

WORKING TOGETHER

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A MAGAZINE OF THE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION SPRING 2023

# URBAN STABLE

UNBRIDLING YOUTH POTENTIAL

THE  
WINNIPEG  
FOUNDATION



Your Community Foundation  
For Good. Forever.

WORKING TOGETHER | A MAGAZINE OF THE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION | SPRING 2023







Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society (CPAWS) Manitoba Chapter partners with the Manitoba Paddling Association to host Paddle Night, which is a great way to connect to nature without leaving the city, and to see Winnipeg from a completely new perspective.

*Credit: Riley Chervinski, CPAWS Manitoba.*



# A WINNIPEG WHERE COMMUNITY LIFE FLOURISHES FOR ALL

The Winnipeg Foundation is **For Good. Forever.**

We help people give back to our shared community by connecting generous donors with causes they care about **For Good.** We are an endowment-based public foundation, so gifts are pooled and invested and the annual earnings are granted back to the community **Forever.**

We strive to be a catalyst for strengthening community well-being, now and for future generations, by promoting philanthropy, creating partnerships, and supporting diverse charitable organizations. Formed in 1921, we are proud to be the first community foundation in Canada.

We are committed to working with everyone in our community toward a shared goal of truth and reconciliation. A copy of the Philanthropic Community's Declaration of Action was signed in 2015 by The Foundation and helps guide our strategic direction. In 2020, we became a signatory of the City of Winnipeg's Indigenous Accord.

**The Winnipeg Foundation is located on Treaty 1 Territory the original lands of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene Peoples, and the homeland of the Red River Métis.**

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## WORKING TOGETHER

A MAGAZINE OF THE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION **SPRING 2023**

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*On the cover: Urban Stable program participant and instructor at Stonehurst Stables.*





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MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

# WORKING TOGETHER TO CARE FOR COMMUNITY

**T**his latest issue of *Working Together* magazine is focused on understanding and celebrating how individuals and organizations working to care for our community are facing today's challenges head-on and changing lives for the better.

We are pleased to share inspiring stories of remarkable resilience and compassion, exemplifying how our dedicated charitable sector is serving Winnipeggers who face countless barriers, and to building a city where community life can flourish for all. Their dedication to positive change and collective well-being are further proof of what we already know; Manitobans are the most generous in the country – with their time, talent, and resources.

The Vital Signs® 2022 report, released earlier this year, informs our work, and in this issue of The Foundation's magazine, we delve deeper into Vital Signs® key findings; exploring how the committed charities in our community are stepping up to meet unprecedented levels of addiction, hunger, homelessness, and mental health issues.

The challenges presented in Vital Signs® are not new, but the last several years have been turbulent, creating uncertainty while exacerbating long-standing issues and taking a marked toll on the charitable sector and those they serve. We are entering a phase of recovery, and through extensive community engagement have developed a strategic plan that will help us support the community today, while adapting to meet the future.

We recognize that a system-wide effort is needed to help improve the lives of Winnipeggers. The Winnipeg Foundation's new Strategic Plan (2023-2026), developed to help our city get back on its feet, draws on what we learned from Vital Signs® 2022. The new plan is directional and speaks to how we intend to grow past granting and create additional tools to help meet the needs of our community, while continuing to support all areas of our city's charitable sector through responsive granting programs.

It is a time of change, realignment, and dreaming big for our city. From issues in our own back yard such as diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, to mental health, climate change, and our collective journey on the path to truth and reconciliation, your community foundation is committed and determined to help Winnipeg on its rebuilding journey.

**For Good. Forever.**

**Tom Bryk,**  
Board Chair



WINNIPEG'S

# VitalSigns® 2022

A PROJECT OF THE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION



Vital Signs® 2022, a research project of The Winnipeg Foundation, is based on conversations held at a time when our community was struggling to recover from the pandemic. Researchers connected with more than 1,200 diverse Winnipeggers to produce a report covering a range of local issues from housing affordability to the cost of daycare to environmental concerns.

**The Key Findings from Vital Signs® 2022 identify widespread, interconnected barriers to individual and community well-being.**



Winnipeggers from across the city reported struggling to feel a **sense of belonging**, which is considered a basic human need, with certain demographics being far more isolated than others.



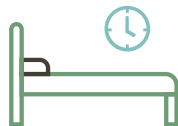
**Mental health** is among the five top illness categories in terms of physician, drug, and facility costs in Manitoba. Nearly half of all Winnipeggers reported struggling with their mental health in 2022.



When people believe that a safety net exists it creates a kinder society and enhanced trust in elected officials and government systems. Certain groups of Winnipeggers have more **confidence in institutions** than others, but in general we lack trust in all three levels of government.



**Hunger** is indicative of poor health, chronic illness, depression, and a lack of emotional and practical support. Since 2019, the number of food hampers distributed to Winnipeg households has doubled, with many new foodbank clients being fully employed and facing hunger for the first time.



In 2021, twice as many drug-related deaths were reported in Winnipeg than in previous years, making clear that **addiction and the opioid crisis** require immediate attention; the average wait time for in-patient addictions treatment for men in Winnipeg is more than one month, and for women is more than four months.



The experience of **homelessness** often occurs at transition points in people's lives – being released from institutions, aging out of Manitoba's child welfare system, family breakdown – and our social safety net is not coordinated to aid in those transitions. More than 1,200 Winnipeggers experienced homelessness in 2022.



**Scan the QR code and view the full report at [wpgfdn.org/VitalSigns2022](http://wpgfdn.org/VitalSigns2022)**



# OUR COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

## MESSAGE FROM SKY BRIDGES, CEO

Earlier this year, The Foundation released its latest Vital Signs® report, along with its new Strategic Plan; *A Community of Well-Being*. Vital Signs® is a 'snapshot in time' project that includes quantitative and qualitative research, looking at our community through the lens of well-being.

The research has told us that we have much to celebrate as a community, however the six key findings in the Vital Signs® report are reflective of the ongoing challenges needing our attention and support. Several of the stories in this issue of *Working Together* dive more deeply into these areas, with stories of resilience and stories of hope.

With the launch of both documents, The Winnipeg Foundation is committed to further meetings with charities and donors from across all cause areas. As a 360-degree grant-maker, The Foundation supports all areas of our community. This is core to our mission, and we will continue to support across the sector to achieve a community of well-being for all.

Our first Vital Conversation was held with charitable organizations in late April. More than 60 agencies were able to join us for a morning of reflection on the COVID-19 pandemic residues in the sector and spending some time 'dreaming big' with us about how we can make Winnipeg the best it can be. We learned a lot from our community partners and are so grateful they were able to share their time and expertise with us.

They provided us insight on support required to continue their 'recovery' as an organization from the pandemic, what their aspirations are to adapt to their changing roles in the community, and how we can work together to achieve these goals. Charities are still feeling the lasting effects of the pandemic – in staff burnout and shortages, in the lack of resources

to adapt to necessary changes, and the instability being felt across the sector, due to lack of long-term funding. Below are two quotes I would like to share with you.

"We appreciate the check-ins from The Winnipeg Foundation staff, as they get to know us and understand the work that we do," one agency said.

"It is important to invest in organizations, not just projects," another added at the discussion.

Agencies wanted us to hear how they are currently doing, and how they could do better. The knowledge and insights shared through the conversations will help The Winnipeg Foundation better implement its new Strategic Plan and help us focus within our community, where our support is needed most.

There are more discussions planned with donors, other funding partners and the community at large in the months ahead. We hope you will be able to join us for one of these conversations, as we continue our work together to create "a Winnipeg where community life flourishes for all".



# THE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION HAS A NEW STRATEGIC PLAN (2023-2026)

The Winnipeg Foundation's new Strategic Plan (2023-2026) outlines how we intend to grow past granting to support the changing needs of our community. As a 360-degree grant-maker, The Foundation will continue to support all areas of our city's needs through its responsive grant programs. This includes all cause areas in our city's vibrant charitable sector; from children, youth, and families to arts, culture, and heritage, environment and animal welfare, health, wellness, and recreation, to literacy education, and employment. All charities play a vital role in our community and are instrumental in our quality of life.

## THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE NEW STRATEGIC PLAN THAT WILL LEAD OUR WORK AND FOCUS ARE:



### COMMUNITY IMPACT:

The Community Impact Pillar of The Winnipeg Foundation's Strategic Plan addresses critical issues that have been identified by our community and the Vital Signs® 2022 report. The Foundation has heard that increasing equity in the philanthropic sector and providing additional support to Vital Signs key findings, such as homelessness, hunger, and addiction, are urgent priorities.



### COMMUNITY GENEROSITY:

The Community Generosity Pillar supports the continued generosity of Manitobans through connecting donors and community. Growing unrestricted funds, such as our Community Fund, increasing diversity within our donor base, and championing generosity throughout the province will help solve our most urgent and long-term priorities.



### COMMUNITY ENDOWMENTS:

The Community Endowments Pillar reflects emerging donor goals and enhances our ability to respond to immediate community priorities. Encouraging gifts that support urgent need, as well as exploring access to capital in support of community priorities, will allow us to address critical issues with flexibility and agility.



### COMMUNITY CHAMPION:

The Community Champion Pillar of The Winnipeg Foundation's Strategic Plan focuses on two key priorities; improving the well-being of people living within the Community Area for Revitalization and Equity (C.A.R.E.) and reducing the number of children engaged in Manitoba's child welfare system, along with supporting better outcomes for youth aging out of the system.

You will see these pillars appear within select stories throughout this magazine. The pillars are a quick reference point, connecting the story you've just read to The Foundation's Strategic Plan priorities. We are accountable to our community and committed to ensuring you are kept informed about and engaged in our work. Linking stories to the plan – *A Community of Well-being* – is one way we will share our goals and the impact of our new trajectory.



# RESCUING FOOD – THE LEFTOVERS FOUNDATION

Preventing waste, combatting hunger, and saving the environment

**T**he Leftovers Foundation reduces waste by directing edible food that would otherwise end up in a landfill, to agencies who fight hunger.

The tech-enabled food charity originated in Alberta and arrived in Winnipeg during the COVID-19 pandemic. “We found ourselves necessary in that COVID landscape. With the closures and the isolation, everyone had to pivot. We were responsive to a lot of what happened through COVID. We’re solution based. Our job is to take care of the logistics of point A to point B,” says Leftovers Winnipeg Lead Coordinator, Julia Kraemer

Using the Rescue Food App, Leftovers connects food donors like grocers, restaurants, and caterers to volunteers who pick up unsellable but still edible food, delivering the donations to one of more than 100 agencies, including family resource centres, neighbourhood associations, and sober living houses.

The Leftovers Foundation began with the goal of combatting food waste. It believes throwing away food is an unnecessary business expense and is detrimental to the environment; the ability to donate to feed people in need has an impact on both the business’ bottom line, and is meaningful to donors, volunteers, and agencies.

Fighting hunger and diverting food waste from the landfill situates the Leftovers Foundation as both a social action and climate action organization. “We are striving for a Winnipeg without hunger, but we’re also in the climate space, a big impact of our program is the reduction in CO2 emissions and greenhouse gas emissions - we interact in each of those worlds,” says Kraemer.

The work of The Leftovers Foundation in food security connects to one of the key findings in Winnipeg’s Vital Signs® 2022 report: an increase in hunger. Food insecurity is an indicator of poor health, chronic illness, depression, and a lack of emotional and practical support. Since 2019, the number of food hampers distributed to Winnipeg households has doubled.

**To read more about The Leftovers Foundation visit [rescuefood.ca](https://rescuefood.ca).**





# FOOD

## MATTERS MB





## Reconnecting to tradition creates a bright future for communities in Northern Manitoba



**S**tories about access to food in Northern communities, or lack thereof, crop up regularly in the news, often accompanied by a photo of a \$12 head of wilted lettuce or \$14 bottle of ketchup. The sticker shock, combined with recognition that these communities may lack infrastructure and economic opportunity, makes clear that a viable solution to food precarity in the North is desperately needed. Enter Food Matters MB, a Winnipeg-based organization working to create sustainable food systems in communities across Northern Manitoba.

Food Matters' Executive Director, Demian Lawrenchuk, a member of Fox Lake Cree Nation, is focused on building capacity for Northern communities to help create and maintain self-sustaining food practices. He says, "the root of the problem is colonization," which has created social isolation and a disconnect from traditional food gathering practices.

An experienced and enthusiastic gardener, Lawrenchuk observes that resources are often used to create gardens and greenhouses in as many communities as possible, a well-intentioned approach that can nevertheless mean "you aren't doing the best to build up strong teams, you are chasing one-time interactions." He explains that embarking on ambitious projects that require learning a whole new set of skills "is a tall order when a lot of people are dealing with the social impacts of colonization - people are emotionally beaten down and have lost hope. When there's no hope, people can't sustain initiatives."

Starting with what people already know is key to reducing hunger and food insecurity, says Lawrenchuk, asserting that "people in the North are world class experts in hunting and fishing and trapping, why not cut to the chase and start with the path of least resistance." Building on the success and knowledge already present in Northern communities creates strong relationships and a renewed sense of purpose, paving the way for future initiatives.

Lawrenchuk underscores the importance of building relationships, saying, "One of the big things with how our communities are structured, we have planes and roads and vehicles, but never have we been so isolated. We are recreating networks across regions, giving opportunities for people from different communities to gather and hunt together." This revival of traditional networking, where nomadic groups would meet and cross paths throughout different seasonal gathering practices, is crucial to both the success of the projects and to individual well-being.

"For communities that lack resources, persevering and reconnecting to culture and tradition is key," says Lawrenchuk. "Despite all these challenges, you have leaders that emerge within communities and navigate their own life stories, are committed to pushing forward for positive change, along with the natural curiosity of the children and youth who want to be part of something."



*Community members of all ages preparing and preserving fish.  
Photos courtesy of Food Matters MB.*

“I’VE ALWAYS BEEN IN THE BUSH, SINCE I WAS A KID, AND I SEE MYSELF DOING IT FOREVER... I’D LIKE TO SEE THESE GUYS BE CONFIDENT GOING OUT ON THE LAND WHEN THEY ARE ADULTS.”

Laurence Saunders, also from Fox Lake Cree Nation, is one such leader. For Saunders, who overcame challenges within his own life, it is all about his community’s youth. He leads a wide variety of Food Matters’ projects, with a focus “on getting kids back into outdoor living, trapping, and camping trips. Trapping is losing ground, that knowledge is dying with the old people.”

In the winter months, Saunders and a group of youth run a 70km trapline 3 days a week, which gives him the opportunity to impart lessons about traditional life and how to stay safe in the bush. In the warmer months, the group goes on canoe and camping trips, learning how to harvest, process, and preserve fish. This spring he is bringing a group up to Churchill to hunt snow geese alongside leaders and youth from other communities; the food they bring back will help sustain their community and provide an opportunity to share processing and preservation methods.

Saunders, who says he’s always learning, laughs as he recalls receiving 300 mixed berry seedlings from Lawrenchuk through Food Matters, despite having no gardening experience. He did his research and planted them in the area surrounding the community, alongside trails and throughout the bush, and looks forward to seeing them bear fruit for the community in the coming years.

The benefits of reconnecting with the land and traditional practices are numerous, and Saunders notes, “the boys aren’t really getting into trouble anymore. I would always talk to them about the consequences of trying to be tough guys - I lived that life, it’s not a good one. I’ve been sober for six years coming up, it’s been good.” After a few seasons of heading into the bush with youth from the community, Saunders says he has seen an uptick in confidence, with kids coming to see him to “borrow canoes, skidoos, trapping supplies - they are taking initiative.”

Saunders says, “there is a lot more interest now,” which means a rise in demand for camping, canoeing, and harvesting equipment. The community, currently using basements and temporary structures to store and process meat and fish, lacks a processing facility with stainless steel tables, refrigeration, hanging racks, and running water. He hopes to someday have access to more and better equipment, which would help the community on the road to being more self-sufficient.

Saunders says, “I’ve always been in the bush, since I was a kid, and I see myself doing it forever... I’d like to see these guys be confident going out on the land when they are adults.”

Food Matters is currently engaged in a research project with the University of Manitoba to better understand the health benefits of accessing traditional food in Northern communities. The comprehensive seven-year study involves researchers periodically collecting and analyzing DNA, urine samples, and other data from community members, and will conclude with a report outlining the project’s findings. Lawrenchuk hopes that having scientific evidence backing up



Smoking fish on an open fire. Photo courtesy of Food Matters MB.

Food Matters’ methodology will create a stronger understanding of the importance of letting community lead.

Lawrenchuk, a big picture thinker, says “food security isn’t just about being able to get a goose or a fish, it’s a good place to start, but in today’s day and age food security is directly related to having the ability to economically participate in society.” He hopes to employ locals to hunt, fish, and trap to provide food for their community, and says he wants to “get to a place where we have big agricultural projects that could start to create more jobs in communities, hit the economic piece of food security.”

Moving closer to goals of self-sufficiency, ending hunger, and creating opportunity in Northern communities starts with reconnecting to tradition, and to each other: “The biggest thing that we are doing now,” says Lawrenchuk, “is building relationships, so people can continue to learn new skills and rediscover how to get food from the land, make it sustainable for generations to come.”

The Winnipeg Foundation recently supported Food Matters MB with grants for two initiatives: *Preserving Knowledges: Exploring Modes of Documenting & Sharing Traditional Food Dehydration Knowledges* and *Letting Community Lead: Building A Framework of Support, Resources, and Mentorship for Community-Driven Food Security Initiatives*.

You can learn more about Food Matters MB at [foodmattersmanitoba.ca](http://foodmattersmanitoba.ca).



The **Community Impact** pillar of The Winnipeg Foundation’s Strategic Plan addresses critical issues that have been identified in our community, including providing additional support to Vital Signs® key findings, such as homelessness, hunger, and addiction.





How Winnipeg's charitable organizations are addressing food security as the cost of groceries continues to rise

## COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS TO HUNGER

**A**n overwhelming number of Winnipeggers currently face food insecurity. Difficulty acquiring nutritious food can manifest as poor health, chronic illness, depression, and/or a lack of practical and emotional support from local community members. Several community-based charitable organizations in the city are working to address food security in their neighbourhoods.

The Chalmers, Elmwood, and Glenelm neighbourhoods are food deserts. With no large grocery stores in the area, residents face significant barriers to obtaining fresh, nutritious food. The Chalmers Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation's (CNRC) Better Access to Groceries (BAG) program has been working to address food insecurity in the area since 2015.

The program, supported through a COVID-19 Grant from The Winnipeg Foundation, has gone through several iterations. It began by delivering "good food boxes" to a limited number of families through the Elmwood Parent Child Coalition, until the cost of doing so became prohibitive. At this point, the CNRC began forming partnerships with other organizations in the area to develop a plan to address food insecurity. The program found its stride when Leilani Esteban-Villarba, Executive Director of CNRC, came across a bulk-buy program through a major grocer.

*Staff and volunteers with the Chalmers Neighbourhood Renewal Better Access to Groceries program fill bags with fresh fruit and vegetables to be delivered to local residents.*

"We started with 10 families, and today we're at about 300," says Esteban-Villarba. "Our first couple of weeks, we were delivering food once a week. It started off with 10 people, grew to 20, and then people heard about it, and it just exploded."

The program is run out of the Chalmers Community Centre, where boxes of fresh, nutritious produce are stacked high on folding tables that line a small room in the Centre on pickup days. Hand printed signs indicate the type of produce and the amount that participants can take home with them. The bulk-buy system allows the BAG program to offer a weekly bag of fresh fruits and vegetables valued at \$20 to \$30 to community members for \$10, while people who live alone can receive a smaller bag for \$5.

The program has a strong presence on social media, where information about what will be included in the next bag, as well as low-cost, healthy recipe ideas are posted. The recipes have been especially helpful for people receiving items in their bag that they may not have cooked with before.

With a central neighbourhood location, the program is easily accessible to residents who would otherwise face transportation barriers to fresh food. Many people in the community who access the BAG program use active or public transportation, but the significant distance to the nearest large grocery store poses a challenge.

"We've got a lot of walkers, people on bikes, people using strollers, so going all the way down to one of the bigger shopping places is a barrier," says Esteban-Villarba. "Or they're using public transportation, and that's a huge barrier for people getting groceries. This program has been a godsend to a lot of people."

The program, which ran nearly uninterrupted throughout the pandemic, has connected residents of the neighbourhood not only with fresh produce, but with each other. Jacquie Pontedeira, a Coordinator with BAG, says a new community has blossomed out of the program: "The community that has been built, even with all the volunteers we have, the camaraderie that has occurred – that has been a big part of it. People who live two streets over from each other who never knew each other before, now they're neighbours."





Across the Red River in Seven Oaks, Gwen Sector Creative Living Centre's Kosher Meals on Wheels program is addressing food insecurity for seniors and those living with mobility or cognitive restrictions. Gwen Sector took over the operation of the program from Meals on Wheels in 2021, when the program began serving free meals to seniors across the city, thanks to several funders.

"During the pandemic, we shifted very quickly to provide meals not just to those who required kosher meals, but to the whole city of Winnipeg," says Becky Chisick, Executive Director of Gwen Sector Creative Living Centre. "We delivered 600 meals weekly to seniors who were isolated in their homes."

The program offers nutritious, balanced meals cooked in Gwen Sector's kitchen. Each meal includes meat, a vegetable, and a starch, and recipients have the option of receiving the food in a foil oven container or in a microwaveable container. Feedback about the program has been overwhelmingly positive.

"It allows participants to be able to eat the foods they enjoy when it would not be something that they would be able to purchase in the store for themselves. People get roast beef, roast chicken, and items that you wouldn't be able to purchase on a fixed income, and that are very hard to make for one person," says Chisick.

Today, demand for the program is still strong. Though the program is no longer free of charge, the amount of people it serves is three times what it was prior to the pandemic. Gwen Sector Creative Living Centre works closely with the provincial government, which helps community members on income assistance access the program.

**Learn more about the CNRC BAG program at [chalmersrenewal.org/bag](https://chalmersrenewal.org/bag), and the Kosher Meals on Wheels program at [gwensector.com/catering](https://gwensector.com/catering).**

## FOOD BANK USAGE



Food bank usage has more than doubled in 3 years. In 2019 there were 6,180 households using food banks in Winnipeg compared to 11,037 households in 2022.

Source: Harvest Manitoba

**"IT ALLOWS PARTICIPANTS TO BE ABLE TO EAT THE FOODS THEY ENJOY WHEN IT WOULD NOT BE SOMETHING THAT THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO PURCHASE IN THE STORE FOR THEMSELVES."**

*BAG program staff and volunteers with bags soon to be filled with nutritious food.*





Shirley Richardson was an incredible citizen and generous Winnipegger. She passed away peacefully on March 11, 2023.

Shirley dreamt that Winnipeg could have a butterfly garden for all to enjoy. As a first step in accomplishing this vision, her family provided funds for a temporary butterfly garden within the Assiniboine Park Zoo. This temporary exhibit was so successful that a permanent butterfly garden was incorporated into the design of the newly opened park attraction, The Leaf; The Shirley Richardson Butterfly Garden carries her name in recognition of her vision and her family's support.

In 2016, Shirley made a founding gift of \$400,000 to the ParkShare Endowment Fund, with the goal that as many Winnipeggers as possible be able to access the park and its programming, including the Butterfly Garden. It was important to her that the attraction bearing her name be accessible to all, without barriers. Shirley's son, Jim Richardson, says, "She was passionate about inclusivity and providing equal access to opportunities and experiences for everyone."

The Assiniboine Park Conservancy's goals for the ParkShare Endowment fund are to provide funding for students with limited access to its diverse, curriculum-linked educational programs, to help newcomers connect with their community and nature through park programs, and to share park experiences with child and senior groups through community outreach.

In 2018, Shirley said, "As long-time users and supporters of Assiniboine Park, it brings our family great pleasure to be able to ensure that the Park and Zoo remain accessi-

ble to the community for many years to come. We have strongly believed in the importance of connecting with nature and the outdoors, and this important initiative will help continue to allow people of all ages to do just that."

In addition to her work with The Assiniboine Park Conservancy, Shirley was a devoted arts champion, supporting Manitoba's visual and performing groups as a season ticket subscriber, and advancing their profile by serving on committees. She was a generous supporter of the Manitoba Theatre Centre, the Winnipeg Symphony, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers, and the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Shirley also supported local Craft Guilds, donating high quality material and thread to Manitoba quilters for their beautiful hand-stitched quilts. In later years, she became a lead sponsor of the new Winnipeg C2 Centre for Crafts.

The breadth and depth of Shirley's volunteerism, philanthropy, and generosity led her to be honoured as a recipient of the Order of Manitoba in 2022.



Shirley Richardson with a rendering of the Butterfly Garden during the planning phase for The Leaf. Photo courtesy of Assiniboine Park Conservancy.

A LIFE OF PROFOUND AND MEANINGFUL  
GENEROSITY







# URBAN STABLE UNBRIDLES POTENTIAL



# Horses lead the way to healing and growth

**U**rban Stable, established in 2001, has served more than 700 youth during the past 22 years. The organization's mission is focused on empowering youth to engage in education and community, with participants finding healing and personal success through hands-on learning experiences with horses.

Instructors at Urban Stable help youth, facing a range of challenges, discover and develop personal life skills such as teamwork, communication, self-awareness, and self-regulation. These learning experiences are generated by working hands-on with horses. Students learn how to take care of grooming, cleaning hooves, and saddling horses, as well as how to lead and ride. Urban Stable's instructors are certified (or in the process of attaining certification) through the Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association (CANTRA), however the best instructors are the horses themselves.

"Horses are brilliant teachers," says Hayley Edwards, Executive Director of Urban Stable, "Being a prey animal, they're highly aware of their surroundings and mirror whatever emotional behavior students are presenting." Some students come to the program with anxiety and depression, are struggling with trauma or grief, or have a difficult home life. Edwards says they strive to provide a safe and accepting space where students can grow in a supportive environment.

Edwards started with Urban Stable as a volunteer in 2014. Throughout her tenure, she occupied numerous different positions in the organization before becoming Executive Director. Taking the reins during the peak of the pandemic in 2021, Edwards guided the organization through a big move and a significant decline in participation. Prior to the pandemic, Urban Stable served nearly 70 youth, including its summer program. In 2022, Urban Stable had 24 students. They currently serve 32 and hope participation will again increase this summer.

"Horses are also herd animals and like to be in relationships with students, helping them learn to create healthy friendships and create healthy boundaries," says Edwards.

Whether a student is struggling with social or emotional behavior, neurological challenges, or learning difficulties, is a newcomer or in foster care, all are welcome. To enter the program, students are typically referred by their school or community group.

Urban Stable's main youth programming serves Winnipeg and the surrounding area, working with school divisions such as Red River Valley, Seine River, Pembina Trails, and the Interlake. They also partner with organizations like DASCH and St. Amant. Urban Stable provides team-building workshops for organizations that focus on experiential activities with horses. New programming, including barn tours and accessible unmounted programs, which allow participants not ready or able to ride still interact with the horses, were launched recently.



Now operating out of Stonehurst Stables outside their original catchment area, Edwards continues to work on building new connections and relationships in the Stone-wall area.

"I would really love to get back to our strategic plan for growth and get back to having full days of programming," says Edwards. "Just really building our foundation more, having more certified instructors, helping more students, and growing all areas."

There are multiple ways to support the sustainability of Urban Stable. Those with horse experience can volunteer as a handler, others may volunteer at fundraising events, join a fundraising committee or the Board of Directors, be a corporate sponsor, or donate to Urban Stable through The Winnipeg Foundation.

**Learn more about Urban Stable online at [urbanstable.ca](https://urbanstable.ca) and find them on Facebook and Instagram.**

*Urban Stable participants and instructors move through a series of exercises and activities at Stonehurst Stables.*

# FIVE MAIN BENEFITS

## OF EXPERIENTIAL RIDING

### PHYSICAL

Riding can contribute to improved balance, coordination, and posture. It can also increase motor control, muscle strength, and flexibility, and challenge a student's overall endurance, coordination, and reflexes.



### EDUCATIONAL

Riding can enhance verbal and non-verbal communication skills including word recognition, speech vocalization, and articulation. By working in a stable setting, students gain a better grasp of following instructions and categorizing information, improve cognitive skills, and learn how to conceptualize everyday occurrences on a larger, lifelong scale.





## BEHAVIORAL

A student's self-esteem and sense of responsibility increases while they master the many skills of horsemanship and riding, and the experience allows them to be involved in both group and independent activities.



## PSYCHOLOGICAL

Riding and overall horsemanship also has a profound psychological effect on developing minds. Students often feel more motivated, patient, joyful, and courageous. Students may also experience a sense of "normalcy" while in the program, gain a greater sense of emotional control, and develop an increased interest in their surroundings.



## SOCIAL

Riding programs facilitate social well-being for participants, encourage them to develop new friendships, and help create understanding that taking part in physical activity can be a positive experience.



The **Community Impact** pillar of The Winnipeg Foundation's Strategic Plan addresses critical issues that have been identified in our community, including providing additional support to Vital Signs® key findings, such as homelessness, hunger, and addiction.



## Nature Club helps thousands of Winnipeggers explore the great outdoors

# URBAN NATURE CONNECTIONS

Spending time in nature has been proven to increase happiness, reduce stress levels, improve mental health, and encourage better sleep. But in an urban area like Winnipeg, how can people connect with nature to reap the benefits?

According to Mira Oberman, self-proclaimed nature fanatic and Communications Director with Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) Manitoba chapter, it's easier than you might think. Winnipeg is dotted with expansive parks, treed trails, and river views, and Nature Club, a CPAWS program born out of a mission to help people connect with nature and each other safely during the COVID-19 pandemic, aims to help Winnipeggers get in touch with the natural world in their own backyard while building a community of like-minded people.

CPAWS' core objective is to protect nature for future generations of people and wildlife. The organization is currently working to protect 30 per cent of Manitoba by 2030, with a goal of eventually protecting half the province. In addition to protecting natural habitat and helping to ensure green space exists for future generations, the organization also strives to connect Manitobans with nature.

Nature Club, which The Winnipeg Foundation supported through its One-Time Community Grants program, began with a series of pandemic-friendly webinars in late 2020. It blossomed into an in-person club when restrictions were loosened in 2021, allowing members to try their hand at a variety of outdoor activities designed to be all-inclusive.

"We wanted to design a program to help people who might not necessarily be comfortable getting out and doing this on their own, to find a way to get out and connect with nature in a really easy, simple, safe way," says Oberman.

The club, which is open to all, provides free and low-cost opportunities to try hiking, paddling, yoga, and spending time in the forest. There are also opportunities to learn new skills, gain confidence exploring the wilderness, and learn about the province's flora and fauna. In the summer, group hikes are held every other week, while the winter provides an opportunity for members to go out once a month.

Since its launch, the club has seen 15,000 people – ranging from parents with small children, to seniors, to friends meeting up for an outdoor adventure – register for webinars and activities. Oberman emphasizes that connecting to nature doesn't need to be an all-day activity.

"You can spend an hour and a half in Assiniboine Forest going for a walk, and then getting off to hockey lessons or whatever you're doing that day," she says. "We show people places they can get to in an easy, half-day trip. We show them the benefits of getting out into nature, have them meet new people, have some conversations, connect to nature, and have a good day."

*Biologist John Morgan leads an in-depth tour of remnant prairie grass along the Headingley Grand Trunk Trail in September 2022. Credit: Riley Chervinski, CPAWS Manitoba.*





# WOMEN IN RECOVERY

Women wait an average of four months  
for addictions treatment in Manitoba

**T**he first time Mandipa Sy had a drink, she knew it was her favourite thing in the world. Just months shy of her eighteenth birthday, alcohol erased pervasive feelings of anxiety and depression, bolstered her confidence, and helped her fit in with peers.

Growing up as a Black Muslim girl in Winnipeg in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Sy experienced bullying and racism throughout her teenage years: “Because of who I am and the life I’ve had, I always felt like I couldn’t connect or relate to other people. I’ve always felt like an outsider.”



Mandipa Sy

When Sy left an abusive relationship in her early twenties, her drinking became more serious. She appeared functional, holding a nine to five job while helping her parents around the house, but was hiding her addiction, drinking alone in her bedroom at the end of each night. In February 2020, she attempted to end her life.

While she was hospitalized, Sy says “my mother cleaned out my bedroom and found all my bottles that had accumulated... she saw the truth for real.” Sy is grateful when recalling how her mother reached out for advice and treatment options to a family friend who had who had gone through treatment a few years prior. Sy was accepted into a 28-day treatment program in March 2020, one week before the first COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. After completing this initial period in treatment, she followed in the footsteps of her family friend, moving into Esther House to live alongside four other women in recovery.

Resources and support for women continuing their recovery are essential to creating a stable, healthy life filled with purpose. Due to a shortage of treatment spaces, women wait about 119 days for treatment, compared to a 44-day wait time for men. Women typically receive less support from their family or spouse than their male counterparts when it comes to entering treatment and continuing recovery.

Esther House provides a solid structure for women in recovery, explains Brenda Evans, a long-time board member. The house has two staff, one full-time position, and a part-time position supported through an Adapt Grant from The Winnipeg Foundation. Staff meet with residents daily to check in, provide guidance and feedback, and help residents develop skills that benefit their recovery.

Women staying at the house are bound to house rules, must not use drugs or alcohol, and must actively take part in an addiction recovery program. The house offers several benefits to women who choose to stay there, one of which is the community they build.

Because Sy began her stay at Esther House during the pandemic, she was part of the longest continuous cohort in Esther House history. Sy explains that her cohort was “really connected. Some of us formed friendships, others not friendship necessarily, but an almost familial bond.” During her time at Esther House, Sy focused on sobriety, rebuilding her life, and forming relationships, and began volunteering and attending Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings twice a day.

In addition to meetings, there are several other programs in Winnipeg that help women maintain their sobriety and stay connected to a recovery community. Vanessa Mernett is a rehabilitation counsellor in the Women’s Continuing Recovery Program at St. Raphael Wellness Centre (SRWC). The program, supported through Adapt and Community Building Grants from The



Source: Addictions Foundation of Manitoba  
(May 2022)





Winnipeg Foundation, empowers women who have completed a 28-day treatment program to reconnect with life, remain sober, and achieve their goals.

“A LOT OF WHAT WE TALK ABOUT IS BOUNDARIES,” SAYS MERNETT. “BEING ASSERTIVE AS WOMEN, LEARNING HOW TO BE EMPOWERED – IF YOU DON’T FEEL LIKE YOU DESERVE SOBRIETY OR FEEL LIKE YOU’RE WORTH IT, YOU’RE PROBABLY NOT GOING TO STAY SOBER.”

Women in the program participate in discussions about triggers, cravings, relapse prevention, and self-care. The program also offers women the opportunity to try new activities, celebrate their successes, and be part of a community. Mernett says, “We know that women need connection in terms of recovery, and a lot of them don’t have that from their families, a lot of their friends are no longer in the picture because they’re not using anymore. To be able to be part of this program that facilitates growth and support is incredible.”

Success in the program beyond continued recovery looks different for each woman, and experiences include developing friendships, being granted parole, and having their CFS files closed after being reunited with their children.

Colleen Allen, Executive Director of SRWC, explains “One of the problems [that comes with addiction] is you have short-term memory issues. Participants may have tried to go back to school but haven’t been able to concentrate. Now, further into their recovery, they’re thinking about going back to school, getting a job... having the confidence to say, ‘I can do this.’” Allen emphasizes that for participants to be successful in recovery, there must be joy.

Sy says her recovery has been the most joyful time in her life. She now works as a crisis and addictions counsellor, lives in her own apartment, and is studying sociology with a minor in psychology at the University of Manitoba.

“I work in mental health now, and that’s something I’ve wanted to do for a long time. I had to get sober for it to finally happen for me,” says Sy. “For the first time, I’m succeeding, attending classes – it’s amazing. I just finished my first year of university.”

**Learn more about Esther House at [estherhousewinnipeg.ca](http://estherhousewinnipeg.ca), and St. Raphael Wellness Centre at [srwc-mb.ca](http://srwc-mb.ca).**

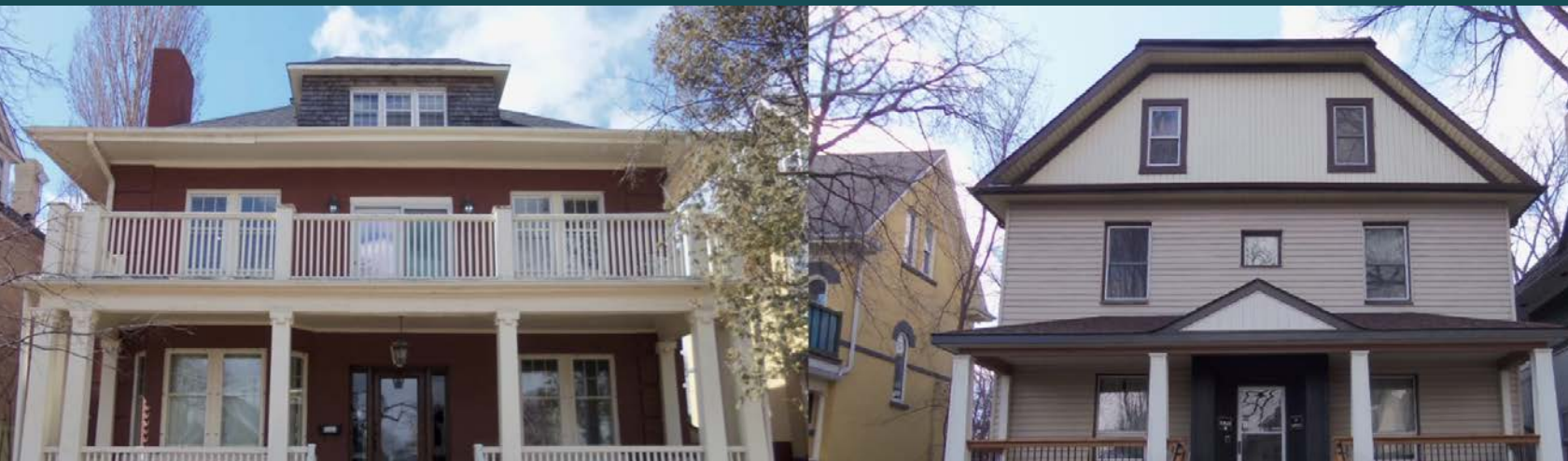
## Anonymous donors quietly make an impact

*In 2004, Esther House board members learned that an anonymous donor had gifted the organization \$22,000 through The Winnipeg Foundation. Prior to receiving the gift, Esther House board members frequently wondered how the house would continue its work with the precarious level of funding they operated with.*

*Brenda Evans, Board Treasurer for Esther House, explains that news of the gift, which came out of the blue, was a happy surprise and a relief. The organization worked with The Winnipeg Foundation’s Donor Engagement team to set up an endowment fund. Seeded with the anonymous gift, the fund was created to provide stable, ongoing operational support for the house.*

*Today, the Esther House endowment fund has a contributed value of about \$318,000, which has made an enormous difference in the ease of operating the house.*

# A WAY TO HEAL



## TAMARACK RECOVERY CENTRE PROVIDES THE STRUCTURE FOR CLIENTS TO RECONNECT AND RECOVER SAFELY

**D**uring the last four decades, Tamarack Recovery Centre has honed an approach for treating addiction and created a recovery structure with a high success rate.

Tamarack has served our community for nearly 50 years, offering trauma-informed treatment and support for alcohol and drug addiction, and helping individuals make lasting change in their lives. Lisa Cowan, Tamarack's Executive Director, says, "Whether it's making new connections or reconnecting to family, culture, traditions, or community, it's all about providing the invisible structure of support, that *scaffolding* so someone can find their place and their purpose."

Reconnecting with one's community is a crucial aspect of recovery and sobriety. Tamarack is a conduit through which reconnection can be made, with the "safety-scaffolding," evidence-based treatment, and expertise to guide clients through the recovery process. Every case is unique; therefore, every treatment plan must also be unique.

"We are adapting to meet the very specific needs of individuals at whatever level they're at, in terms of their recovery journey," says Cowan.

The Manitoba Centre for Health Policy reports that in 2019-2020, there were 6,606 admissions to addiction treatment services in Winnipeg, and the average length of stay in treatment was 38 days. Tamarack's residential treatment program is 60 days, with the extended programming, aftercare, and transitional housing creating time and space for individuals to reintegrate into society at a pace that works for them.

"With the advantage of having a longer program, being able to go deeper, we really are encouraging people to start to identify some of the earlier traumas," says Cowan. "Some of the things that impacted them, that led them to use substances to cope."

Tamarack's trauma-informed approach provides guidance, service, and a structure that leads to better outcomes across the board, with 92% of the program's graduates continuing to access resources for ongoing support. The Centre's staff-to-client ratio of 1:4 allows for individualized attention and support during the recovery process. The organization is held in high regard, and 75% of Tamarack's clients say they chose the program because it was recommended by someone they trust.

"Safety completely underpins everything we do. It allows us to offer a very welcoming environment where people who come to us hopefully very quickly feel like they can trust us and keep coming back to work with us without judgment."

There are no magic bullets for recovery or treatment, but Cowan and her team at Tamarack are working to provide solutions that are evidence-based and client-driven, while supporting and contributing to the West-Broadway Neighbourhood. "Responsibility can allow you to feel like you are a part of something and you're contributing," says Cowan. "You're not just receiving, because nobody wants to feel disempowered; it's all about empowering people."





All photos courtesy of  
Stationpoint Photographic.

# AMOOWIGAMIG: MORE THAN A WASHROOM

NEW FOUR-YEAR FUNDING SECURED  
FOR THE FACILITY

**A**moowigamig provides dignity and equity to a community that lives and gathers downtown. At its core, the facility provides essential amenities such as toilets, handwashing stations, and clean drinking water to those with few or no alternatives.

“It means everything to them. It’s a safe, secure place that they can come and just use the washroom, which is something a lot of people take for granted,” says Jacob Kaufman, Amoowigamig’s team lead.



Since opening its doors last June, more than 25,000 people have visited Amoowigamig, which means public washroom in Ojibwe. “Being a washroom is a small part of what we do here, we have harm reduction supplies, so needles, crack pipes, condoms, lube, hygiene products, pads, tampons, things like that,” Kaufman says.



Harm reduction is an essential aspect of what Amoowigamig offers community. The facility is staffed with peer support workers who provide access to life saving supplies, such as naloxone, clean drug paraphernalia, and safer sex supplies, and who connect people with community and agency resources. Throughout initial community consultations, on-site staffing was recognized as critical to the project's success and the overall safety of facility users and the building itself.

Melissa Stone, a project coordinator for As-tum Api Niikinaahk and Amoowigamig, says the “peer support workers have been unsheltered at some point in their life. They get it - relationships are easily built with community and community really likes them.”

“I grew up homeless. I grew up in Vancouver. So, when they started handing out essentials like needles and crack pipes, we saw a massive decrease in the rate of HIV, hepatitis, and AIDS on Hastings Street,” Kaufman says. “A common misconception about harm reduction is that it enables people to use drugs, but the truth is that it

enables them to use drugs safely. This [Amoowigamig] is in no way, shape, or form a safe injection site, but it is a bathroom, and we know people are going to do things in there.”

The three-story re-purposed shipping container features one accessible washroom, three general use stalls, and two outdoor urinals located at the rear of the facility with privacy doors. Wins Bridgman, the architect behind the project, says his focus was on safety. Bridgman explains that community members wanted to have a space to go that felt safe, “where my friends can see and hear me.” The stalls have half doors, so staff members can see if they need to respond to a medical emergency, which has “helped us save lives,” says Kaufman.

Each indoor stall is equipped with a bio-bin for used needles that could otherwise end up on sidewalks and in public spaces. The stalls also come equipped with panic buttons, which set off an alarm in the peer support office. Each stall has individual lights that dim when someone has been in the stall for more than five minutes, which is a safety feature.

“We gently knock on the door [when the lights dim] to make sure someone hasn't overdosed and isn't in distress,” explains Kaufman. “I've lost count of how many people we've helped. We've had countless medical emergencies here and done Narcan reversals. So, when someone overdoses on fentanyl or another opioid, we reverse it with Narcan, and it's been incredible.”

“Harm reduction just isn't about drugs. It's about necessities and human rights for individuals,” says Stone. Amoowigamig has become a destination and community hub for residents and visitors of the downtown neighbourhood. Ma Mawi reports staff routinely and successfully assist

facility visitors with Employment and Income Assistance, Legal Aid, finding a family doctor, navigating challenges with Child and Family Services, and securing shelter openings. “Harm reduction is finding a place to lay your head in a shelter if you can't afford rent,” Stone says.

The Amoowigamig support team is able to make calls or send emails advocating and offering support for individuals with a variety of needs: “if people are looking for food, we tell them where they can go, if they are looking for a doctor, we tell them where to go, if someone needs to connect

with the police on a current matter, we connect them,” explains Kaufman. Peer support staff have personally secured housing for 30 previously unsheltered individuals since the project's launch.

Amoowigamig is located on the corner of Main Street and Henry Avenue. The project cost \$925,000 to build with funding from the Canadian Medical Foundation and the Canada Healthy Community Initiatives fund, a program administered by The Winnipeg Foundation, which granted the project \$250,000.

The facility has been treated with respect, says Kaufman, noting “there's no graffiti, there's no smashed windows, there's no garbage. It is clean. It is beautiful and that is mainly because the community wants it to be kept in the shape it is because it means so much to them for a litany of different reasons.”

**“HARM REDUCTION JUST  
ISN'T ABOUT DRUGS.  
IT'S ABOUT NECESSITIES  
AND HUMAN RIGHTS  
FOR INDIVIDUALS.”**



“IT IS BEAUTIFUL AND THAT IS MAINLY BECAUSE THE COMMUNITY WANTS IT TO BE KEPT IN THE SHAPE IT IS BECAUSE IT MEANS SO MUCH TO THEM FOR A LITANY OF DIFFERENT REASONS.”



Maintaining the surrounding area is an essential aspect of the project, and The Winnipeg Foundation has provided \$230,000 for hardscaping, site furnishings, lights, cultural markers, and Indigenous gardens. Brook McIlroy, an Indigenous landscape company, has consulted extensively with local organizations and community members, and designed a plan based on traditional Indigenous knowledge. Work on the grounds will get underway this summer.

The facility is currently open seven days a week for 10 hours a day. A reduction in hours was forecast due to a lack of secured funding, but a recent additional grant from The Foundation to Ma Mawi Chi Itata for \$225,000 per year until 2026, will help the facility continue providing community care for at least eight hours per day.



*The **Community Champion** pillar of The Winnipeg Foundation's strategic plan focuses on improving the well-being of people living within the Community Area for Revitalization and Equity (C.A.R.E.), and on reducing the number of children engaged in Manitoba's child welfare system while supporting better outcomes for youth aging out of care.*

# INCLUSION THROUGH ART, CULTURE, AND HERITAGE



PROJECT BRINGS ARTISTS FROM DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES TOGETHER TO COLLABORATE, LEARN, AND SHARE

The goal of The Ethnocultural Council of Manitoba's (ECCM) eight-month project was to build bridges between different ethnocultural and Indigenous communities in Winnipeg, and give artists an opportunity to enhance their skills and share their work at ECCM's Stronger Together dinner, held annually in December, and at the project's Showcase in February 2023, at the Ukrainian Labour Temple.

In fall 2023, Mohammad Mahdi Sultani, coordinator for the Inclusion through Art, Culture, and Heritage Project, launched the initiative by promoting a call for participants over social media and reaching out to more than 20 ethnocultural communities connected to ECCM. The call received a surprising amount of interest, and of the many who applied, 20 were selected to form a cohort for the project.

Most of the participants immigrated from other countries, including Nigeria, South Sudan, and Afghanistan. One participant arrived from Ukraine just two weeks before the project began.

The artists first gathered in November 2022 at one of two orientation sessions, where they learned more about the project and connected with each other. They began collaborating during an artists' gathering held at the Edge Gallery later that month.

Damhat Zagros, a Kurdish mixed media artist, is studying human rights at the University of Winnipeg and is interested in advocacy through art. He says, "When they told me about the project, I was like 'Yes, this is the type of work I like to do.' This has a message focused on an issue happening in the community."

Zagros met Mckenna Hampson, one of three grade 12 students from Collège Miles Macdonell Collegiate taking part in the project, at the gathering at the Edge Gallery. Hampson began beading about three years ago, reconnecting to an artform that was important to her Métis great grandparents. "My great grandma would bead all the time and it had kind of gotten lost," says Hampson.

Zagros thought Hampson's beadwork would complement his visual art style, so they collaborated on a t-shirt design to convey a common message. The design features a stylised silhouette of a woman with a long braid surrounded by yellow rays. The woman is wearing a beaded red earring shaped like a dress and a beaded hair tie at the end of her braid. The red dress is a recognized symbol of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Two-Spirit People, and the hair tie melds Hampson's beadwork with traditional Kurdish colours.

Women play a significant role in Kurdish and Indigenous communities, and it was important for Zagros and Hampson to highlight the strength of women and recognize the oppression that both communities have endured while focussing on hope.

During the project Zagros and Hampson discovered their cultures had a lot in common. Zagros, who is originally from Syria, explains the Kurdish community is an indigenous nation in the Middle East whose lands were also colonized, and whose culture and language have been eroded. "We have different experiences, but at some point, have something that we can both relate to," says Zagros. "We have experiences that help us understand each other."

"I have another perspective," says Hampson, "It was really cool to understand that other people also have the same issues and difficulties even though they're not in Canada."

*Zagros and Hampson at the project's showcase in February 2023.  
Photos courtesy Mohammad Mahdi Sultani and Mckenna Hampson.*

**Learn more about ECCM at [ethnomanitoba.ca](https://ethnomanitoba.ca)**



# MARKET LANDS CREATIVE HUB

## KEEPING ART ALIVE IN THE EXCHANGE

**T**he Exchange District's vibrant arts and culture scene will soon have a new hub, thanks to a unique partnership between CentreVenture and the University of Winnipeg Renewal Corporation. The Market Lands project will be constructed on the site of the City's former Public Safety Building, a once contentious, mid-century brutalist icon, beloved by some and despised by others, that was demolished in November 2020.

The new building will be comprised of three integrated and complementary components: the Creative Hub, a 20,000 square foot area dedicated to arts and culture organizations, a mix of affordable and market-rate rental units, and a community-focused area that is still in the planning phase.

During the past several decades, The Exchange District has transformed from a gritty haven for the arts, thanks in large part to the profusion of affordable warehouse space, to an upscale, trendy neighbourhood with boutiques and fine dining. Many of the warehouse buildings formerly occupied by creatives have been converted into condos, others fell into disrepair, and the costs to rent or lease space rose dramatically, creating a precarious environment for arts organizations operating on shoe-string budgets.

*Rendering of Marketlands courtesy of CentreVenture.*





Urban Shaman staff Theo Pelmus, Debbie Keeper, and Liz Garlicki in unintentional but delightful matching stripes in the gallery at 290 McDermot Ave.

“WE ALREADY COLLABORATE WITH URBAN SHAMAN AND WITH CREATIVE MANITOBA, SO TO BE IN THE SAME BUILDING, WE COULD REALLY MAKE THAT ACTIVE AND ENGAGED AND SEAMLESS, AND MAKE MORE ART HAPPEN FOR LESS RESOURCES BY WORKING TOGETHER.”

“We felt that [Market Lands] should reflect the heart and soul of The Exchange District, that is our arts community,” says Angela Mathieson, CentreVenture’s Chief Executive Officer. After a year of consulting with community partners and members, Mathieson says those conversations helped determine strategies to keep arts organizations in the area “because if we lose them from The Exchange, we’re losing the soul of The Exchange, and we didn’t want to see that happen.”

The building is one of the first net zero carbon projects in Canada, with Mathieson explaining it will produce as much energy as it consumes. The design includes a state-of-the-art building envelope, with the front of the building being clad entirely in solar panels.

Mathieson says The Winnipeg Foundation has played an instrumental role in supporting the Creative Hub after supporting two organizations, Urban Shaman and Mentoring Artists for Women’s Art (MAWA), with grants

to help them move from their current spaces into Market Lands. She explains the new space “provides these organizations with lifetime homes that will have a very low-cost structure, which allows them to focus on what they do best, which is making art.”

According to Shawna Dempsey, MAWA’s Co-Executive Director, Market Lands is a prime piece of real estate and artists are worthy of occupying the space; the arts are central to Winnipeg’s identity. “Creating a custom build space is recognizing that artists need certain things and artists deserve those things,” Dempsey added.

Since 1984, MAWA has provided space for women to develop their artistic practices through education, theory, and criticism informed by an intersectional feminist perspective. The organization also welcomes non-binary, trans, and two-spirit participants. As the organization continues to flourish, Dempsey says MAWA has outgrown its current space at 611 Main Street.



“We found some of our programs were so popular, we simply couldn't accommodate people. We had to turn people away, or we'd have so much going on we'd have to rent space elsewhere for some of our programming,” Dempsey says, “So more space and kind of a better configuration of space was super attractive. Artists are professionals. They deserve a professional space in which to show their work and learn.”

MAWA will occupy a corner unit on the ground floor in the Market Lands Creative Hub, which features street-facing windows to entice people into the new space. Dempsey says the organization's current programming brings in heaps of foot traffic and “that's people enlivening our downtown.” The arts community contributes to Winnipegger's sense of place and pride, with Dempsey noting that “We really are the visual arts capital of Canada. Despite our small size, we punch far above our weight.”

Another big advantage of moving is the sense of synergy the venue facilitates. “We already collaborate with Urban Shaman and with Creative Manitoba,” says Dempsey, “so to be in the same building, we could really make that active and engaged and seamless, and make more art happen for less resources by working together.”

MAWA's neighbour on the ground floor at Market Lands will be Urban Shaman, an Indigenous arts organization focused on contemporary and emerging art. Urban Shaman is currently located on the second floor of 290 McDermot Avenue, a heritage building with some unfortunate issues, including a lack of accessibility. While the building holds a lot of charm, Debbie Keeper, Urban Shaman's Interim Director, says it is not conducive to hosting certain exhibitions as the infrastructure isn't up to gallery standards.

Urban Shaman has been a vital part of Winnipeg's arts scene for nearly 30 years, yet a lot of people aren't aware of the organization's existence. “Having this new space will be great because we would have a street presence. People could see us, then they'd be more curious to come in,” says Keeper.

“It's a safe space, where we don't have to defend what we're doing to anybody. We just can create art - Indigenous art.” Keeper says artists who exhibit at Urban Shaman, one of three Indigenous artist-run centres in Canada, may one day go to the National Gallery of Canada; it is important to foster the relationships created through artists-run centres, “they birth artists and the culture.”

“We're about showing artwork promoting artists. For us, we take a lot of pride in giving an artist their first show, and then watching their careers blossom,” says Keeper, noting that it is important to have a facility that reflects artists' needs and keeps people engaged with the arts community.

Market Lands Creative Hub goes beyond enriching the lives of artists; the new go-to destination will contribute to an already vibrant community in the downtown core, cementing Winnipeg's reputation as a city where art and creativity are valued by all.

**For more information about Market Lands, visit [marketlands.ca](http://marketlands.ca).**



MAWA's Shawna Dempsey outside the current gallery space at 611 Main Street.

# REACHING OUT, OPENING DOORS, AND BUSSING IN

## OUTREACH AND INCLUSION AT THE GIMLI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL



Every summer, thousands descend on the sleepy lakefront town of Gimli, and every July, it also bustles with movie goers, taking in the Gimli International Film Festival (GIFF), Manitoba's largest film fest. During the past few years, the festival has welcomed youth and underserved communities, thanks to GIFF's Community Outreach and Inclusion Program, funded by The Winnipeg Foundation.

Partnering with arts organizations and community-based agencies, GIFF's Outreach and Inclusion Program waives festival fees on a first come first served basis to those who identify and are recognized as a member of an underserved community. "Being in Gimli means only a certain demographic of people comes to enjoy the festival and we wanted to reach out to people who have never experienced the festival before," says Alan Wong, Festival Director for GIFF. "Our programming at the festival is diverse being an international film festival but our audiences have not been. Here's an opportunity to open to that demographic."



The Young Film Makers Program, another component of the outreach and inclusion initiative, works with teachers at established high school film and production programs, to encourage film-making among students, with an invitation to screen and present at GIFF. "The future of the festival depends on young people and developing industry side engagement for young people - for them to develop and foster non-Netflix movie perspectives is important," says Wong. Young filmmakers participate in their film's screening, explore the town, and partake in festival events, as part of the program.

Participants of the two programs are offered a shuttle service, to remove the additional barrier of transportation to the festival. And in 2023, the service will also be an option for volunteers, filmmakers, and the public. "Gimli in the summertime gets very busy with traffic. The shuttle reduces traffic on the highway and is a more environmentally friendly option," says Wong. This is the second year the shuttle is in operation and the first year it will be offered to the public. "We have capacity and we found that there is a demand."

Last year was challenging for the festival, at the tail end of the pandemic, but festival organizers are excited about the films coming to GIFF 2023 and look forward to seeing you there!

**For more information about the Gimli Film Festival and its programming, visit [gimlifilm.com](http://gimlifilm.com).**



*Photo of outdoor screening courtesy of Doug Little, other photos courtesy of Wen Photography.*





New warehouse serves thousands of clients with dignity and respect

# MAKING A HOME

**C**athy Ireton, a volunteer at Centre Flavie Laurent, unpacks endless boxes of clothing, books, and household items, all of which will be provided free of charge to newcomers and people transitioning out of homelessness. “I get emotional sometimes when I see these people come in that have nothing,” Ireton says, “it just rips at my heartstrings.”

For more than 40 years, Centre Flavie Laurent has worked to provide dignity to Winnipeggers affected by poverty. Last year the organization served more than 10,000 clients, received 23,000+ donations, and distributed more than 60,000 free items, including clothing, household items, furniture, and beds.

Soaring levels of demand coupled with a rise in donations led the organization to move into a new, 13,000 square-foot building at 301 Archibald Street in September 2022. Ireton says the new location has more space for donations, volunteer workstations, and to display items, creating a better browsing experience for those looking for items.

When people arrive at the warehouse, they are issued a number and wait until it is their turn to browse. Clients have about one hour to look around and gather items they want. Those without a vehicle who are selecting larger items can arrange a low-cost delivery.

Centre Flavie Laurent’s Executive Director, Gilbert Vielfaure, explains “people have a lot to contend with already, and if we can create an environment that’s more conducive to them enjoying the experience... I think that’s something we should be striving for.” He says the primary goal is to respectfully meet clients, whose circumstances and life experiences vary broadly, where they are at. Vielfaure constantly reminds staff that “we might be the only good morning that person is going to get. So, let’s always be mindful of that.”

Vielfaure has worked in the philanthropic sector for more than 30 years, 18 of which have been with Centre Flavie. He says without volunteers and community partners, the organization’s important work would not be possible: “The strength of impact and the frequency and dependency on the impact received from The Winnipeg Foundation, has been immeasurable over the years. We wouldn’t be where we are now.”

Centre Flavie Laurent recently received a \$250,000 grant from The Winnipeg Foundation for its new warehouse space. The organization is responsive to community need, filling a significant gap in the non-profit sector by helping vulnerable people acquire essentials needed to create a functional, comfortable home.

Centre Flavie also creates a sense of belonging and community among staff and volunteers. “I can honestly say I’ve never gotten up one morning where I said I don’t want to go to work,” Vielfaure says. Ireton turns 75 next month and has volunteered with the organization for almost three years. She echoes his sentiment, saying, “I started volunteering just twice a week, and now I’m told that I can come every day if I want. I would be here until midnight if they let me.”

**To learn more about Centre Flavie and its work in the community you can visit its website at [centreflavie.com](http://centreflavie.com).**



Volunteers and staff busy at work at Centre Flavie’s new warehouse at 301 Archibald Street.





# THE EXCEL EMPOWERMENT CENTRE

THREADS OF HOPE AND HEALING CONNECT COMMUNITY  
OF WOMEN REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS





The sound of whirring sewing machines and hissing steam irons fills the stairwell leading down to The Excel Empowerment Centre (TEEC). The centre, located in a sprawling basement in Winnipeg's West End, opened in 2018 and grounds its work in peace and reconciliation. The organization has a focus not only on the economic independence and inclusion of newcomer women, but also on building a sense of community and belonging for newcomer immigrants and refugees.

The centre is a labour of love and a form of therapy for Executive Director Rebecca Deng, a South Sudanese Canadian and former lost girl. "We created this organization because most of us come from countries with similar backgrounds," she says, "The idea here is to empower women and reduce isolation." Many of the newcomers have lived in refugee camps, experienced extreme poverty and hunger, and saw war and death first-hand. The centre is as much a space for healing as it is for skill building.

"WE SEWED  
AND PROVIDED  
BLANKETS TO  
UKRAINIAN  
IMMIGRANTS.  
THEY CAME  
TO A COLD  
COUNTRY, THEY  
NEED A WARM  
BLANKET."

The centre provides a safe community space for training, education, and connecting with other women who are navigating a new country. The drop-in centre at TEEC is a gathering place for newcomers to share information, access support services, and find healing and social support.

The economic inclusion of women is key to TEEC's philosophy, with sewing classes for newcomer women being a central activity, teaching valuable and marketable skills. Learning to thread machines, use beginner patterns, and cut fabric leads to more advanced activities such as taking measurements and tie-dyeing. The centre focuses on sewing as a skill that can be picked up without prior experience. The learning is peer-supported and doesn't require that participants speak the same language to help each other, although TEEC does plan to run basic English classes in the future to help participants build language skills, which are key to finding employment opportunities and navigating local systems.

To practice their sewing skills, women from Vietnam, India, and South Sudan sew colourful quilts and feminine hygiene products. A corner of the church basement is stacked ceiling-high with purple quilts that are ready to be shipped overseas in a partnership with the Mennonite Central Committee. The women also sew for local charity using mostly donated supplies. "We sewed and provided blankets to Ukrainian immigrants. They came to a cold country, they need a warm blanket," Deng says with a smile.



TEEC participants learning new skills and working on quilts to donate to charities.





Rebecca Deng (centre, front) with a group of TEEC participants.

TEEC has a holistic approach, operating with the understanding that cultural and recreational activities support emotional and mental well-being. The kitchen stands idle due to an ongoing renovation, but activities like cooking, storytelling, and arts and crafts are central to TEEC, as activities that help build connection and a sense of belonging. Deng says they have “up to 400 women using the centre” on a drop-in basis. The women mostly live in the neighbourhood, but some come by car to connect with the community.

The pandemic had a significant impact on the centre, and much like other organizations, it pivoted, holding virtual health and well-being workshops, with participants sewing face masks from home. Putting together hampers and packages for quarantined families and doing well-being checks were key activities that helped the centre stay connected to the women it serves. The philosophy of participants at the centre is a belief that strength in community comes from the support of one another.

Deng’s labour of love crosses oceans as TEEC operates here in Winnipeg and in Bor Jonglei State, South Sudan. The sister organizations share the same philosophies of building economic

independence for women and supporting one another to build strength in community. Operating TEEC overseas was a way to give back. “I carry a pain inside me from the war. Coming to Canada I could see the difference of someone who was born in a peaceful country. We want to give back,” says Deng.

The Winnipeg Foundations supported The Excel Empowerment Centre with a grant to build sewing skills for newcomer women. TEEC became a registered charity in 2021.

**For more information about TEEC, visit [teec.ca](http://teec.ca)**



The **Community Impact** pillar of The Winnipeg Foundation’s Strategic Plan addresses critical issues that have been identified in our community, including providing additional support to Vital Signs® key findings, such as homelessness, hunger, and addiction.



# CONNECTING WITH THE NEXT GENERATION OF DONORS

The Foundation's Donor Engagement team unveils new strategy

**A**s we embrace the future and encourage Manitoba's culture of generosity to grow, our vision at The Winnipeg Foundation is to ensure we are building "A Winnipeg where community life flourishes for all." To commit to this vision, we are realigning our engagement strategies in community generosity with an inclusive "For All" lens.

We established the goal of ensuring community members feel reflected in the work we're doing, which led to a recognition that we need to collaborate and convene with others to gain a better understanding of current philanthropic perceptions, key issues, and gaps in community generosity.

Through this experience of reflection, we developed the "For All" strategy, which is focused on engaging with the next generation of community members, acknowledging the powerful breadth of BIPOC community philanthropy, and partnering with visionaries and strategists who are mobilizing movements across communities.



The Winnipeg Foundation's Michelle Gazze presenting work about next generation donors at the Canadian Association of Gift Planners National conference.

Under this strategy, we are currently implementing engagement methods to deepen our understanding of the next generation and their values of generosity, philanthropic habits, motivations and how that will influence their relationship with The Foundation and the community in coming years. The multi-year engagement strategy is rooted in listening, learning, and improving the ways we steward and engage those who believe in us, and our community. Through focus groups, surveys, and outreach meetings we are convening and elevating the voices and experiences of under-represented generosity stories to realign our work to better serve our community.

In April 2023, our Donor Engagement team had the opportunity to present the work we're doing to connect with the next generation of donors, at the Canadian Association of Gift Planners National Conference in Vancouver, B.C.. Among the speakers were Nikki Sanchez, Decolonial Educator, and Djaka Blais, Co-Chair of the Foundation for Black Communities, who urged the philanthropic sector to reflect on our own living legacies and the impact we each want to leave behind in the work we do.

The intention of sharing our framework and research with leaders in the charitable sector is to collectively identify ways to address barriers to charitable giving, be more responsive and accountable, and work together to discover ways to expand possibilities that create accessible, equitable and inclusive philanthropic spaces and partnerships.

**Michelle Gazze is a member of the Donor Engagement Team at The Winnipeg Foundation.**





Concert for a Cause 2023. Photos provided by Paul Ong, courtesy of JPG Photography.

# THE YAP-ONG FAMILY FUND

CONCERT FOR A CAUSE GIVES THE GIFT OF MUSIC WHILE SUPPORTING COMMUNITY

When Paul Ong recalls his move from the Philippines to Canada, he says he had no idea “that the biggest opportunity would come when I arrived in Winnipeg.”

Ong, a vice-principal in the Winnipeg School Division, began singing as a hobby and a form of self-expression as a teenager, performing on stage and TV in the Philippines. When his family moved to Canada in 2010, Ong thought it was an end of an era, and that he would use his background in business to pursue a career; one year later he was participating in the 2012 season of Canada’s Got Talent.

This opportunity led Ong to be selected to represent Canada in the 2015 World Championship of Performing Arts, an annual international competition inspired by the Olympics. The competition was in Los Angeles and Ong had to fundraise to support his trip. Upon his return to Winnipeg, he hosted a homecoming concert to thank the community for their support.

“I thought [the concert] was a one-off,” says Ong about the inception of the Concert for a Cause series, but “[In] 2016, they wanted another one.” Ong donated the proceeds from the concert to support a mobile computer lab for an inner-city school. “As soon as we gave, it’s just, it’s contagious.” Since then, Ong continues to organize Concert for a Cause, contributing increasing amounts to charitable organizations like Cancer Care Manitoba, Siloam Mission, and Hands of Hope.

At the ninth concert, held on April 29, 2023, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra (WSO) joined the performance for a second year. Through ticket sales, advertisements, and sponsorships the concert raised more than \$45,000 for Sistema Winnipeg, a partnership between the WSO, Seven Oaks School Division, and Winnipeg School Division that provides after school music education to children throughout the school year.

Although Ong loves performing, fundraising is his favorite aspect of the project; “To be able to use the music for that purpose really brings me so much fulfillment.”

During this year’s concert, Ong also launched the Yap-Ong Family Fund, an arts, culture, and heritage endowment fund at The Winnipeg Foundation. Ong was inspired to create the fund when friend and mentor Larry Vickar suggested Ong could put a portion of the proceeds raised from the concert series into an endowment fund. Vickar and his family are also supporters of the community and have established funds at The Winnipeg Foundation.

This year concertgoers were invited to contribute to the Yap-Ong Family Fund. Ong hopes to build the fund with contributions from future concerts, creating lasting impact in the community. “It’s great to know that you can leave a legacy and sustain charitable giving this way,” says Ong.

Ong feels it’s a privilege to have a platform that brings so many people together for a shared goal. He sees how the many pieces everyone contributes creates a successful concert, which mirrors his hope to grow the endowment fund. “This concert is a prime example of what ‘every little bit counts’ looks like.”



The **Community Generosity** pillar of The Winnipeg Foundation’s Strategic Plan supports the continued generosity of Manitobans by growing unrestricted funds, increasing diversity with our donor base, and championing generosity throughout the province to help solve urgent and long-term priorities.



# THE MORNING BREEZE HEALTHCARE ENDOWMENT FUND

OFFERING A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO HEALTHCARE



**G**enaro Guevarra started Morning Breeze HealthCare at the height of the pandemic, despite concerns from family and friends about the less-than-ideal timing. Guevarra, with more than a decade of experience in long-term care, had a desire to take control of his work-life balance while giving back to the community in his own way.

Guevarra identified a gap in the healthcare system related to homecare services and care for those struggling with memory related disorders. He realized that improving the lives of an aging population would require increased access to healthcare professionals, especially those with training in elder care.

By creating Morning Breeze HealthCare, an organization offering specialized dementia care, healthcare staffing solutions, and homecare services, Guevarra found a way to make a difference right at his client's doorsteps.

Morning Breeze takes a holistic approach to healthcare. "We look at the family as a unit and if one member of the family is affected, it affects everybody," says Guevarra. "It affects their loved ones, it affects their communities, it affects the activities of daily life, and so we're there to provide support to families."

Guevarra trained to be a nurse in the Philippines. When he arrived in Winnipeg 25 years ago, he spent his first few years working for L'Arche Winnipeg, which is where he learned about The Winnipeg Foundation. "That's when I heard about starting a fund for long-term growth in the community," says Guevarra, "Reading the history of The Foundation, I was really inspired to follow suit and start my own endowment."

Guevarra accomplished this goal recently by starting the Morning Breeze Endowment Fund through The Winnipeg Foundation. The goal of the fund is to invest back into the community, supporting young students and community leaders as they become agents of change.

"I would encourage kababayan ['fellow countrymen' in Tagalog] to do their share of not just giving to their own family circle, but also to the community," says Guevarra. "Having that sense of community will really help build a better future."



Genaro Guevarra



The **Community Endowments** pillar of The Winnipeg Foundation's strategic plan reflects emerging donor goals, encourages gifts that support urgent need, and will explore access to capital in support of community priorities.

EVEN IN HIS FINAL DAYS, OLI NARFASON  
STOOD AS A BEACON OF GENEROSITY

# OLI NARFASON'S WESTSHORE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Oli Narfason receiving a Manitoba  
150 Volunteerism Award for his  
work in community.

**R**ooted in a “sharing is caring” family ethos and deeply connected to his Icelandic heritage, Gimli Manitoba’s Oli Narfason left a legacy defined by an unwavering dedication to making a positive difference in his community, and helping as many people as he could.

“He just wanted to help. He grew up through the Depression where they had nothing and worked hard. He paid a lot of attention to the stock markets. He really watched for trends,” says Krista Narfason, Oli’s granddaughter. “He was very financially smart, so when the community foundation started happening, it didn’t take long to convince him that this would be something that would be great for the area, for a long time.”

Among a long list of accolades, awards, and distinctions, one of the ‘shining stars’ in Oli’s legacy is his role in helping establish the Westshore Community Foundation. He was a founding member of the community foundation in 1998 and was the first President of the organization’s Board of Directors. Krista is now the Foundation’s Administrative Coordinator, and she is keeping her grandfather’s legacy alive and furthering his great work.

In 2024, The Westshore Community Foundation will celebrate its 25th year, and Oli was very proud that it recently surpassed \$5 million in managed funds. Once just a vision, the community foundation has granted hundreds of thousands of dollars through different grants and scholarships, thanks in part to Oli’s dedication and commitment.



“Afi [grandpa in Icelandic] was probably the humblest person I’ve ever known,” says Krista. “He was on committees and boards locally and internationally, volunteering for thousands of hours. And [he] never wanted, never expected, an acknowledgment or anything.”

Oli had a commitment to education and a belief in empowering students to shape a better future, which led him to generously support scholarships through The Westshore Community Foundation. “He loved hearing how much went out for scholarships each year,” recalls Krista. In 2022, \$32,171 was awarded to 16 scholars. In 2023, that number is \$59,000.

Oli remained generous to the very end. “A lot of what he’s done through Westshore has been fairly quiet. He didn’t want big pomp and circumstance,” says Krista. “However, one morning, just before he had the stroke, he had told us ‘You know, this time I’m okay. Let’s use my name and do a photo op or whatever’...I don’t know if his mind changed on that, or if that was his strategy to get other people to give - I think that’s probably what it was.”



Manitoba currently has 57 community foundations across the province, more per capita than any other province in the country. Community foundations are charitable organizations built through the generous gifts of donors. By pooling these gifts and carefully managing their resources, these foundations can support the communities they serve today and into the future.

Manitoba's community foundations support a wide range of charitable organizations and projects that enrich the quality of life of people throughout the province. The Winnipeg Foundation, Canada's first community foundation, was established on April 26, 1921.

"We are honoured the Manitoba government has proclaimed April 26 – The Winnipeg Foundation's birthday – Community Foundation Day," says Tom Bryk, Board Chair of The Winnipeg Foundation. "Community foundations are built through the generous gifts of donors who want to see their community flourish. This annual day will celebrate the contributions of community foundations throughout our province and the generosity of all Manitobans."

# APRIL 26 HAS BEEN PROCLAIMED COMMUNITY FOUNDATION DAY



Endow Manitoba represents the network of our province's community foundations that work together to advance the sustainability and growth of the community foundation movement and to enhance their impact on the communities they serve. "Manitoba's community foundations are committed to community vitality," says Sky Bridges, CEO of The Winnipeg Foundation. "Each community foundation serves its local community's unique interests and needs, enriching the quality of life and helping create vibrant communities across Manitoba."

On May 9, representatives from Manitoba community foundations attended the reading of the proclamation at the Legislature, and later met with Municipal Relations Minister Andrew Smith as he presented the proclamation. Manitoba Community Foundation Day celebrates the generosity of Manitobans and promotes awareness of the incredible work community foundations across the province do to impact community well-being.

"The Government of Manitoba values the crucial role that community foundations play in our province. Manitoba's community foundations support a wide range of charitable organizations and projects that enrich the quality of life of people throughout the province," says Municipal Relations Minister, Andrew Smith.

The Manitoba government has supported the community foundation movement for many years, including partnering with The Winnipeg Foundation, through its Endow Manitoba initiative, on the Endow Manitoba Giving Challenge and Manitoba Heritage Trust Program, and establishing an endowment fund to support the growth of our community foundations.



Representatives from Manitoba community foundations at the reading of the proclamation with the Honourable Andrew Smith, Minister of Municipal Relations (6th from the left).

A BANNER YEAR FOR WINNIPEG'S

# NESTAWEYA RIVER TRAIL 2023!

Open for an action-packed 72 days (about 2 and a half months), The Nestaweya River Trail, presented by The Winnipeg Foundation, returned for another year. Fully equipped with warming huts, skate/snowshoe/ice bike rentals, and other outdoor activities, the river trail provided many diverse ways to experience the joy of winter in our city.

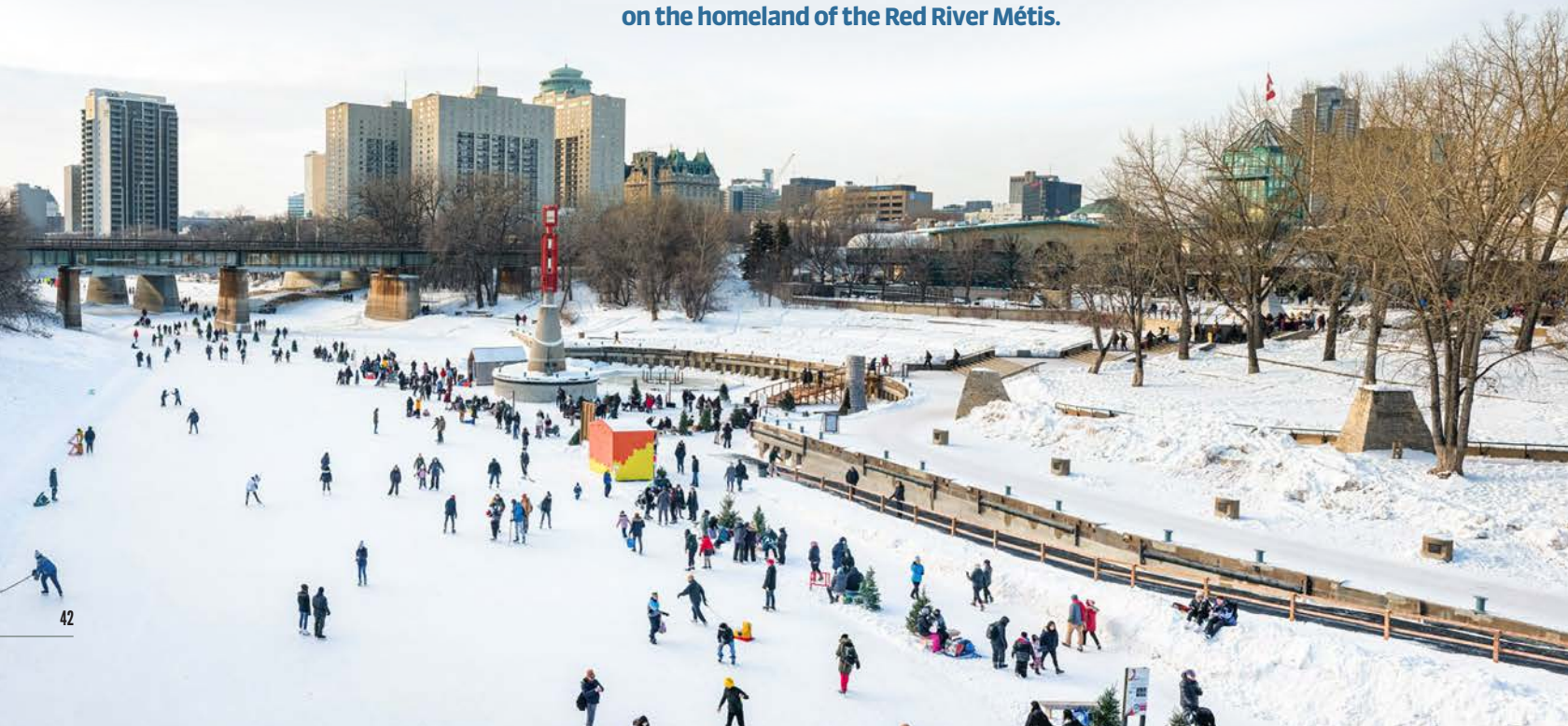
The Nestaweya River Trail officially opened on New Year's Day and marked year two of a five-year lead sponsorship commitment by The Winnipeg Foundation. The trail opens in increments, depending on the ice conditions each year. This year's trail was open from The Forks to Hugo Dock up the Assiniboine River, and from The Forks to Churchill Drive on the Red River.

Approximately 220,000 patrons had access to more than 6 kilometers of trail this year. Falling just three days short of the longest open record (75 days), guests on the trail were also provided a sneak peak of The Winnipeg Foundation's Vital Signs® 2022 report. Signage along the trail shared where Winnipeg stood in certain areas of need in the community and provided examples of actions community members could take to make a positive change.

Patrons engaged in opportunities to support and show love to our incredible charitable community by participating in the 'Check Your Vital Signs®' survey. The survey compared experiences of Winnipeggers related to Vital Signs® 2022, for a chance to win one of five \$1,000 grants for their favourite local charity.

The Foundation understands the importance of honouring our city's history and is committed to the name 'Nestaweya' for the remainder of its sponsorship. Nestaweya (phonetic pronunciation: nestah-way-ya), or "three points" in Cree, is the original name of the area we now know as Winnipeg. It also refers to the history of the land as people came from three paths to create a community (Cree from the north on the Red River, Ojibway from the south on the Red River, and Lakota/Dakota/Nakota or Assiniboine on the Assiniboine River).

**The Nestaweya River Trail is located on Treaty 1 territory – the original lands of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene Peoples, and on the homeland of the Red River Métis.**





# SIGN UP TODAY TO MAKE A MONTHLY GIFT. IT'S EASY AND AUTOMATIC!



Help make 'a Winnipeg where community life flourishes for all.'  
[wpgfdn.org/give](http://wpgfdn.org/give) | 204.944.9474



# ORGANIZATION NAME CHANGES

REFLECTING ON THE PAST, LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

## ACORN FAMILY PLACE



Shedding place names with colonial implications is an ongoing aspect of truth and reconciliation. Winnipeg's City Council recently voted unanimously to change three different roadways named for Bishop Vital-Justin Grandin, a Roman Catholic priest who was a prominent architect of the residential school system. Non-profit organizations are following suit.

Wolseley Family Place was named for Garnet Wolseley, an army officer who led colonial expeditions across the British Empire, and who was a key figure in the federal campaign to quash the Métis uprising led by Louis Riel. The organization recently changed its name to Acorn Family Place, reflecting a dedication to further reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Acorn's new name is meant to symbolize something small that carries the potential to grow strong and mighty like an oak under the right conditions. Acorn Family Place helps families thrive by providing a range of programming and services focused on parental education and guidance, gaining employment skills, access to peer support workers, and much more.

**To learn more about Acorn Family Place visit [acornfamilyplace.ca](http://acornfamilyplace.ca).**

## HEARTWOOD HEALING CENTRE



The Laurel Centre got its start as The Women's Post Treatment Centre in 1984, when counsellors working in the addiction field shared concerns that female clients were struggling to come to terms with experiences of childhood sexual abuse. They recognized the need for an aftercare program in the community that was focused on helping those struggling with past trauma. In 1985 The Centre began providing services, and in 1997 the organization changed their name to The Laurel Centre.

In 2010, the Men's Resource Centre, formerly part of the University of Manitoba's Department of Social Work, became a program of The Laurel Centre, and in 2011, with support from The Winnipeg Foundation, The Centre successfully piloted a program for men who had experienced childhood sexual abuse. Ongoing funding was later secured to create the Male Childhood Sexual Abuse Program, the first of its kind in the province, which became a permanent program of the Men's Resource Centre.

In 2022, The Laurel Centre and Men's Resource Centre became Heartwood Healing Centre, the only organization in Manitoba dedicated solely to helping all people who experienced sexual abuse as children.

**To learn more about Heartwood Healing Centre visit [heartwoodcentre.ca](http://heartwoodcentre.ca).**



# From the desk of...



## Shereen Denetto

Executive Director, IRCOM - Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba, Inc.

## IRCOM IMPACTS THE LIVES OF HUNDREDS OF IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

"It's a whirlwind, but it's been exciting. I'm thoroughly enjoying myself. There's not a day that goes by where I'm not happy to come to work."

Before becoming Executive Director in 2021, Shereen Denetto spent eight years in a senior executive role with IRCOM (Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba), including as Director of Programming (2012 – 2015), Interim Executive Director (2015 – 2016), and Associate Executive Director (2016 – 2020). She recently left Mosaic Newcomer Family Resource Network to return to IRCOM as CEO in August 2021.

IRCOM provides safe, affordable transitional housing for newcomers to Canada, with a focus on assisting refugees. In the three years they're able to stay with IRCOM, residents are provided with holistic wraparound services and supports to help them settle into the broader community.

"We have folks from 21 different countries under our roof. It's a real feeling of multiculturalism," says Denetto. "We meet with each family as soon as they move in, we learn about their story and then learn about where they want to be in a year from now, two years from now. They develop their goals, and with our support, we develop a plan for what kinds of services and supports might help them along the way."

After three years, residents are able to move out into the broader community and become thriving members of our city.

Denetto's parents came to Canada more than 50 years ago from India, originally landing in Montreal. Her dad, an engineer, came first and then sponsored her mom. The family eventually settled in rural northern Ontario, with Denetto moving to Hamilton to study at McMaster University. Her first job out of school was a crisis worker at a shelter for abused women and children, which led Denetto to complete an MA in Social Work at Carleton University in Ottawa; she has been in the field of social work ever since.

"The idea is to give people a hand up, not a handout," says Denetto. "We support them to learn English, to understand the school system, the healthcare system, find jobs, and understand the Canadian norms in society."

Currently, the need for transitional housing and wrap-around services outweighs IRCOM's capacity, with 111 units available for families. But that does not stop Denetto and her team from doing everything they can to help families find their community and find their place.

"It is called a harm-reduction approach. Non-judgmental. You really start where people are at and work with them. That is an intrinsic part of our social work approach," says Denetto. "Putting people first is embedded in our value statements. Going the extra mile. We place a strong emphasis on Community. Families often talk about the amazing community of friends, neighbours, and staff. These are lifelong connections."

Although the work is complicated and can be difficult, Shereen and her team are heartened by the transformations that families go through.

"You really see the impacts of the work you do," says Denetto. "You stay with these families, you get to know every member of the family, you see when they come through the other side, you see them make connections and develop community. That is what keeps us going."

IRCOM celebrated its 30th anniversary last summer, and Denetto and her team are preparing for 2023's Summer Celebration; an outdoor street festival at their 95 Ellen location.

**For more information about IRCOM visit [ircom.ca](http://ircom.ca).**

