

■ SEE ABILITY IN DISABILITY

Rotary Accessibility Projects and Easter Seals

People with a disability are often thought about in terms of what they cannot do, yet often people facing challenges have amazing abilities and are truly inspiring. For over 60 years, the Rotary Club of Summerside has become known across Prince County for enhancing the quality of life, self-esteem, and self-determination of children and adults living with physical and mental disabilities.

The Rotary Club supports numerous projects dealing with individual requests for wheel chairs and wheelchair lifts in specialized vans, including community complexes such as the Evangeline Recreation Centre. Customized computers have also been purchased for assistance with communication, wheelchair ramps for homes,



and Camp Gencheff to name but a few.

Camp Gencheff provides a wonderful opportunity for children, teens, and adults with special needs to develop physically

and emotionally through a safe and fun summer camping experience. Campers have a chance to be valued, learn new skills and experiences, and meet new friends.

The Rotary Club promotes social inclusion of people with disabilities and the provincial Easter Seals campaign kicked off February 29th where this year's Ambassador was revealed, Tyra Mackeeman. Mackeeman is 10 years old and attends Vernon River School. She enjoys making people laugh and smile, and her motto for the 2016 Easter Seals Campaign is, "Go for it, and Make someone smile today!"

Tyra lives with Neurofibromatosis. "This is a big word. I am not good at saying it, so I call it NF1 for short. Even though the word is big, I am not letting NF1 be a big trouble in my life," quotes Tyra. Tyra will be making her way across Prince Edward Island as this year's Easter Seals Ambassador and she looks forward to meeting lots of new people.

The Rotary Club of Charlottetown, the Rotary Club of Montague, and the Rotary Club of Summerside operate the Easter Seals campaign on P.E.I. They distribute funds in their respective regions.

■ GROWING MEMORIES



Rotary Friendship Park

In 1993, a 64-acre Park was created (through acquisition and licensing of eight parcels of land) as a dedication to the 50th Anniversary of the Rotary Club of Summerside. An abandoned shale pit was restored, trails were created, fencing installed, and more than 30,000 trees were planted.

The Rotary Friendship Park is now one of the most utilized green spaces in the Summerside area. The park is a fantastic example of a multi-use space that has been carefully designed to accommodate people of all ages and abilities. People can walk, hike, cycle, or even just sit and enjoy peaceful contemplation. The total capital cost at the time was in excess of \$750,000 provided by generous donors.

Rotary Celebration Garden

Almost two decades later, the Rotary Club established the Rotary Celebration Garden. The idea grew from a desire to allow

family and friends, as well as businesses to recognise loved ones in the midst of this passive green space. More than \$40,000 was raised to help support the park and other Rotary projects.

A lush canopy opens into a commemorative garden highlighted by an array of stones in the shape of the Rotary Wheel – the international symbol of the club. Residents can purchase a part of the wheel to carve their names and memories in stone, with the proceeds funding Rotary programs worldwide.

Inspiration for the centerpiece was taken from the interpretive signs placed carefully around the park that tell the story about Rotary and its international projects.

Stones have been purchased by people from around the world, and serve as a continuing reminder of the value of dedicating and protecting green space for the enjoyment of all within the community.

