



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

MEMBER REPORT AGM 2024

The Prince Edward Island Retired Teachers' Association is made up of 1072 members. We have 8 regular meetings throughout the year and hold our AGM on the first Thursday of November. Because of our small size, we are able to have our monthly meetings at the office of the PEITF. Our AGM rotates yearly between Charlottetown and Summerside.

Our Executive remains the same for 2024. The President is Phyllis Horne, and Vice-President is Lise Morin. Wayne Denman is Past-President. A complete list of members has been forwarded to ACERCART. There will be changes at our AGM in November for the 2025-2026 term.

At the PEIRTA AGM in November 2023, the attendees were very appreciative of the information shared by our guest speakers, Amber Wilson and Shea Callaghan from Key Murray Law. They had a presentation on Estate Planning that provoked a lot of interest and follow-up questions from the RTA members present.

We had golf and curling activities throughout the year. The annual golf tournament was held last September. Wayne Denman put a lot of work into organizing this event. Our RTA also held a successful curling bonspiel in March.

We recently participated in the pre-retirement seminars held for active teachers. There were 58 teachers registered for the Summerside meeting and 93 for the Charlottetown meeting. These teachers were pleased to hear of the low cost of joining (\$2 each month) and to hear about the many benefits. The RTA representative is also invited to attend a retirement reception in June for all new retirees. At this event, we will present a package to new retirees which includes an application form and a newsletter. We continue to work on informing new retirees of the benefits of belonging to the RTA.

We are fortunate to have Michel Plamondon as a voting member on the teachers' pension plan committee. Michel attends all of our regular executive meetings and gives updates. In January 2024, Prince Edward Island retired teachers received a 6.86% increase in their pensions to reflect the CPI. As well, Kimball Blanchard is on the health insurance committee and attends our regular meetings and AGM with updates.

Each year, the RTA awards scholarships and bursaries to PEI students in the pursuit of a career in education and also young leader awards to students graduating from Island high schools.

On August 16, Lise Morin and Marg Stewart, RTA representatives, along with other stakeholders were invited to an in-person round table meeting with the Minister of Health, the Honourable Mark Holland, to discuss the Improving Affordable Access to Prescription Drugs (IAAPD) Initiative. They shared advice and insights on initiatives implemented under the IAAPD, and how IAAPD can inform a national pharmacare program. The Retired Teachers' Association has lobbied the government since 2015 on this issue. The reduced co-pay to \$5.00 for drugs covered under the PEI Pharmacare's Senior Drug Program, the Family Health Benefit Program, the Generic Drug Program and the Diabetic Drug Program are positive steps in providing access to affordable medication for our senior population. The adjustment to the Catastrophic Drug Program to lower the cap on the amount of money a household spends on eligible medications, based on a percent of household income, will also impact seniors positively, specifically the ones who fall in the 1 out of 4 seniors on 10 medications for chronic long-term conditions. Better access to medication means better health and quality of life: aging with dignity. Regarding the implementation of a national universal pharmacare program, it has been a long-term priority of the Canadian Association of Retired Teachers. Adequate and dedicated funding, a national senior's strategy and dental care are key to affordability of aging in place and long-term care. We were pleased to add the voice of the retired teachers to the round table and are committed to keeping our membership informed.

On November 22, 2023, Margaret Stewart and Lise Morin participated in the public release, in Charlottetown of A Proposal for a Guaranteed Basic Income Benefit in Prince Edward Island. The proposal provided a clear, evidence-based framework for the PEI Government to support negotiations with the Federal Government on a province-wide Basic Income demonstration program. It is affordable and promises to eliminate poverty and to contribute to social and economic progress and improve conditions in the province for everyone. We have been in conversation with Marie Burge, board member of Cooper Institute, and member of the PEI Working Group for a Livable Income since 2003. She provided information which was shared with our membership in the Spring Newsletter.

The PEIRTA is pleased to work with ECERTO and ACERCART around the issues of advocating for seniors particularly in the areas of Pharmacare and aging in place. We continue to participate in the zoom meetings for each organization and continue to keep our members informed through our newsletters.

Submitted by
Phyllis Horne,
President PEIRTA