

NEW PRODUCT LINE OFFERS NEW SKILLS AND A GREAT COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

The weather outside is frightful, but the fire is so delightful... If you haven't started a fire in your fireplace to warm up your house this season you likely will be before long. And if you are anything like me, you'll be searching around for some kindling to get it going. A new project at Bonny Lea Farm, in Chester has just made that part easier.

The brainchild of vocational instructor Wade Davis, the Kuttin' Kindlin' project gives his work crew who work in the Bark Mulch project something to do during the colder months. The Barn where the mulch is made and bagged is not insulated but the participants enjoy the meaningful and productive work. Discussions began to identify a project that could get up and running on a short of timeframe with low start-up costs and work that would engage the team.

One day as Wade was driving home he spotted kindling at various gas stations. He saw it as the perfect project for his crew.

"I realized another cold winter season was fast approaching and that people would soon be getting ready to fire up their woodstoves for the long cold winter. What's a woodstove without kindling?" comments Wade Davis, vocational instructor at Bonny Lea Farm.

After doing some research into sources and pricing he approached Steve Foran at Chester Building Supplies to see if the store would be willing to sell the bundles of kindling. Not only did Steve agree to sell the product with 100% of the sales returning to Bonny Lea Farm, he was very supportive of the idea and helped with getting the project set up by selling at cost the equipment the Farm needed to make the project happen.

The project engages every member of the team from splitting the kindling using an electric splitter, to securing each bundle with twine and finally tagging the bundles with the product label, which does double duty as a carrying handle.

Kuttin' Kindlin' is the newest in Bonny Lea Farm's stable of social enterprises. The organization is also known for its greenhouse and herbal products sold at local markets, including the upcoming Indoor Chester Farmers Market at the Chester Legion on November 22 and the Father Christmas Gourmet Food Market in Mahone Bay the weekends of November 27 and December 5. If you've ever had take-out from the Island View restaurant in Gold River you have used one of the cutlery packs packaged by Bonny Lea Farm participants. The workshop has an ongoing contract with Louisiana Pacific in East River preparing their stain sample cans and has also recently delivered a number of beautifully hand crafted wooden crates to Haskapa in Mahone Bay, for packaging their products.

A unique charitable organization founded in 1973, Bonny Lea Farm is located on 80 acres in Chester, and provides residential and specialized programs and services for 45 adults from across Nova Scotia living with various disabilities such as Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorders, acquired brain injury, epilepsy, cerebral palsy, visual and hearing impairments and other neurological and genetic disorders.

With an annual budget of nearly \$4 million, 75% of which comes through the Department of Community Services, Bonny Lea Farm's programs are tailored to individual abilities, needs and goals. Through the Centre for Independent Living participants develop life-skills and receive care and support in one of the eight homes. The Day Program offers Vocational, Transition, Alternative and Seniors' programs. While the Greater Achievement Centre provides individualized approaches to Physical & Speech therapies; individual and group counselling; Special Olympics and physical activities and community outreach, work and volunteer placements. The remaining 25% of the budget is funded through grants, the proceeds from their social enterprises and continuous fundraising.