

Youth Group Report 2025

Perhaps the most important function of our Junior Group is to provide access to the shooting sports for young Newfoundlanders. Under current legislation a young person cannot own or use a gun, buy ammunition and generally lacks transport without the support of an adult licence holder. And for many that support is not available. Junior membership provides a ready access for young people to engage and become skilled and qualified in the safe and responsible use of firearms.

A decade ago our group comprised independent teenagers, generally coming from outside organizations such as cadets or the Duke of Edinburgh Award Program, but in recent years that has markedly changed to a significantly younger intake from the general public. We now have members as young as nine, who inevitably bring their parents as well. In most cases the parents are also new to the sport and wish to undertake training and licence certification along with their children. Although our focus is on youth we have evolved into a family group, currently numbering around 35.

A key objective is to provide an opportunity for junior members to become familiar with all activities offered by the club through participation in the GunQuest Challenge program, which offers a skill development path covering all club activities as well as maintenance, re-loading, angling and indoor winter projects. There are 50 non-competitive challenges requiring at least 2 years of dedicated effort to reach the top 'Marksman' level and this year 3 of our juniors achieved that goal. The best year ever!

The youngsters are keen to participate in club events alongside our older members and produced a strong showing in this year's military rifle shoot, the .22 cal mini rifle shoot and numerous sporting clays and trap events. There has always been an interest in archery, which had been unavailable in the past due to age restriction, however, this year we purchased a youth compound bow and with the help of the archery group held a well-attended introductory session.

We thank the Executive, many older members and Complete Gun Repairs for all their support and encouragement over the year.

Alastair Allan