

Golfers raise more than \$100k for anti-poverty programs

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SAINT JOHN - A golf tournament has raised more than \$100,000 for the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative, a group that supports community programs that help children living in poverty.

Fortis Properties sponsored and hosted the Sept. 27 event, teeing up with 150 businesses that raised a total of \$102,500. That money will go toward programs and groups like the Early Learning Centre and PALS (Partners Assisting Local Schools).

Event chair Paulette Hicks, general manager of Delta Brunswick & Brunswick Square Complex, said the tournament is aimed at giving Saint John children in poverty "a better chance to reach their full potential." "It's our pleasure to help rally the business community each year to assist BCAPI and Saint John in achieving this important community goal to build a bright future for local children and break the cycle of poverty," Hicks said in a press release.

The money is wisely spent because "the consequences of lifetime poverty are very costly," added Tom Gribbons, chair of the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative.

One golfer achieved a feat during the fundraiser tournament. Gary Lawson, a partner with Lawson Creamer who used to be chair of the initiative, made a hole-in-one, sinking the shot at the par 3, 10th hole.

"If you think we may never accomplish our mission of wiping out poverty, anyone who has seen me golf will say that if I can get a hole in one, anything that seems impossible is indeed possible," Lawson said in a press release.

The Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative was created in 1997 by business leaders who wanted to "substantially reduce poverty in Saint John." In addition to the Early Learning Centre and PALS, the group has partnered with P.R.O. Kids, The Resource Centre for Youth, Vibrant Communities Saint John and First Steps. Its goals including moving single parents off social assistance and into jobs and helping vulnerable teens be prepared to enrol in post-secondary education and join the workforce.

Each year, the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative funds the Bill Gale Bursary, which is designed to help youth overcome significant financial barriers to pursue education.

During the Fortis Charity Golf Classic's 11-year history, it has raised \$672,000.



The 11th annual Fortis Charity Golf Classic on Sept. 27 raised \$102,500 for poverty reduction projects. Left to right: Tom Gribbons, BCAPI chair and vice-president, manager, RBC Dominion Securities; Bill Gale, BCAPI founder; Paulette Hicks, event chair and general manager of Delta Brunswick & Brunswick Square Complex; and Kevin Woodbury, director, Hospitality Atlantic, Fortis Properties. PHOTO: SUBMITTED