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The Daybreak calendar of activities is always full and varied. Every month we try to attend at least one play or concert.

On Saturday, January 31, Daybreak attended the stage musical “Beauty and the Beast” at Convocation Hall, Mount Allison University. A member reflects, “I have been to many plays, but this was one of the best. On a scale of 1-10 I would say it’s an 11.”

The play opens with a village in France. Belle, who lives in the village, is pretty and loves reading. There is a playboy in the village named Gaston. The young ladies in the village are all infatuated with him and fall all over themselves whenever he is around. During the show, one of our members observed, “Uh oh, he’s a player.” Although Gaston clearly plays the field, he has his sights set on having Belle as his wife. And so the tale begins.

Daybreak members had nothing but raves for the performance. All agree that the costumes in Garnet and Gold’s Beauty and the Beast were superb as were the sets, singing, dancing and acting.

Of course, the moral of the story, Beauty and the Beast, is that beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. It is not the outside appearance that matters, but what is inside, in our thoughts and in our hearts. A lot of us at Daybreak feel that this is true for us. Society, through social institutions like schools, government and churches, has decided what is “normal”, including what is beautiful. Often people with lived experience of mental illness don’t fit into preconceived notions of beauty, behaviour or even ways of spending our time. This can be hard for people who do fit into the “norms” of our society to understand. We understand this and we understand each other. That is why we say we are so much better when we are together.

Studies have shown a correlation between engagement with the arts and well-being.

The Arts and Individual Well-Being in Canada, the 39th report in the Statistical Insights on the Arts series found that six cultural activities contribute to well-being, including mental health:

- Art gallery visits are associated with better health and higher volunteer rates.
- Theatre attendance is associated with better health, volunteering, and strong satisfaction with life.
- Classical music attendance is associated with higher volunteer rates and strong satisfaction with life.
- Pop music attendance is associated with better health, volunteering, and strong satisfaction with life.
- Attendance at cultural festivals is associated with better health, volunteering, and strong satisfaction with life.
- Reading books is associated with better health, volunteering, and strong satisfaction with life.

<http://www.hillstrategies.com/content/arts-and-individual-well-being-canada>

Daybreak members enjoy being part of events in our community of Sackville, New Brunswick and are thankful that organizations like Garnet and Gold Society and Mount Allison Performing Arts are so welcoming of us at their performances and events.