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Brooklyn Knowlan got her face painted by Emily Campbell at the Mardis Gras party on Wednesday evening.

PHOTO: CLIVE MCKENZIE / TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL.

## Mardi Gras inspires mental health awareness

The Saint John-style festivities were complete with rain and fog

**CLIVE MCKENZIE**  
TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

**SAINT JOHN** • A colourful crowd gathered for an outdoor Mardi Gras event amidst the fog and rain on Prince William Street Wednesday evening.

The Bourbon Quarter hosted the festivities in partnership with MindCare New Brunswick.

"Only in Saint John could you pull off a rainy Mardi Gras," said east side resident Megan Wu as she passed by.

Traditional New Orleans inspired music, food and decor livened the area all in an effort to raise community awareness for mental illness.

The city of Saint John allowed for the closure of a portion of Prince William Street from traffic which, according to Bourbon Quarter owner

Shawn Verner, is something the city has wanted to do for a long time.

"It wasn't hard to pull off, the city has been great. From the council to the fire marshal to the police department, they were all very supportive," he said. "It was actually less than a month in the making."

A special Mardi Gras menu from the Bourbon Quarter was offered alongside their regular menu. It featured dishes such as bourbon glazed pork loin and chicken sausage gumbo.

"The band is from New Orleans," said Verner.

"And the Bourbon Quarter is southern inspired, so it all just came together."

Sweet Crude is the band they played for a portion of the evening. The southern Louisiana group made a special stop in Saint John on their summer tour.

The band was sheltered from rainy weather with a large tent that was set up on the patio but once the weather changed from a drizzle to a downpour,

they decided to take a break.

Tents were set up all along the block offering balloon animals, face painting and jewelry to festival patrons. And Prince William Street businesses were sampling chocolates and other goods to those in attendance.

"We're inspired and very grateful for the many community-minded people who support mental health in our region, not only in their day jobs, but also through volunteering their time and talents to raise much-needed funds," said Jeff McAloon, President and CEO of the Saint John Regional Hospital Foundation.

"Each year, our MindCare Committee approves grants for mental health research, education, transformational projects and therapeutic programs from across New Brunswick. Money raised at Mardi Gras for MindCare will have a direct and positive impact on our community."

Picaroons Traditional Ales, Bell Aliant and the Bourbon quarter all sponsored the event.