



TO HOST OR NOT TO HOST



Imagine being retired and “parenting” teenagers for the first time! Read on!

This Spotlight features two active Carleton and North York Branch retirees, both of whom have had lengthy and successful careers as teachers and administrators in the public schools of the province.

Nancy Dickson hails from Bathurst and started out teaching there, but spent most of her career in Carleton County. Hartland, NB native, **Angela James**, a Hartland High and UNB grad, has spent her entire career in Carleton County.

After retiring in 2010 (Nancy) and in 2016 (Angela), both have continued to provide educational opportunities for teenagers from all parts of the globe. Through the province’s Atlantic Education International/New Brunswick International Student Program, hosting international students in their home has afforded high school students access to its quality education system. Not only have they hosted, but they have also been involved since 2017 as Home Stay Coordinators responsible for student placements in hosting homes. They have coordinated placements for over 50 students in the five years.



The interest in hosting began because of Angela’s role at the Hartland Community School where she had become acquainted with a number of international students. Her personal experience on a teacher exchange combined with her familiarity with these international students, piqued her interest in hosting a student. In the spring of 2016, she approached Nancy, her lifelong friend with whom she has shared a house for many years, and asked if they might host a student. Initially, Nancy was reluctant to host, but after a great deal of thought, she decided that she would be able to handle a one semester student placement.



Milena, a student from Brazil, arrived in September of 2016. Milena embraced Canadian life at school and at home and was an absolute delight. After agreeing to host, Nancy received the devastating news of her brother’s death in June 2016. The presence of Milena that fall brought much joy and hosting was not nearly as much work as Nancy had anticipated. In addition to coordinating Home Stay Placements, they hosted three additional students, Nina and Fabiola from Brazil and Amelia from Germany.

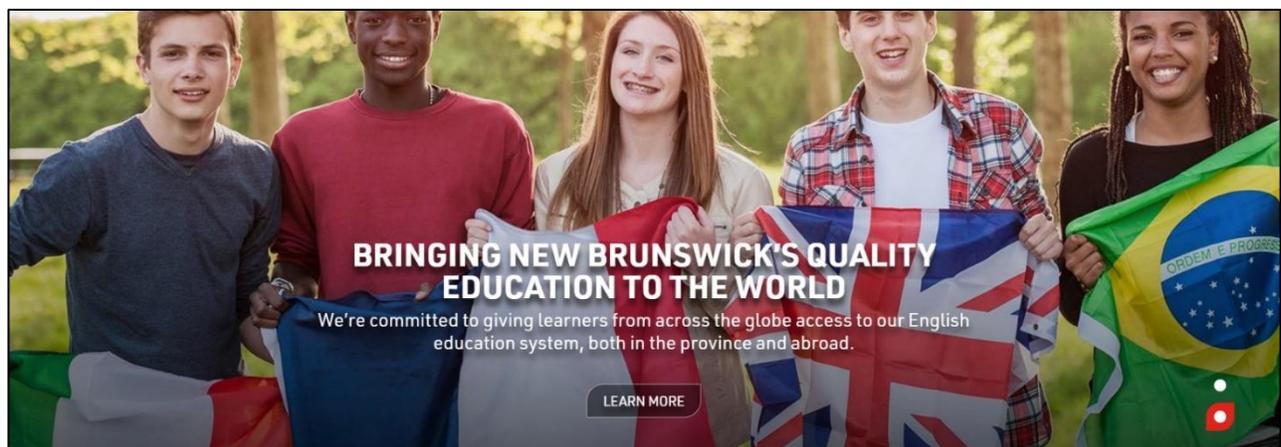
They state that host families see New Brunswick through new eyes as they share the province with their students. Lifelong relationships are developed. They truly become a part of their Canadian families as evidenced by the tearful departures and the number who return to visit their Canadian families. The students experience monthly activities like whale watching, skiing, tubing, curling, snowshoeing, sleigh rides, skating, games nights, international meals and the like. They get to enjoy the simple things of New Brunswick life with their host families, and they get to share information about their cultures with these families.



International students pay to study in New Brunswick. Most work through an agent in their home country who handles all logistics with Atlantic Education International. The majority of students in New Brunswick are high school students who come for one semester, a school year, or multiple years. Middle school students come for shorter placements.

Nancy and Angela express without reservation that the students enrich the learning environments in the schools that they join. They see that local students gain a more global perspective. As retired teachers, it keeps them connected to the education system and the involvement is enriching for everyone.

Both suggest that if any retirees are interested in hosting, they should visit the AEI website at: aei-inc.ca. There is a simple form to complete and the Home Stay Coordinator in the person's local area of New Brunswick will be notified and will contact the interested family.



If you have an idea for a *SPOT Light Feature*, contact Larry Farrell: farell@rogers.com