

# DO YOU KNOW A DENTAL HYGIENE SUPERHERO?



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## Francine Leach, RDH

Francine Leach's passion for oral health began over 20 years ago when she became a dental assistant. She decided to further her education and became a dental hygienist in 2005. After years of working in private practice, she accepted a position at the North End Community Health Centre (NEHC) Dental Clinic as its first oral health outreach navigator and dental hygienist. NEHC is a unique, collaborative health care centre in Halifax that focuses on improving the overall well-being of priority populations and the community it serves through volunteer and student clinicians. It is funded primarily through grants and donations. Recently, Francine developed the Children and Youth Dental Program, which provides access to oral care for the youngest community members. As an exemplar model of oral health promotion and improving access to services for the North End community, the NEHC Dental Clinic received the 2020 Canadian Dental Association Oral Health Promotion Award. Francine's goals now include adding a fourth operatory to better meet the dental needs of the community.

In addition, Francine is a part-time faculty member of Dalhousie University's School of Dental Hygiene and supervises student externships at the NEHC Dental Clinic. When not at the clinic, she is out in the community promoting "Oral Health is Health" with Dalhousie's Healthy Populations Institute and running outreach events at local schools and organizations. Francine and her husband, Patrick, live in Halifax, where they are raising their daughters, Grace and Cecilia. When they are not busy with work and school activities, they can often be found at their favourite beach.



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