



New Smilezones Bring Colour, Comfort, and Acceptance at Autism Nova Scotia in Cape Breton

Thanks to Tim Hortons Cape Breton Island Owners and Smile Cookie supporters, families now have two new spaces that foster acceptance and inclusion.

SYDNEY, NS - May 15, 2025 — Autism Nova Scotia is proud to announce the grand opening of two newly designed Smilezones in its Cape Breton regional autism centre, made possible through the generosity of Tim Hortons Cape Breton Island Owners and funds raised during the Tim Hortons Smile Cookie Campaign.

Located in the main programming room **and the** multipurpose/board room at Autism Nova Scotia – Cape Breton centre, these vibrant new Smilezones are designed to ease anxiety and provide inclusive, sensory-friendly environments for children and youth on the autism spectrum and their families.

“Creating safe and joyful spaces where children can thrive is at the heart of what we do,” said Scott Bachly, Co-Founder, Smilezone Foundation. “Thanks to the incredible support from Tim Hortons Cape Breton Island Owners, these new Smilezones will make a real difference in the lives of local families.”

These Smilezones are equipped with colourful murals, sensory development tools, and interactive technology—transforming ordinary rooms into therapeutic spaces that promote comfort, creativity, and connection.

“These beautiful new Smilezones are more than just bright and welcoming areas—they are safe spaces where children and families feel seen, supported, and celebrated,” said Amanda Alexander, Executive Director of Autism Nova Scotia. “Thanks to the incredible generosity of local Tim Hortons Cape Breton Island Owners and the Smile Cookie community, these spaces will have a lasting impact on the well-being and inclusion of Autistic individuals and families who visit our Sydney office.”

The Tim Hortons Smile Cookie campaign has played a transformative role in funding Smilezone spaces across Canada, bringing comfort and joy to thousands of children in healthcare and community settings. Through the collective generosity of Tim Hortons restaurant owners and their customers, funds raised during Smile Cookie week have helped build engaging, therapeutic environments including Halifax, NS, Brandon, MB and Cambridge, ON. These Smilezones—designed with vibrant murals, sensory tools, and accessible technology—help reduce stress, support developmental needs, and foster inclusive, welcoming spaces where children and families feel safe and supported during often challenging times.

ABOUT SMILEZONE FOUNDATION:

Smilezone Foundation is a registered charity in Oakville, Ontario committed to improving the lives of children receiving medical treatment at health facilities across Canada. In 2012 founders Adam Graves and Scott Bachly were approached to make a financial contribution to the construction of a local hospital. Through partnerships with hospitals, community centers, and other organizations, Smilezone creates accessible, fun, and therapeutic environments where children can heal and thrive. Smilezone has transformed 450 spaces into Smilezones across Canada, benefiting over 96 communities and reaching hundreds of thousands of children, parents, health care workers and families. For more information, visit www.smilezone.com.

ABOUT AUTISM NOVA SCOTIA:

Autism Nova Scotia is a non-profit community-based organization that builds understanding, acceptance, and inclusion for Autistics/individuals on the autism spectrum and their families through leadership, advocacy, education, training, and programming across the lifespan. Autism Nova Scotia was founded in 2002 by Joan and Jack Craig, parents of an Autistic adult son. Autism Nova Scotia delivers programming in Halifax and across Nova Scotia through our eight Regional Autism Centres. Our programs and services include Social & Community Inclusion; Mental Health & Wellness; Post Secondary & Employment Support; Strategic Engagement; and Family & Caregiver Support. For more information, visit www.autismnovascotia.ca.

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