



**2016 Lakes Region  
& Statewide Winner  
Champion for Children  
Leslie Dion**

Leslie “Les” Dion is an integral part of the Newfound Area. She has been the director of the Tapply Thompson Community Center (TTCC)

for the past 20 years and sits on just about every board or committee that exists in the area that involves children and youth, including the Newfound Area School Board, Communities for Drug and Alcohol Free Youth (CADY), Stand Up Newfound drug free task force, and many others.

Les also contributes to the Newfound Area School District’s 21st Century Learning Grant, which provides afterschool opportunities for students, such as teen nights, special events, and activities that provide children with a safe and nurturing environment when otherwise they may be out on the streets or home alone. Through the grant, Les organizes the annual Westward Bound trip in which she brings 12 eighth graders to one of the country’s national parks. The students selected are those who would otherwise not have the chance to travel and who have the potential for leadership. The trip serves to build confidence, self-determination, and long-lasting relationships. Westward Bound alumni thrive as incoming freshman, going on to become class presidents, club and sports leaders, and scholars.

As Stacy Buckley, superintendent of SAU #4, says, “There are few things that occur in the Newfound Area with children that Les has not had a direct impact on initiating, supporting, organizing, and participating in with gusto!” Paul Hoiriis, principal of Newfound Area High School, agrees stating, “Les is easily the school’s closest and most reliable community partner. Her empathy and advocacy for students has helped the youth in our community persevere and strive. She is a lifeline for students.”

Daniel MacLean, TTCC assistant director of recreation, puts it simply, “Les is an amazing woman and deserves all the recognition and praise for what she has done and continues to do!”