



Regional library receives funding for Seniors Mentoring Newcomers project

A Western Counties Regional Library project to increase the retention of newcomers in the region and enable the active participation of area seniors as mentors for newcomers has received \$25,000 in federal funding to establish the mentoring program.

The regional library has received the grant on Jan. 6 to implement its Seniors Mentoring Newcomers in conjunction with the South West Shore Development Authority's Immigration Information Navigator.

The money is to be used to get the project up and running with the goal of making it self-sustaining, says Debbie Duke, project coordinator for the regional library.

"We expect results within the first six months," Duke says, adding that the project will start right away.

The funding will be used to hire a volunteer trainer, purchase necessary equipment such as a laptop computer, cover training costs and create a self-sustaining project. Once a pool of volunteers is trained, some will be able to continue to train new volunteers to enable the program to be ongoing.

Volunteers commit to a minimum of six months service to the program. All the volunteers will be seniors who will use their skill and experience to mentor newcomers to the region and to train new volunteers. The service will cover Digby, Shelburne and Yarmouth counties, Duke says.

"We're hoping to start with a core group of maybe 20 volunteers," she explains.

The program will be overseen by a volunteer committee of five people, comprised of Immigration Information Navigator Andrew Pace, Duke and three seniors. Duke is actively seeking the other board members.



From left, Immigration Information Navigator Andrew Pace, West Nova MP Greg Kerr and Western Counties Regional Library Coordinator Debbie Duke discuss the Seniors Mentoring Newcomers project. Kerr announced on Jan. 6 that the project would receive \$25,000 from New Horizons for Seniors program.