields, Public Church Spaces, Theatres, Fire Halls, etc.

Citizens / Families: Increased access and enhanced experiences participating & volunteering. Locate opportunities near home or in other counties and even provinces.

Travelers: Easy discovery of, and access to, hyperlocal happenings.

Collective Impact



PlayFinder aims to make it easier for impact organizations to coordinate and collaborate effectively - you tell us what that looks like for your organization and community and we'll build it together!

PLAY FINDER
ANTIGONISH

Access to information, opportunities, and tools that help organizations thrive and make participation easier for everyone.

Find your way to play at PlayFinder.ca!



The Municipality of the County of Antigonish and the Town of Antigonish have partnered to expand the use of PlayFinder, the digital recreation hub that many families already use to discover local programs and activities.



This collaborative initiative means that all non-profit recreation organizations and community facilities across the Town and County can use the platform for program registration, facility scheduling, communication, and more. As more organizations come on board, you'll start to see even more programs, facilities, and opportunities available across Antigonish Town & County. **Stay tuned!**

Questions or Ideas? Contact Support@PlayFinder.ca

MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF ANTIGONISH

THE TOWN OF ANTIGONISH

PLAY FINDER
PICTOU COUNTY

PICTOU COUNTY Partnership

TRENTON, N.S. INCORPORATED 1911 · STRIKE WHILE THE IRON IS HOT ·

Pictou Landing First Nation

TOWN OF WESTVILLE, N.S. INCORPORATED 1894

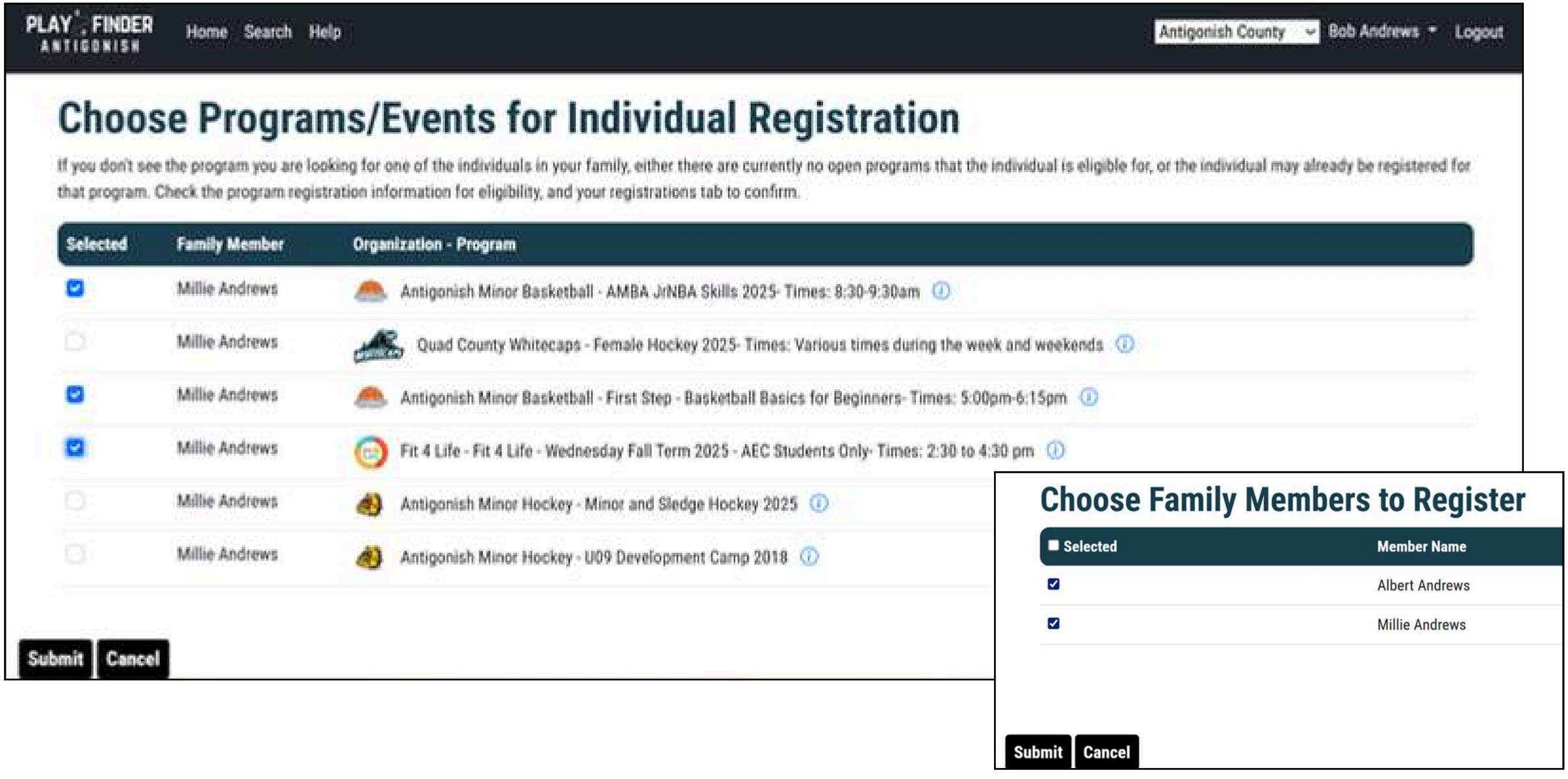
MUNICIPALITY PICTOU COUNTY INCORPD AD. 1879 NOVA SCOTIA

New Glasgow flourish

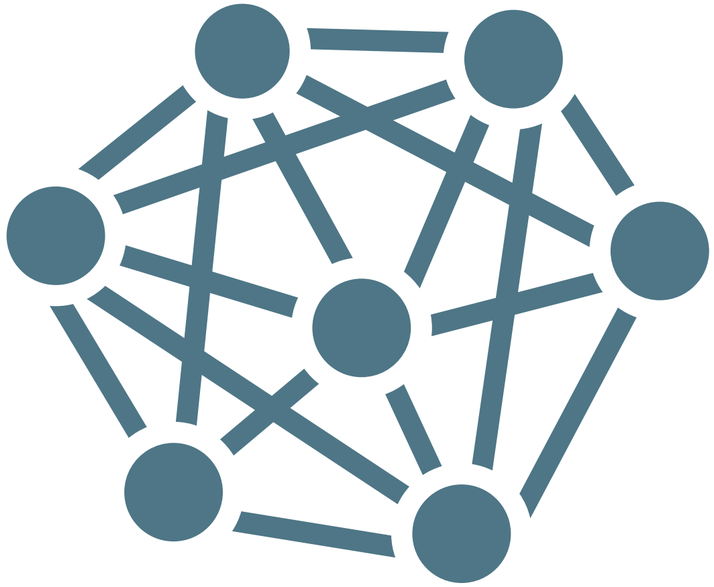
STELLARTON Spirit, People, Pride

town of PICTOU Birthplace of New Scotland

EXAMPLE


PLAY FINDER ANTIGONISH
Home Search Help
Antigonish County
Bob Andrews
Logout
Choose Programs/Events for Individual Registration
If you don't see the program you are looking for one of the individuals in your family, either there are currently no open programs that the individual is eligible for, or the individual may already be registered for that program. Check the program registration information for eligibility, and your registrations tab to confirm.
Selected
Family Member
Organization - Program
Millie Andrews
Antigonish Minor Basketball - AMBA JrNBA Skills 2025- Times: 8:30-9:30am
Millie Andrews
Quad County Whitecaps - Female Hockey 2025- Times: Various times during the week and weekends
Millie Andrews
Antigonish Minor Basketball - First Step - Basketball Basics for Beginners- Times: 5:00pm-6:15pm
Millie Andrews
Fit 4 Life - Fit 4 Life - Wednesday Fall Term 2025 - AEC Students Only- Times: 2:30 to 4:30 pm
Millie Andrews
Antigonish Minor Hockey - Minor and Sledge Hockey 2025
Millie Andrews
Antigonish Minor Hockey - U09 Development Camp 2018
Submit
Cancel
Choose Family Members to Register
Selected
Member Name
Albert Andrews
Millie Andrews
Submit
Cancel

Community Operating System and Living Lab







Integrated Infrastructure

Powerful Data & Insights

THE MUNICIPALITY OF BARRINGTON
An ocean of opportunity

STEWIACKE
RIVERS OF OPPORTUNITY

Municipality of Inverness County

Colchester Recreation

Membership Services
and benefits

RECREATION NOVA SCOTIA

Destinations
Parks, Trails, Beaches, Waterparks, Historic Sites

NS RINGETTE

INFINITY FLOORBALL

Advance FEMALE FLOORBALL

STFX BASKETBALL

Fit 4 Tots

CHEM

STFX CROSS COUNTRY & TRACK

STFX GYMNASTICS

STFX SOCCER

Fit 4 Life

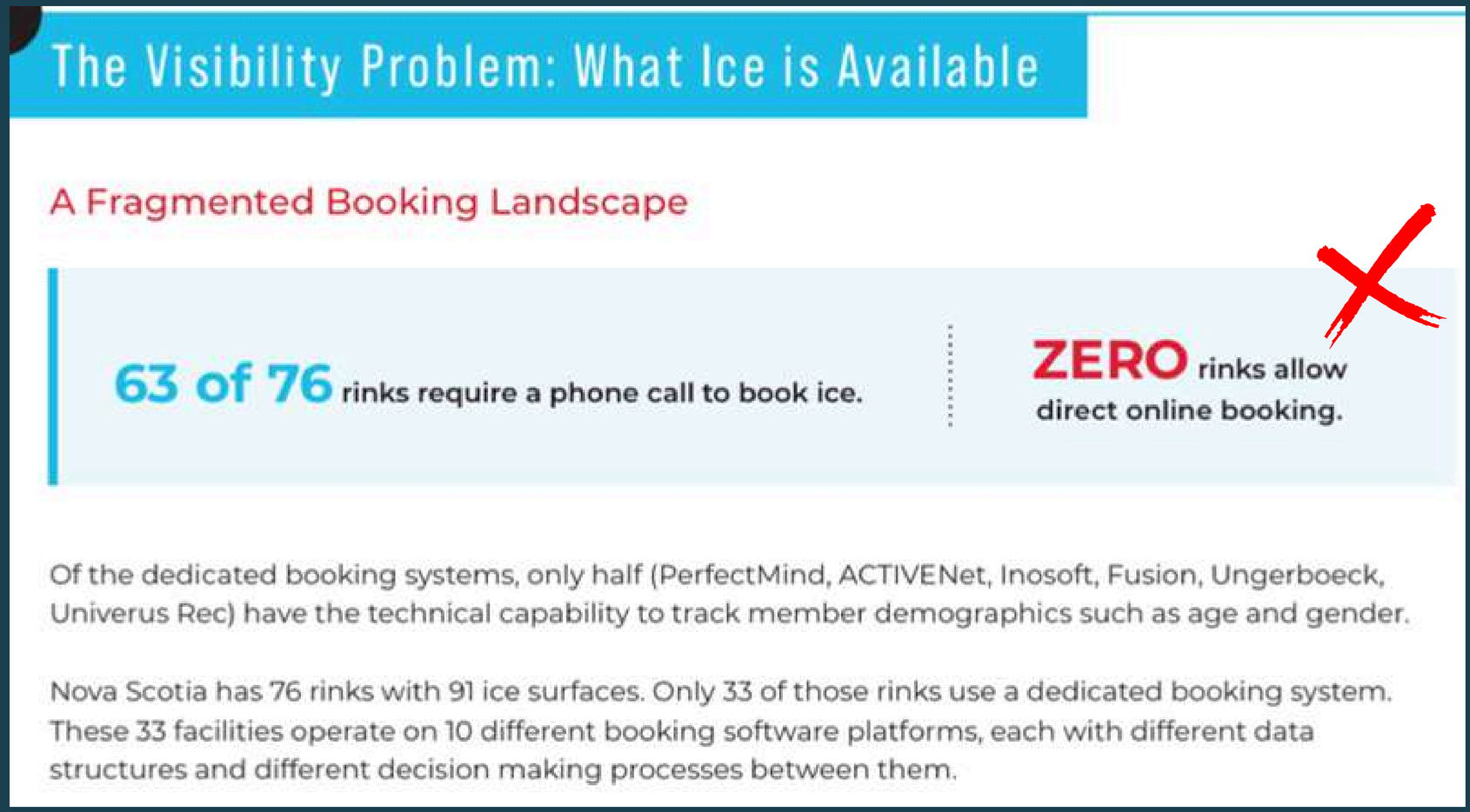
STFX HOCKEY

STFX FOOTBALL

STFX MUSIC

EARTH

FACILITIES



Correction:

ONE rink in Nova Scotia now allows direct online booking!

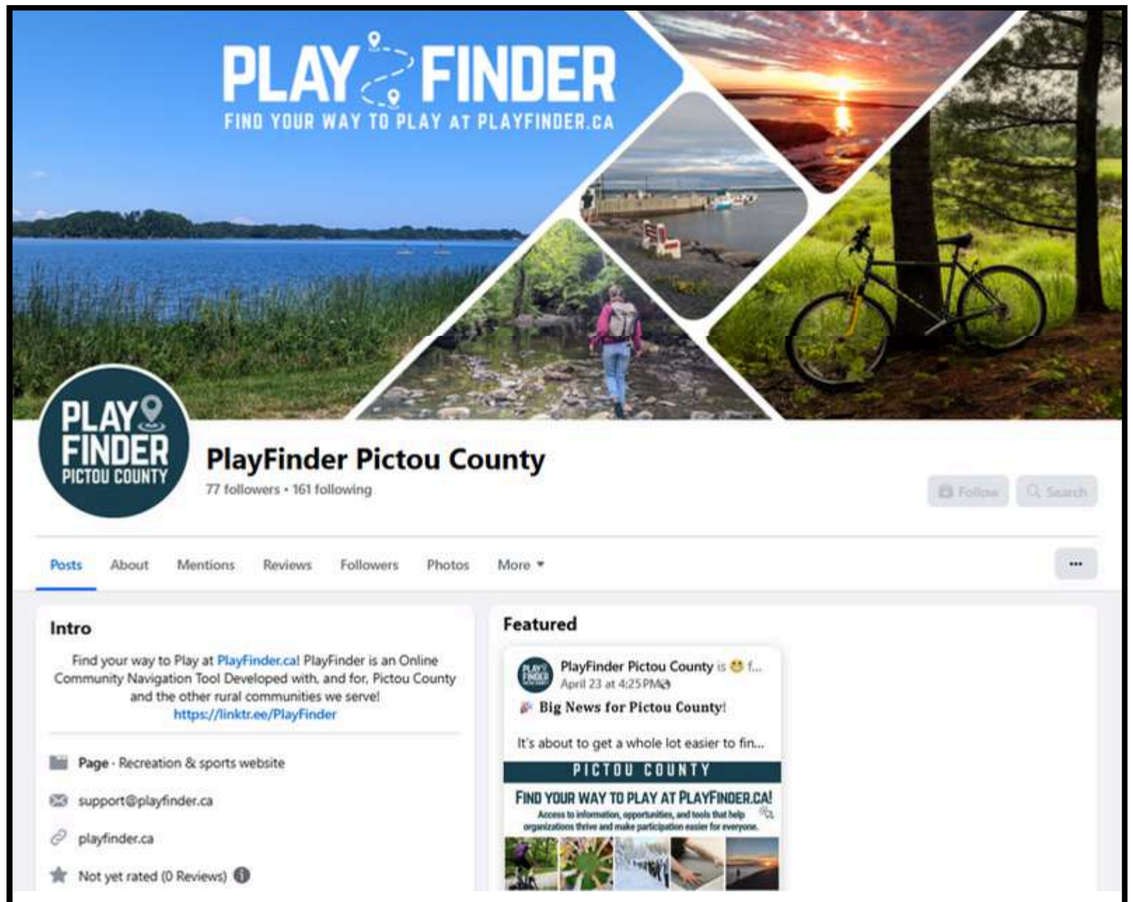
SANDY WICKENS MEMORIAL ARENA

Source: Future of Hockey Lab - Key Findings from the Nova Scotia Pilot

Community Building

- Community Newsletters
- Community Facebook Page
- PlayFinder Cup - The Traveling Trophy









PlayFinder Cup

PLAYFINDERCUP



A new tradition celebrating community, connection, and the joy of play. This trophy is meant to be shared—passed from one incredible community event to the next, recognizing the people and organizations who bring recreation to life.

We're proud to share that the very first team to hoist the PlayFinder Cup is the champions of the Antigonish Minor Hockey U11 House League Year-End Tournament 🎉 What a way to kick things off!

Want to bring the PlayFinder Cup to your event? It's officially up for grabs! PlayFinder partner organizations can request the trophy by emailing support@playfinder.ca to be part of this growing tradition.

Here's to celebrating play, together 💙



playfindercup Not to be outdone by the older players, these U9 intermediate @antigonish.bulldogs players took the #PlayFinderCup in their season end game! Congratulations to all on a great year and thanks to all the volunteers involved.
It's was a super fun weekend to share the community cup with minor hockey house league this weekend!
If your a partner organization who would like to use the cup for your event, email us at Support@PlayFinder.ca to arrange.

PlayFinder Cup



Municipality of the County of Inverness
June 19 at 4:00 PM ·

Get Active Ball Hockey

The 2026 Playfinder Cup Championship Games took place this week, bringing together 176 young athletes who demonstrated outstanding energy, sportsmanship, and teamwork while competing for the cup.

We are proud to announce the 2026 Playfinder Cup Champions:

- Port Hood Young Dawgs – Lightning
- Port Hood Old Dawgs – Sabres
- Chéticamp – Stars
- Inverness Young Gunz – Lightning
- Inverness Old Gunz – Stars

Congratulations to all participants on a season filled with fun, teamwork, and friendly competition.

A special thank you to the dedicated volunteers whose hard work and commitment helped make this season a success. **See less**

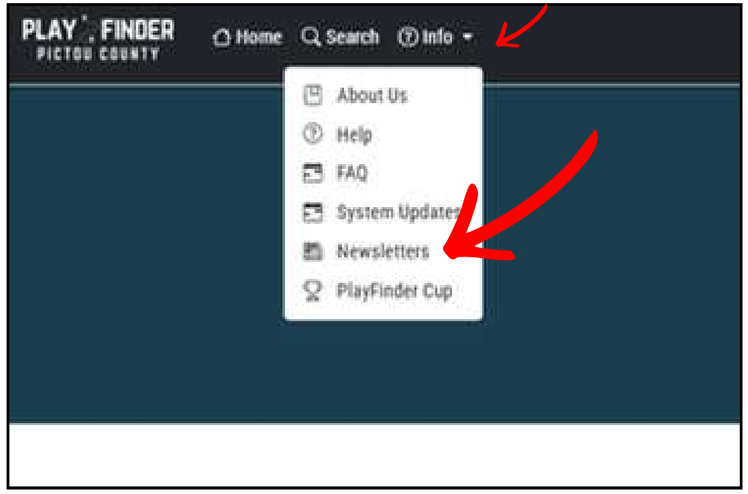




PlayFinder Inverness
June 19 at 4:14 PM ·

Look at those smiles and huge participation numbers! Sure appears like everyone gave 110% and had a ton of FUN! What an amazing event, the perfect week for the inaugural outing of the PlayFinder Cup in Inverness, the trophy that celebrates PLAY in our rural communities! 💙🏆 Huge thanks to the Get Active Team from Municipality of the County of Inverness who are constantly running phenomenal programming for local youth. 👏🔥💛⚡ **See less**

Community Newsletter



PLAY FINDER NOVA SCOTIA

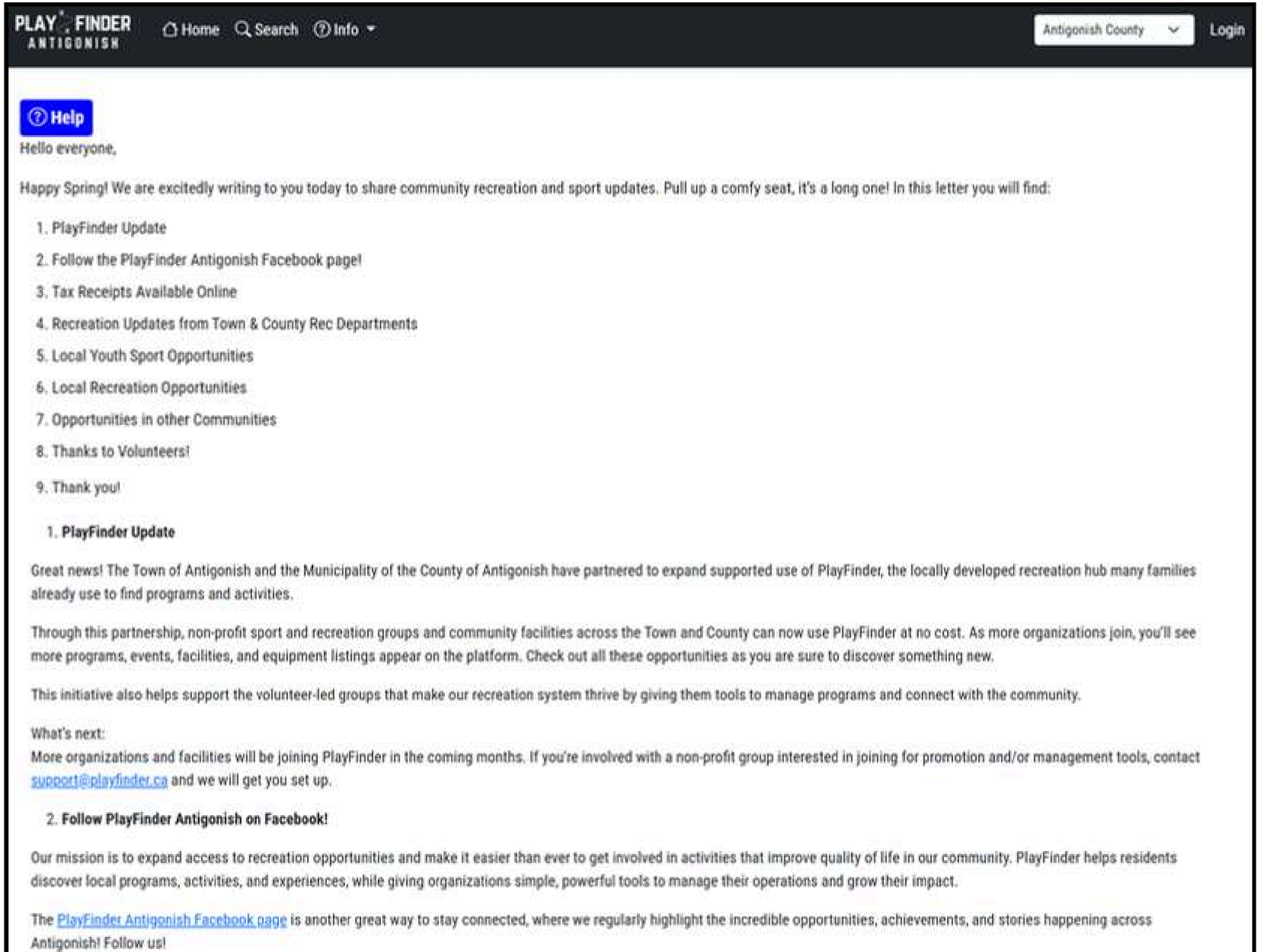
PlayFinderWeb - PlayFinderWeb

Happy Spring! We are excitedly writing to you today to share community recreation and sport updates. Pull up a comfy seat, it's a long one! In this letter you will find

playfinder.ca

To your inbox and available online anytime





Help

Hello everyone,

Happy Spring! We are excitedly writing to you today to share community recreation and sport updates. Pull up a comfy seat, it's a long one! In this letter you will find:

1. PlayFinder Update
2. Follow the PlayFinder Antigonish Facebook page!
3. Tax Receipts Available Online
4. Recreation Updates from Town & County Rec Departments
5. Local Youth Sport Opportunities
6. Local Recreation Opportunities
7. Opportunities in other Communities
8. Thanks to Volunteers!
9. Thank you!

1. **PlayFinder Update**

Great news! The Town of Antigonish and the Municipality of the County of Antigonish have partnered to expand supported use of PlayFinder, the locally developed recreation hub many families already use to find programs and activities.

Through this partnership, non-profit sport and recreation groups and community facilities across the Town and County can now use PlayFinder at no cost. As more organizations join, you'll see more programs, events, facilities, and equipment listings appear on the platform. Check out all these opportunities as you are sure to discover something new.

This initiative also helps support the volunteer-led groups that make our recreation system thrive by giving them tools to manage programs and connect with the community.

What's next:
More organizations and facilities will be joining PlayFinder in the coming months. If you're involved with a non-profit group interested in joining for promotion and/or management tools, contact support@playfinder.ca and we will get you set up.

2. **Follow PlayFinder Antigonish on Facebook!**

Our mission is to expand access to recreation opportunities and make it easier than ever to get involved in activities that improve quality of life in our community. PlayFinder helps residents discover local programs, activities, and experiences, while giving organizations simple, powerful tools to manage their operations and grow their impact.

The PlayFinder Antigonish Facebook page is another great way to stay connected, where we regularly highlight the incredible opportunities, achievements, and stories happening across Antigonish! Follow us!

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS!

All of our partner organization have contributed so much to the platform design, every improvement and new feature is contributed by YOU!

VIRTUAL SUGGESTION BOX!

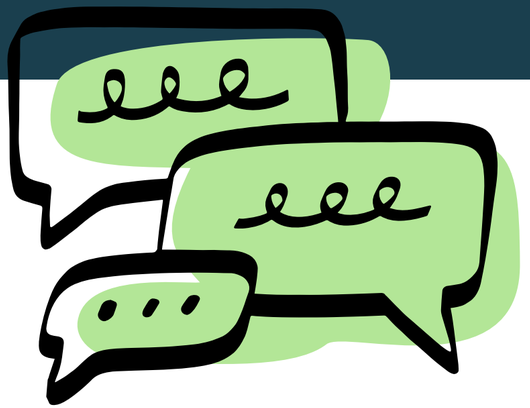


PLEASE SCAN THE QR CODE TO SHARE YOUR IDEAS, FEEDBACK, OR QUESTIONS.



You are always welcome to reach us: Support@PlayFinder.ca

What are people saying?



"I love how easy it is to keep track of everything my family has going on. We register multiple family members for various events at once, pay online, receive communications, both of us can consult our color-coded family schedule - It's a total game changer in our house!" - *Parent/Volunteer*

(re. support & development) "We were all just talking in the office about how fast and helpful you guys are, we really appreciate everything you do, thank you so much! "
- University Administrators

"We are grateful for the community approach and having everything in one place. We've already grown from the exposure and PlayFinder has had huge impact on our organizational effectiveness".
- Community Org Board Member

"We've wanted to use an online solution for a while but the cost was prohibitive for our non-profit facility to invest in. We're thrilled to have access to PlayFinder and love how it connects directly to our organizations and individual users that already have accounts." - *Facility Manager*

"There tends to be a lot of turnover in our department and this will really help us with continuity. Only having to update things in one place is a huge time saver."
- Municipal Employee

"I'm hoping to move on from my role and PlayFinder will make that handoff to my replacement so much easier!"
- Community Volunteer

NEXT: CONNECTING ATLANTIC CANADA

PLAY FINDER
NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK
NEW BRUNSWICK



PLAY FINDER
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR





PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

PLAY FINDER

Link Tree

PLAY FINDER

FIND YOUR WAY TO PLAY

PLAYFINDER.CA










Laura Duggan

LET'S CONNECT!