

# From the NSTU President



## Kindness, Connection and Hope

As autumn settled across Nova Scotia and classrooms filled with all the familiar energy of the school year, another annual tradition took root, one that reminds us of the strength, passion, and professionalism within our system.

At the end of October, teachers and specialists from across the province gathered for conferences and professional learning events organized by our NSTU Professional Associations. This long-standing tradition continues to be the highest participation event within our union every year. It reflects what we know to be true, educators are lifelong learners who are always striving to grow in practice, deepen understanding, and better support the students we serve.

Our 21 Professional Associations work tirelessly behind the scenes to plan, develop, and deliver exceptional learning opportunities. They coordinate conferences, workshops, and keynote speakers for every subject area and grade level, ensuring that no matter where one teaches, there is a place to learn and connect. The engagement we see each October is a testament to the dedication, creativity, and leadership of the volunteers who make these events possible.

On behalf of NSTU members across the province, I would like to extend my sincerest thanks. Your hard work strengthens the profession, enriches classroom practice, and uplifts educators each year.

As we move toward the holiday season, I am reminded of the meaningful work happening every day in our schools, not only academically, but as part of the fabric of our communities. Many schools take on projects that bring joy, dignity, and support to those around them. One shining example is at Evangeline Middle

School in New Minas, where a small idea has grown into a powerful tradition: the *Tree of Hope*.

For more than 25 years, this initiative has nurtured empathy and connection by encouraging small acts of kindness. Whether it's writing a note of encouragement, sharing food, or offering a simple gesture of care, the *Tree of Hope* reminds students, and all of us, that helping others doesn't require something grand. Sometimes, the smallest act can light the way for someone feeling unseen or overwhelmed.

I had the pleasure of visiting the staff and students at Evangeline Middle School while filming this year's NSTU holiday commercial. The atmosphere was alive with excitement and warmth, an energy that quickly spread to everyone in the room. It was a powerful reminder that when we come together with compassion, hope grows.

As we enter this holiday season, let us carry that spirit forward. Let us remember that kindness is powerful, connection matters, and hope is something we can create together. A warm smile, a kind word, a moment of patience, these gestures cost little yet can mean everything to someone who needs it.

Thank you for the work you do every day in your classrooms and communities. You make a difference.

Wishing you rest, joy, and hope in the weeks ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John G.', written in a cursive style.