

WORKING TOGETHER

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A MAGAZINE OF THE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION FALL 2023

PARK
CINEMATOA
SEPTEMBER 27

CINEMATOA BRINGS STORIES OF GENEROSITY TO LIFE

THE
WINNIPEG
FOUNDATION



Your Community Foundation
For Good. Forever.

KIDS CONNECT WITH NATURE THROUGH FORT WHYTE ALIVE PROGRAMMING RUN BY YOUTH

STORY ON PAGE 8.





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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23 Below



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If you do not wish to receive this print publication, please contact us. The magazine is also available on our website.

The Foundation strives to ensure we reflect the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity for people of all abilities. If there is anything we can do to make this publication more accessible, please contact us at communications@wpgfdn.org.

The Winnipeg Foundation board of directors

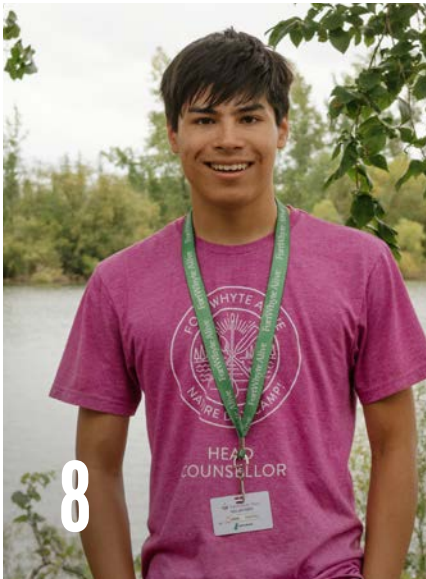
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MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS ARE A GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

As a trusted community institution, The Winnipeg Foundation has spent the past century working hard to help ensure ‘a Winnipeg where community life flourishes for all.’ But its age does not suggest it is resting on the laurels of decades past.

Your community foundation’s greatest asset lies in its ability to change with the times and respond to current community needs. That’s also the benefit of the endowment model; for the past 100+ years, our donors have invested in our community, having faith and confidence that The Foundation would respond to pressing community issues, perhaps decades after they were gone, to see the results of their investments in the city we all love.

As I pen this last message as Board Chair of The Winnipeg Foundation, I have been reflecting on what a gift community foundations are to the communities they serve, and I think Manitobans really understand the value – we have more community foundations in our province (57!) per capita than any other jurisdiction in North America.

As The Winnipeg Foundation moves forward with its new Strategic Plan, the current community issues the plan is addressing could likely not have even been imagined 50 years ago, let alone 100 years ago. That’s the beauty of such an organization – it has the community knowledge, expertise, and nimbleness to be able to respond to current issues with appropriate resources to improve any situation. We are honoured and humbled by our donors – for their confidence and trust in The Foundation – none of this work is possible without your support.

After serving 11 years on the Board of The Winnipeg Foundation, including these past two as Chair, I am constantly amazed by the great work happening in our community by the committed charitable sector. The challenges of the past three years are a clear reminder that although Winnipeg’s charitable sector has been stressed and stretched, it is still standing and continues to serve our community.

It is The Winnipeg Foundation’s role to continue to support and enhance this sector that gives our community so much, day in and day out. I have every confidence The Foundation will continue to meet our community’s challenges in the months and years ahead and I am so honoured to have been a part of this organization.

Tom Bryk,
Board Chair



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.

MANITOBA'S GENEROSITY IS ALWAYS IN SEASON

MESSAGE FROM SKY BRIDGES, CEO

Generosity happens throughout the year, but the passing of autumn ushers in 'the giving season.' During this time, our vibrant charitable sector will be inviting you to give from the heart through promotions and annual campaigns. November 15 is National Philanthropy Day, which invites us all to honour our love of community by volunteering and giving.

Did you know that, along with the amazing work charities do in our community, they also contribute on a large scale to the overall well-being of our province? Manitoba's diverse non-profits and charities have a critical impact on the economy and health of our province, offering valuable programs and services to all.

The non-profit sector in Manitoba contributes more than 10% to the province's GDP, constituting \$7.1 billion in economic impact, according to the latest numbers from Statistics Canada (2021). Community non-profits contribute \$1.3 billion – almost 2% of our province's overall GDP. And if that's not reason enough to support your local charitable sector, did you know that 114,000 Manitobans are employed by a non-profit? And almost half of Manitobans (49.1%) volunteer, contributing 63 million volunteer hours annually (Statistics Canada, 2018).

Manitoba remains the most generous province in the country, and at The Winnipeg Foundation we have the privilege of seeing your love of community in action every day.

It is the generosity of our donors that support a community of well-being. The impact of your giving reaches far beyond an individual gift – your support changes lives every day. And collectively, we are more effective and can have greater impact when we work together.

For example, we are currently wrapping up our intake for Major Capital Grants, which supports large-scale capital projects in our community. Thanks to the generosity of donors throughout the years, we have helped bring to life crucial projects such as the creation of the Bruce Oake Recovery Centre, an expansion for Ka Ni Kanichihk, and a new home for Ronald McDonald House.

The current cohort of projects reflects a range of exciting initiatives; housing for youth aging out of care, innovative approaches to addressing security, and accessibility upgrades to beloved performing arts spaces. We look forward to announcing the full list of projects very soon.

How ever you plan to support our community this year, we thank you for your generosity and the impact it has in our community, and for helping ensure 'a Winnipeg where community life flourishes for all' - we couldn't do it without you.





VOLUNTEERING IS VITAL

Volunteer shortage across the non-profit sector

Volunteers are an integral part of the fabric of our community; it's difficult to imagine what our city or province would look like without them. There are more than 7,000 not-for-profit organizations in Manitoba that rely on volunteers to operate programming, from essential services to cultural events. Since the pandemic, finding and retaining volunteers has proved to be a challenge.

"Organizations are struggling to meet the volunteer numbers they had in place prior to COVID," says Ashley Seymour, Executive Director of Volunteer Manitoba. "There's absolutely a volunteer shortage in our city, in our province, and across the country."

The need for services offered by non-profit organizations has risen sharply, while volunteer capacity has dropped. Trying to meet new demands can lead to volunteer managers and other staff taking on extra work, which can result in burnout. This perfect storm "has really put a strain on people's capacity, and unfortunately some of these organizations may have to reduce their programs and services as a result," says Seymour.

A decrease in volunteerism across the charitable sector may not seem like a cause for alarm, but when considering the crucial role non-profits play in the demanding areas of poverty, addiction, hunger, and homelessness, disruptions can create real challenges.

New strategies and reimagining volunteer roles

Volunteer Manitoba has been working with organizations in its network to reimagine what their volunteer roles might look like. Short-term opportunities, for example, have become more popular in recent years to accommodate busy schedules and the higher premium placed on personal time.

There is also a focus on connecting both newcomers and people of all ages with volunteer opportunities. Seymour explains that volunteering in community provides a wealth of benefits; youth and people who are new to the province in particular stand to gain valuable skills and develop new connections by offering up their time and talent to a non-profit.

Creative solutions

Fort Whyte Alive is an outlier when it comes to the volunteer shortage, in part because the organization appeals directly to youth. The wildlife preserve, recreation area, and educational centre, located on the southwest border of the city, was a place residents flocked to during a time when indoor gatherings were discouraged. Engagement has not only held steady but seen improvements.

Fort Whyte volunteers and participants enjoying the outdoors. Photos courtesy of Fort Whyte Alive.

In the last year alone, volunteerism at Fort Whyte Alive has increased by 40 per cent, with 140 of their active volunteers being youth, thanks in part to the new Youth Ambassador program supported by The Winnipeg Foundation. The program allows youth who have already taken part in a summer camp through Fort Whyte Alive to apply to become an ambassador. Applicants are evaluated based on their time at camp, then interviewed to determine what their interests are before being selected and placed in a volunteer position at the organization.

Depending on their interests, youth ambassadors may be placed in roles anywhere from the interpretive centre, where volunteers interact regularly with visitors, to learning from a more experienced volunteer about how to guide a hike, to assisting with Fort Whyte's annual sunset goose flights. Volunteers take part in regular social gatherings and have the opportunity to develop their knowledge through professional development sessions.

Why it works

"We're trying to offer more of an inclusive, diverse volunteer program, and having youth here with our adult volunteers creates a really great community," says Nicole Griffo, Volunteer Manager with Fort Whyte Alive. "The skills you learn when you're in camp and through this program are very transferrable to other areas of life, whether that's at school or during employment."

Griffo says it has been exciting to see youth who have transitioned from summer camp to the ambassador program excel as they take on more leadership in their placements. Fostering a positive volunteer experience along with professional development has several youth ambassadors coming back season after season.

"We do have a lot of volunteers that come back every summer," says Griffo. "Once they volunteer at Fort Whyte, they're in our database and they can volunteer for our winter break camp or our spring break camp, and they get an invite to volunteer for the summer, so they don't have to re-apply."

At Fort Whyte Alive and across the city and province, opportunities to volunteer abound, and help make our communities stronger.

"It's an opportunity to connect with new people and build community," says Seymour. "These organizations offer vital services and supports to community, and without volunteers, many of those would not be available."

To learn more about Fort Whyte Alive's youth ambassador program, visit www.fortwhyte.org.

To learn more about Volunteer Manitoba or to find a volunteer opportunity, visit www.volunteermanitoba.ca.



IMAGINE CANADA REPORT REVEALS IMPORTANCE OF NON-PROFIT AND CHARITABLE SECTOR IN MANITOBA

Manitoba's diverse non-profits and charities have a critical impact on the economy and health & well-being of people across the province. They offer valuable programs and services ranging from child care, housing, and health to arts, employment, and education.

The non-profit sector in Manitoba contributes 10.4% to the province's GDP, constituting \$7.1 billion in economic impact. Community nonprofits contribute \$1.3 billion, constituting 1.9% of Manitoba's GDP.

The non-profit sector employs 114,000 people in Manitoba, 73% of whom are women, with community non-profits employing 32,000 people.

Strategic Plan > Enhanced Charitable Sector Supports

The Foundation is committed to providing capacity-building for the charitable and non-profit sector and underserved organizations, and will support the creation of a Manitoba-wide organization that will be a voice and champion for sector.





SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Thirteen youth, 13 local registered charities, and eight weeks of fun(damental) skill-building for the workplace. This is the premise of The Winnipeg Foundation's Summer Internship Program, a paid eight-week internship that builds on the experience of Youth in Philanthropy participants.

With the goal of providing an opportunity to gain practical work experience, a professional edge in the workplace, and an introduction to the charitable sector, interns are matched with mentors at local registered charities, based on the youths' skills and interests. Mercy Oluwafemi, Youth Program Officer with The Winnipeg Foundation, explains that a lot of thought goes into matching interns with organizations.

"We were very strategic in some of the matching we did this year. We placed some interns in places that might not be the most obvious fit, but it ended up being very successful," she says, "For some it is the very first introduction to the non-profit sector. It provides an opportunity to work with people in that community and understand what it means to make a difference."

Participants experience hands-on, meaningful summer employment and learn about a local charitable organization, while host organizations have the benefit of a full-time staff to complete a short-term project during the course of the summer.

"In The Foundation's Strategic Plan, priorities include empowering the next generation of donors and working with organizations to increase their capacity in areas beyond granting dollars. From The Foundation's perspective, it's a big win for us because we're doing that with this program," says Oluwafemi.



Top: SIP participants take a tour of the Major Incident Response Vehicle during an event with St. James Assiniboia 55+ Senior Centre.

Middle and bottom: SIP participants learn about and take part in movement exercises during a site visit at The Movement Centre.



The summer of 2023 saw summer interns working with bicycles, art, children, and seniors, completing a range of projects from facilitating programming to event support to developing social media strategies.

“The interns learned a lot about confidence and working in a professional environment for the first time – that’s a big deal for a lot of them,” says Oluwafemi.

Throughout the summer, interns and their mentors travelled to each of the host organizations to watch presentations by the corresponding intern, receive a tour of the organization, and learn more about the work each charity does. Organizations in 2023 included The Movement Centre, The WRENCH, St. James Assiniboia 55+ Centre, Graffiti Art Gallery, and Spence Neighbourhood Association.

To learn more about the Summer Internship Program, visit www.wpgfdn.org/sip.



Top: SIP participants take a tour of The WRENCH, helping unload a shipment of bicycles and taking part in a race to remove pedals from each bike.

Bottom: SIP participants take in an information session at Assiniboine Park with St. James Assiniboia 55+ Senior Centre.



Winnipeg's Overdose Crisis Requires Immediate Intervention

URG

Community workers at North End Women's Centre perform life-saving measures, a task that transcends their roles, as non-profit organizations are thrust onto the front lines of Winnipeg's opioid crisis.

"Imagine, you wanted to support people and community and you got a job working in a drop-in at a resource center, and your job is to help people come in every day and support them, and then all of a sudden, now you're needing to grab a naloxone kit, call 911 and, you know, inject a medical substance into people that has the potential to save their life," says Cynthia Drebot, North End Women's Centre (NEWC) executive director.

*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.*



This June, NEWC staff, dedicated to providing vital services to the city's most vulnerable, responded to five drug overdoses within four days, providing CPR and administering naloxone – a medical substance used to revive opioid overdose victims.

"The toll during that particular time period on my staff was massive," Drebot said.

Drebot says it is not that staff aren't willing to administer naloxone and perform chest compressions: "They have the heart, but they also know that's not what they thought they were going to be doing."

The slew of tragedy provoked Drebot to write an "URGENT" email, a desperate call to all levels of government and the philanthropic community to help community agencies manage their grim reality by providing safe consumption sites and immediate resources to community, as the city grapples with a relentless and devastating wave of drug overdoses.

"This is not the job of not-for-profit agencies or the social service sector. We can't keep up. Winnipeg needs safe consumption sites (SCS) and safe supply now," Drebot wrote in the email, underscoring the burden placed upon NEWC's community workers is immense and unsustainable.

Drebot said NEWC will always respond to community needs, "if community needs access to naloxone for themselves, we will provide it. If we need to be trained on naloxone, we will do that. But we're not first responders."

This is not an isolated incident, but rather a chilling manifestation of an epidemic. The crisis is underscored by unsettling statistics; during the course of May 2023, Winnipeg's Fire Paramedic teams deployed naloxone 116 times, a stark testament to the magnitude of the problem.

In the absence of a safe consumption site, safe supply, and sufficient detox treatment options, many users are seeking out community agencies as safe spaces to use in case the drug supply is toxic, assuming agency staff will revive them if needed.

Cynthia Drebot, executive director of North End Women's Centre, is pulling double duty as she fills in as interim director at North Point Douglas Women's Centre.

ENT

Shortly after NEWC issued the call for help, The Winnipeg Foundation and United Way Winnipeg responded, granting \$370,000 to 20 community partners to help ensure organizations got the support they needed. Grants range from \$3,750 to \$25,000 – with a spending flexibility to go to staff training, harm reduction supplies, and safety upgrades.

Emails of gratitude from grant recipients flooded the inboxes of The Winnipeg Foundation and United Way, thanking the organizations for responding to the challenges and changing environments that agencies have and continue to face. Among these was an email from Spence Neighbourhood Association.

“Thank you so much for this. We have been struggling with a leap in overdoses around our site, and it has taken a toll on our, mostly young, staff,” writes Michele Wikkerink, Spence Neighbourhood Association executive director. “It is difficult to go back to regular programming and helping kids when you’ve had to go out and administer naloxone and first aid to someone who is not responding.”

Drebot echoes that sentiment. Staff members recount tales of administering numerous naloxone doses, the fear of encountering an overdose victim on their way home, and the haunting question of ‘what if they cannot save a life’?

“They’re basically dead in front of you until that medication works, and you don’t know if it’s going to work,” Drebot says.

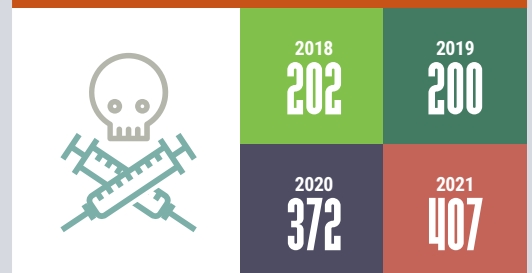
The wear and tear on these dedicated professionals’ mental and emotional well-being is unmistakable, and the specter of burnout looms ominously. The legacy of this moment will be defined by the swiftness and efficacy of the response to prevent further loss of life, preserve the well-being of community workers, and to uphold the fundamental principles of dignity, love, and compassion for all.



ADDICTION AND THE OPIOID CRISIS

An increase in addiction and opioid poisoning in Winnipeg are a key finding in Vital Signs® 2022, a qualitative and quantitative research project of The Winnipeg Foundation. In 2021, twice as many drug-related deaths were reported in Winnipeg than in previous years. Addiction transcends economic and social groups and can be a result of complex trauma, PTSD, and untreated mental illness. Access to supportive programming, community connection, and non-judgmental care are fundamental elements of recovery, employing 32,000 people.

DEATHS FROM SUBSTANCE OVERDOSE IN MANITOBA:



Source: Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Government of Manitoba 2022



MEET THE MOPS TEAM

SHINING A LIGHT ON WINNIPEG'S COMMUNITY HEROES

Most mornings, Val Ballantyne-Lewis drives a retrofitted RV to a downtown parking lot just off of Main Street, which operates as a beacon of hope and support for those grappling with addiction in Winnipeg's downtown.

Affectionately known as Kokum, which means grandmother in Cree, Val has been an integral part of the Sunshine House's Mobile Overdose Prevention Site (MOPS) team since its inception in October 2022. At first, Val was unsure about her nickname, but now proudly embraces it as an honour given by the community she serves.

"I FEEL LIKE
ESPECIALLY
BEING A YOUNG
INDIGENOUS
WOMAN... MY GOAL
WAS TO INSPIRE
OTHER INDIGENOUS
YOUTH."

On a late summer day, The Winnipeg Foundation spent time with the MOPS staff to help shed light on those working in the C.A.R.E area (Community Area for Revitalization and Equity). Val describes MOPS as much more than a place to safely consume substances; it's a space where meaningful connections are formed, divisions are healed, and trust is built.

Val's role during the day is that of a "floater." She circulates in the parking lot, diligently searching for discarded needles while warmly greeting people by name. Many approach her for a comforting hug, and sometimes meaningful tokens, like a pair of orange glass earrings inscribed with "Every Child Matters", are passed to her for safekeeping.

Effectively running MOPS requires a dedicated team of at least three individuals. There's a floater, responsible for outreach and safety, someone managing the tent where people gather for discussions or to use substances, and a third person operating the RV window, which entails handing out harm reduction supplies. On the day The Foundation visited MOPS, Ally Seidlitz was posted at the window.

Before Ally started her role as peer support coordinator, she worked at the Good Will Social Club, but a desire to make a difference led her to joining MOPS. She shares, "Previously, I would build these relationships with community members, and people would be like 'these are the things I need,' and I didn't really have the resources to be able to point them in the right direction. Now I do." This knowledge has allowed Ally to have a tangible impact on people's lives, including administering naloxone, a life-saving antidote for opioid overdoses.

"Obviously, it's really scary to see someone in that state," Ally shares. "There's a little bit of a waiting period to see if you need to administer another shot of naloxone,... it's about two minutes, but it feels like hours." In those intense moments, Ally and the team serve as a lifeline, relying on their training to respond effectively.

MOPS has transcended its role as an overdose prevention site and evolved into a community hub.

Ally describes it as a place where individuals can gather for coffee, engage in heartfelt conversations, and find genuine care. She emphasizes the importance of humanizing those affected by addiction, highlighting that they are more than just drug users; they are people with diverse interests, hobbies, families, and lives.

Another member of the MOPS team, Lisa Eastman, understands the significance of a safe space like MOPS firsthand. She shares, "I didn't necessarily grow up with these people, but I've been through some stuff that people in the community unfortunately may have experienced."

Lisa initially pursued a culinary career, but felt pulled in a different direction, saying, "I feel like especially being a young Indigenous woman... my goal was to inspire other Indigenous youth." She transitioned into community work, eventually finding her place in child and youth care before joining the MOPS team last December. Drawing from her own life experiences, Lisa brings an unparalleled level of empathy and understanding to her work, allowing her to build connections that go beyond traditional healthcare boundaries, providing a level of comfort and trust that is often elusive in institutional settings. This work is fulfilling, it's about recognizing the inherent dignity of every individual, regardless of their circumstances, and providing them with resources and a warm cup of coffee in the morning, says Lisa.

Working at MOPS is both rewarding and challenging, and throughout it all the team exemplifies unwavering dedication in a world where stigma often overshadows compassion. Val, Ally, and Lisa remind us that every story is worth hearing, and every person deserves a chance to thrive.



HARM REDUCTION

Harm reduction recognizes individuals facing challenges related to substance use, homelessness, or mental health need support and care, rather than judgment and punitive measures.

Harm reduction is about saving lives, preserving human dignity, and fostering a more inclusive and empathetic society. Part of this initiative entails access to clean needles and safe injection sites to reduce the spread of bloodborne diseases, distributing naloxone kits to prevent fatal opioid overdoses, and creating a safe space of support.

By promoting harm reduction, we help to build a more resilient and compassionate community where individuals are empowered to seek help, make positive changes, and find the support they need on their unique journeys to recovery and healing.



Opposite page: Ally Seidlitz and Val Ballantyne-Lewis with a MOPS participant.
Above: Sunshine House's Mobile Overdose Prevention unit.

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.



GIZHE WAA TI-SII-WIN SERVICE DELIVERY EXPO

Respect and dignity are at the forefront

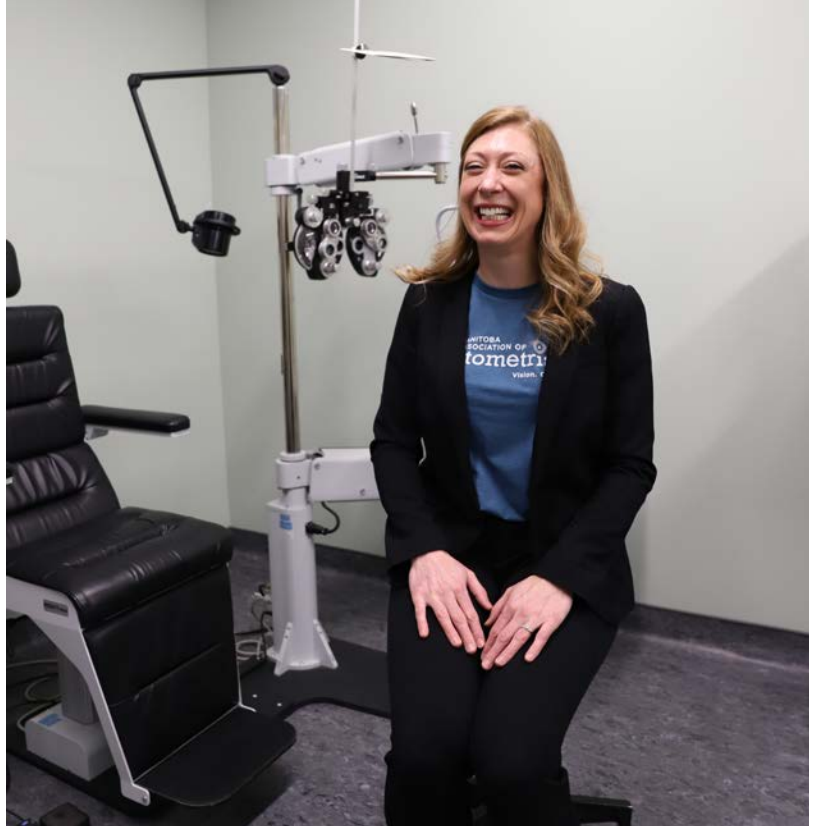
The Gizhe Waa Ti-Sii-Win Expo is an annual volunteer-driven event that began in 2018. The expo provides a broad range of services, from tax preparation to eye exams, for people with lower incomes.

The Winnipeg Foundation is a proud supporter of the Expo, and staff were excited to head over to Siloam Mission the day of the event to speak with some of the volunteers lending their expertise and care to those seeking services. With more than 30 service providers set up within the complex and throughout the parking lot, Siloam Mission was bustling.

Dr. Carmen Recksiedler, an optometrist, explains that although this is her first time participating in the expo, she volunteers regularly to provide eye exams through Siloam Mission. “This is an opportunity to reach individuals who have difficulty accessing care, and Manitoba’s optometrists are always working hard to reach every person in every corner. This platform allows us to provide a high-quality eye exam,” she said.

If someone does need glasses, Carmen explains that through a partnership with the EssilorLuxottica Foundation, they can obtain glasses free of charge using vouchers and bus tickets provided. Carmen says that throughout her time volunteering at Siloam she’s been moved by people’s stories; “Hearing about how meaningful that pair of glasses is – they allow people to see clearly again and to feel like they are being seen in the world.”

Al Wiebe, community advocate and lived experience leadership trainer.



Dr. Carmen Recksiedler from Visual Eyes Optometry.

Jose Solitana is a licensed practical nurse, and one of a team of foot care nurses from Norwest Community Co-op who volunteer at the Siloam Mission service expo. This is his second year volunteering for the event, which he says provides clients with education and important preventative care.

“We know that clients of Siloam Mission really need follow up for their foot care, and that’s one of the very important services that we can offer,” says Jose, “Foot care is very important in order to do daily activities.”

Jose says many of the clients his team works with during the expo are not aware of the risks of foot injuries. A simple callus or blister that goes untreated can lead to a host of more serious issues. Education is part of what the foot care team provides. “We’re not only cutting toenails, we’re foot care nurses,” says Jose. “In assessment, we do education about taking care of their feet. That’s one of the components of our services.”

Shannon Dyck works with The Winnipeg Humane Society and is spending the day set up in Siloam Mission’s parking lot providing wellness exams and vaccines for pet dogs and cats. She explains that the Humane Society has a program called One Health, which helps underserved communities care for their pets. “We believe that everyone has the right to own animals, we know that they benefit people’s mental health and well-being. A lot of people suffer from loneliness, and animals help with that. We would like for there to be more veterinary access for people who can’t afford it but deserve to have the companionship.”

Al Wiebe, a long-time community advocate with lived experience of homelessness, says that every day on the streets can be cloudy, and “this one is a good one” for people who could use a boost. “Last year, someone got \$3,500 back when they got their taxes filed – that’s a life changing amount for someone living on the streets.”

Al explains that the expo is “a one stop shop for people to get a haircut, get cleaned up and feel good about themselves. Human dignity and being treated with respect are so important, that’s what this day is about.”

CHANGE IS AFOOT

THE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION IS WORKING TOWARDS GOALS OUTLINED IN ITS 2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

In February, The Foundation released an ambitious new strategic plan, which outlines organization-wide shifts in everything from staffing structure to how to best support community. We caught up with Megan Tate, Vice President of the Community Impact department (formerly Community Grants) at The Winnipeg Foundation, for her view of what's changing, and why.

The Winnipeg Foundation (TWF): Your team has a new title; can you explain the significance of this change?

Megan: The department has changed its title from Community Grants to Community Impact. This change reflects the philosophy that, while grantmaking is an important way to support community, we are looking at other tools we can use, from agency endowment funds, which community organizations have unrestricted access to, to leveraging the skills and knowledge that exist within The Foundation to support organizations.

TWF: Can you expand on some of the new ways The Foundation is working to support community?

Megan: The Winnipeg Foundation will always be committed to supporting the projects of individual community organizations, but capacity building across the non-profit and charitable sector is really important too. Community non-profits alone contribute \$1.3 billion to Manitoba's economy, and more than 100,000 people work in the non-profit sector across the province! This is part of the systems change outlined in our new strategic plan; the sector needs to be supported to be able to serve community, and it needs to be acknowledged that it meaningfully contributes to our province in terms of jobs, services, and economic impact.

TWF: The Strategic Plan outlines goals of increasing community well-being in an area within Winnipeg defined as the Community Area for Revitalization and Equity (C.A.R.E.) as well as focusing on kids in care. Can you further describe these goals?

Megan: We are continuing to have conversations with organizations working in the C.A.R.E. area and are learning more about supporting their work. The challenges in that area are very visible, but what is less obvious is the real sense of community that exists - there is a lot of knowledge held by people with lived experience of homelessness, addiction, and poverty, many of whom are working in the area. In terms of kids in care, we know from End Homelessness Winnipeg's 2022 Street Census that a significant portion of people who are unhoused have spent time in the child welfare system. We want to support families and avoid having children enter the family welfare system in the first place, and we want to support better outcomes for those youth aging out of care. These interconnected goals are an inherent aspect of The Foundation's vision of Winnipeg being a city where community life flourishes for all.

TWF: The Foundation is still in the process of realizing the unprecedented Bergen gift, how do you see this gift transforming The Foundation's work?

Megan: The Bergen gift is such a special gift to our community in that it is 'unrestricted.' This means once the gift is realized and we can start grantmaking, we can address urgent issues in our community today. It also means that 25 years from now, when someone else is sitting in my chair, we'll be able to address challenges we haven't even considered today. The first community fund gifts in the 1930s would have been used to help people suffering during the great depression, in the 1950s it was helping kids with polio, in the 1970s community funds supported refugees from Vietnam... We don't know what our community will need in 25 years, but we do know, thanks to the Bergen gift, that The Foundation will be able to help.





**MOVING TOWARDS
SUSTAINABILITY AND
ACCESSIBILITY**

Green Action Centre and Transportation Options Network for Seniors form a partnership

In a province where the only option to travel between communities is a private vehicle, and a city where transit access is limited in some neighbourhoods, owning a vehicle can seem like a necessity. But what happens as residents age and lose the ability to drive or the person they rely on to drive them?

Having the ability to easily and independently move around our community is a key ingredient for a high quality of life. A partnership between Green Action Centre and Transportation Options Network for Seniors (TONS) brought a Mobility Fair for Older Adults, supported by a grant from The Winnipeg Foundation, to the River Heights Community Centre on September 13. The fair took place on a sunny fall day and featured a range of organizations focused on mobility and transportation for older adults. Offerings included a myriad of bikes, e-bikes, trikes, and other options that could be tested by participants on-site, with a goal of showcasing multimodal transportation options that can lead to a healthy, independent, and sustainable lifestyle, and on building the foundational skills needed to use these options.

“To be a senior in this city is super challenging, logistically,” says Josep Seras Gubert, executive director of Green Action Centre. “We think that it’s important to offer these healthy and independent options for seniors, because they are more at risk of being dependent on other people or being isolated.” Seras Gubert hopes that learning more about multi-modal transportation will give people the confidence to try different options.



Mobility Fair attendees explore different transportation options.



Samantha Rodeck, executive director of TONS, echoed this sentiment: “We want everybody to be able to drive, but there’s also a large percentage of people that may not have ever driven or may not have the financial means to drive. So, we see that there’s a lot of driving reliance.” She adds that it’s also not always feasible to be “reliant on family and friends for transportation.”

The partnership between the two organizations was a natural fit – Green Action Centre brought its knowledge of active and sustainable transportation and its commitment to working with more vulnerable communities, while TONS brought its extensive community connections. As a team they pulled together organizations including but not limited to Bike Winnipeg, Peg City Car Co-Op, The Plain Bicycle Project, Winnipeg Transit, Easy Street Rehabilitation, and The WRENCH to engage older adults at the fair.

Rodeck explains that TONS views transportation as a skill; not everyone knows how to ride a bike or take a bus. The mobility fair’s focus on building skills helps ensure older adults have freedom in their community to access resources and goods including basics like groceries, health appointments, employment, and volunteer opportunities. Learning how to use different forms of transportation can help people stay independent as their abilities change throughout the course of their life.

“You would be surprised,” she says, “Even getting to church, to a doctor’s office, or going for coffee with a friend is a huge challenge for many people. So multimodal transportation will really alleviate that. We know not everybody can ride a bike, but we hope that they will be able to think a little bit broader than just one way of getting around.”

Part of educating people is changing the assumptions they may have about different types of transportation.

“It’s about helping people have access to their community and staying independent for as long as possible, because we focus on using an aging in place lens. When we create these environments and provide education, it helps people see that biking isn’t just good for kids, it’s good for older adults. It gives people the flexibility to decide ‘Maybe I don’t want to take the bus today, or maybe I don’t want to drive, but I will walk or use the scooter instead.’”

Seras Gubert says the benefits of multi-modal transportation are essential to accessing resources in the community, but that using these modes of transportation has additional benefits.

“Unless you have the independence to move around, aging can lead to mostly sitting indoors, or sitting in a private vehicle before moving indoors,” says Seras Gubert. “A healthy, independent, and sustainable lifestyle increases your connection to other people. You can get a more connected sense of community. It’s a holistic approach to lifestyle, all of these interesting pieces that connect us to nature, and the community. You meet new people, you trust other people, and that is essential. Those are some of the values society should promote more, because it creates a ripple effect of the things we can share as a community.”

To learn more about Green Action Centre, visit www.greenactioncentre.ca.

To learn more about TONS, visit www.tonsmb.org.



A dedicated cyclist is all smiles after a Winnipeg Transit bike-rack tutorial and a quick tune-up courtesy of The Wrench.

Allie Caporale, Resource Manager with the Manitoba Eco-Network. Photo courtesy of the Manitoba Eco-Network.



CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCY – MANITOBA ECO NETWORK

Thriving in the face of climate change

Mitigation is often top of mind when considering climate change, but building resiliency is equally as important. A new project from the Manitoba Eco-Network is implementing ideas about how to create thriving, resilient communities in the face of a changing climate.

Allie Caporale, resource manager with the Manitoba Eco-Network, is organizing and coordinating the Climate Change Resiliency Project, a partnership between Manitoba Eco-Network and a group of local community organizations that is supported by The Winnipeg Foundation. The project's goal is to prepare for the effects of climate change while shedding light on how environmental issues can intersect with social and economic challenges.

"We want to see more walkable places, with a 'people first' mindset," says Caporale. "We want people to be able to have jobs that are close to their homes. That improves resiliency and people's sense of control over their lives, their sense of agency and sense of ownership over their own community."

The project got started in early 2020, as the pandemic began to unfold. The first step involved collaborating with non-profit and non-governmental organizations across Manitoba to assess the state of climate resilience planning, identify gaps, and gather perspectives. The results were compiled into "The Will is the Way," a report outlining the importance of political will and funding in climate resilience efforts.

Step two began in April 2021, and focused on translating these findings into concrete plans. This phase involved working closely with community partners, including West Broadway Community Organization, the West End Resource Centre, and Spence Neighbourhood Association. Two focus areas emerged from these discussions; the importance of green space and supporting residents during extreme weather events.

According to Caporale, this project will create low-cost, community-driven solutions like green-spaces and cooling centers. "It's really difficult to get trees to survive in an urban environment," she says. "Tree canopy health is probably our top priority, so we are looking at developing infrastructure that would allow green things to grow, like trellises that can provide shade. I'm very much cheered by the effectiveness of something as simple as a tree."

Caporale and her team of students from the University of Winnipeg actively included neighbourhoods in designing and implementing solutions tailored to their specific needs. She believes cities should prioritize people's safety, comfort, and well-being over cars and other infrastructure. This approach reaffirms that resilient communities are more sustainable and equitable.

"During the past few years, The Manitoba Eco-Network has really taken more of an environmental justice angle. Environmental protection includes protecting the well-being of all humans," explains Caporale. "Especially because the people who are most impacted by environmental problems tend to be the poorest and tend to be of Indigenous identity. It's not fair that these folks must endure worse environmental impacts."

Strategic Plan > Climate Change

Climate change is one of the most urgent issues of our time, and failure to address it will affect many of the priorities The Foundation cares about, including equity & human rights, health, poverty alleviation, recreation, and community well-being. Climate change is one of the key lenses we will view all our community work through.

Above: The "tree trellis" that started it all, located in Somerville, Massachusetts. Photo courtesy of the Manitoba Eco-Network.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION WEEK

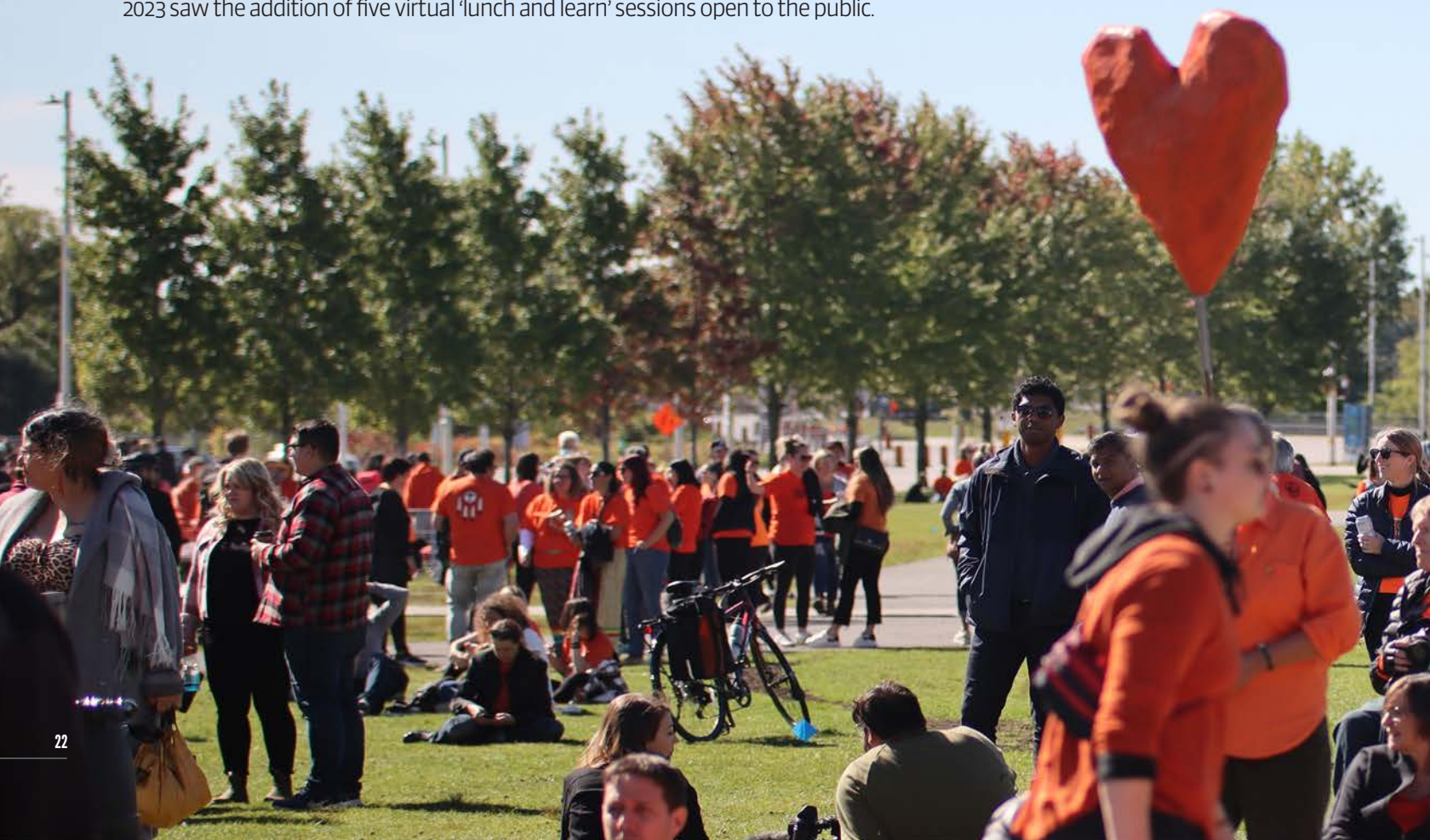


Remembering survivors
while creating a better future
for the next generation

Since 2020, the last week of September has seen Kindergarten to Grade 12 students from across Canada gathering virtually to learn about the history of Indigenous Peoples during Truth and Reconciliation Week. What started as two, 45-minute videos in 2020 has grown into a week-long event reaching over a million students. Five days of virtual teachings from First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people from coast-to-coast make up the bulk of the programming, capped off with two live events in Ottawa. And, due to popular demand, Truth and Reconciliation Week 2023 saw the addition of five virtual ‘lunch and learn’ sessions open to the public.

Truth and Reconciliation Week, organized by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), aims to provide education on the history and legacy of residential schools. Brenda Gunn, academic and research director at NCTR explains the goal of this national conversation is to share the truth of survivors of residential schools with as many audiences as possible. “The survivors that we have the honour of working with here at the NCTR are very clear that there can be no reconciliation without truth,” says Gunn.

The theme for Truth and Reconciliation Week 2023 was Honouring Survivors. The theme was a natural fit for this year, building off previous programming that focused on remembering the children who perished at residential schools in Canada. To date, the NCTR and Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) have documented more than 4,100 deaths of First Nations, Inuit, and



Métis children in residential schools across Canada, though former TRC Commissioner Murray Sinclair has estimated that the actual number of Indigenous children who died in residential schools may be closer to 6,000. Truth and Reconciliation Week programming in 2022 was “part of the response and helping people understand the information that was becoming available about missing children and unmarked burials,” explains Gunn.

“It seemed to be the natural progression in our programming this year, to focus on honouring survivors of residential schools. We are reminded that survivors are getting older and older, and that we are losing survivors far too quickly. It is important to hear from survivors and learn their truth while they are still with us and find ways to record and preserve those truths for the longer period,” says Gunn, “They are more than just survivors of residential schools. They have lived lives and have contributed to Canadian society. We are really honouring all aspects of survivors, and we want to do that while they are still with us, and really focus on sharing those truths with schools across Canada.”

In 2015, the TRC released 94 calls to action to “redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation.” As of 2022, less than 20 of the calls to action were completed. There are four calls to action that address Education for Reconciliation, and Gunn says one of the reasons why the NCTR continues to provide education around truth and reconciliation and the history and legacy of residential schools is because existing curriculums in schools across the country vary.

“Different provinces are in different places with their work toward fulfilling the calls to action around education,” explains

Gunn, noting that the NCTR is also the legacy body to the TRC, which means it holds all of the statements provided by residential school survivors to the TRC. “This puts us in a very unique position to share insights and share the experiences and legacies of residential schools with Canadians.”

Another valuable aspect of the Centre's Truth and Reconciliation Week programming is how it brings classrooms together from coast to coast to coast. This gives students the opportunity to learn this shared history together not just with their classmates, but with Canadian children from across the country. Together, students experience sessions that dig deeper into the history and experiences of Indigenous people as well as sessions with writers, artists, musicians, and filmmakers who share how different mediums can be used to share their important stories.

Gunn explains that even with the broad reach of Truth and Reconciliation Week programming, the NCTR has a limited capacity to educate every Canadian on the residential experience, especially in a way that is specific to the distinct locations across Canada.

“One of the things we wanted to do this year was to share with classrooms how they can learn more about residential schools. We will share a bit about the work of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and what we do, and some of the resources we have available to begin to learn more and dig deeper to understand the history of residential schools.”

To learn more about Truth and Reconciliation Week and the NCTR, visit www.nctr.ca.

*Photo courtesy of the
National Centre for Truth and
Reconciliation.*





GROWING CRAFT IN COMMUNITY

MANITOBA CRAFT COUNCIL NEW ART INITIATIVES
BRIDGING COMMUNITIES



Workshop participants learn how to sew mittens from donated fur coats.

Spools of colorful thread and pelts of beaver, mink, and muskrat are piled up in a cozy, sun-filled room. Sheila Cailleau, a workshop instructor for Manitoba Craft Council (MCC), leads a group of volunteers in constructing fur mittens for Winnipeg's homeless community.

"I wish I had a magic wand so I could make it so people didn't need them. They could have them because they wanted them, instead of 'oh my gosh, my hands are purple, I suck on my fingertips so I can get blood back into my hands'," says Cailleau. "I've been there, done that, and it's horrible."

Many years ago, Cailleau experienced homelessness firsthand, spending a brief but challenging period on the street. Today, as leather worker and founder of Magpie Chiq, Cailleau says she looks back on those difficult times with gratitude, knowing it has given her a perspective that few others possess and through her lived experience she is reaching out to help others.

When pulling up to a traffic light, Cailleau says she would ask people what they needed; sometimes it was food, sometimes money, but often it was something to keep their hands warm. So, her journey began with a simple act of kindness—giving away mittens that she crafted for a living. Instead of selling the mittens, which retail for between \$300-\$600, she started distributing them to those in need on Winnipeg's streets.

"I started to give away mitts that normally would have put food on my table, but this was just more important," Cailleau explains. "I wanted to do it on a much larger scale, but I couldn't afford to continue to give away the stuff that I would normally sell to support my family."

Her determination to continue distributing her handcrafted mittens to those in need led her to a unique idea — repurposing fur coats that would otherwise end up in landfills.

One coat could yield multiple pairs of mittens, with the number depending on the coat's size and type of fur. For instance, a mid-sized coat could produce up to six pairs of mittens, a full length coat up to nine pairs. This transformation not only provides much-needed warmth but also honours the animals and the owners these coats once belonged to.

When word got out, Cailleau's project, Warm Hands Warm Hearts, received overwhelming support from the community, including from MCC who, with a grant from The Winnipeg Foundation, created two new partnerships through the Growing Craft initiative. The first project, Warm Hands Warm Hearts, helps support Cailleau's work through a series of two-day workshops over the summer, each session with nearly 12 participants. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, with full sessions and a waitlist of hopeful volunteers. The first session is spent deconstructing the coats and cutting out the patterns, and the second is used to stitch together the pieces, transforming them into warm mittens.

The second Growing Craft project is with MOSAIC Newcomer Family Resource Centre. MCC offered four Métis beading workshops to English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners, with more than 70 people attending.

**"WE WANT TO HAVE A WAY
FOR PEOPLE WHO JUST LOVE
MAKING TO BE INVOLVED.
THEY DON'T HAVE TO BE
PROFESSIONALS."**



Sheila Cailleau with a pair of handmade mittens destined to keep a pair of hands warm this winter.

"A lot of our communities' kind of exist in their own little places and they do their own kind of thing, and I think that being able to use craft as a means of building community and connections is a really beautiful commitment," said Tammy Sutherland, director of the MCC.

While most of the work the MCC does involves the professional craft sector, Sutherland says it is equally important to get involved in the local community.

"On an organizational level we're always trying to reach new communities and new audiences - our goal is to support and promote crafts. Most of what we do is in the professional craft sector, but we also want to be part of the local community," Sutherland explains. "We want to have a way for people who just love making to be involved. They don't have to be professionals."

Although Cailleau is an expert, not all the volunteers are, and what started as a personal endeavor

has evolved into a community effort. Cailleau says everyone played a part in Warm Hands Warms Hearts, either by donating fur coats or helping with the transformation process.

"I'm so grateful for everybody coming in to help. Every single thing they did, no matter how great or small they thought it was, was tremendous," Cailleau exclaims. "It was tremendous because it helped put a pair of mittens on a pair of hands."



MEHRA FAMILY

SCHOLARSHIPS

CULINARY CREATIVITY HONOURS TRADITION WHILE
EXPANDING DEFINITIONS OF SOUTH ASIAN CUISINE

This year marks the beginning of an exciting new scholarship created by the Mehra family, owners of The East India Company, a successful restaurant business that got its start in Winnipeg. The award will provide funding to a BIPOC Culinary Arts student at Red River College who has a passion for innovation and recipe creation. The family hopes to invite award recipients to showcase food creations at East India Company.

We heard from the Mehra family about the importance of diversity in the culinary world, the inherent creativity that comes with entrepreneurship, and the melding of tradition and innovation.

TWF: Can you tell me about your parents' love for food, and the place of food in your family?

Mehra family: We believe their love for food is tied to home which, in their case, was Delhi and Mumbai. Our parents have told us that when our father first came to Canada in the 1960s, it was nearly impossible to find South Asian cuisine anywhere in the city. They would often travel to multiple specialty grocers around the city in hopes of being able to acquire the ingredients necessary to make the meals that reminded them of home. This is something that so many of us find comfort in.

TWF: Your parents moved to Winnipeg in the 1970s, are there any specific reasons they chose Winnipeg as their home? Or ways that Winnipeg influenced, supported, or shaped the family business?

Mehra family: Our father immigrated to Winnipeg to study engineering at the University of Manitoba in the late 1960s. The South Asian population was relatively small in the city at the time, so their initial desire to open a restaurant was coupled with a yearning to also build community. Their first restaurant, Maharaja, located on Sherbrook Street, was open during the evenings when our dad would return from the university. The restaurant had quite a following because there really wasn't anything like it in the city. Eventually our dad started a film night in the restaurant, renting Indian films from a distributor in New York to screen in the restaurant every Sunday! They did all this to create and foster community within the South Asian diaspora when there were very few people around. In turn, the community embraced and celebrated what they were doing which ultimately helped in creating a new cultural landscape in the middle of the Canadian prairies.

This support led them to eventually open Mehra's Deli (McDermot Avenue) which was right across the street from the Health Sciences Centre and the Medical College. There, their business expanded in a really beautiful way; students, nurses, and doctors would pack into our restaurant. Our parents ran every aspect of the business in the most gracious and loving way—ma and dad both cooking, cleaning, and serving. They were overjoyed with the support. This restaurant became India Gardens and then they opened the East India Company in the 90s which continues to operate in downtown Winnipeg.



Kamal and Sudha Mehra,
courtesy of the Mehra family

TWF: What inspired your family to start a scholarship fund, and what do you hope it will accomplish?

Mehra family: As a family, we feel very grateful to have been in business for over 50 years. Like many diasporic people, our parents struggled in their early days in Winnipeg. We will never take that for granted. That we can support this scholarship fund now hopefully makes it slightly easier for others who share our enthusiasm for South Asian cuisine and culture.

TWF: The scholarship criteria references recipe testing and creativity. When many people think about "regional" cuisine (Sri Lankan, Ukrainian, Ethiopian, Greek etc.) they think of traditional recipes - can you speak to the importance of culinary innovation, particularly in a South Asian context?

Mehra family: South Asia as a region contains many different countries and cultures and we believe that encouraging innovation and creativity as criteria would lead to exciting results for culinary students. Traditional techniques and recipes are the foundations of any great chef's ability. However, it is essential for the next generation of culinary students to innovate and continue to elevate our cuisines. Ultimately, these students have the potential to combine their rich cultural traditions and skillsets in an exciting new landscape, to endlessly expand the definition of South Asian and diaspora.

RESOURCE CENTRE CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

STARTS SECOND HALF OF CENTURY WITH
FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND HOUSING PROJECT



With a new location, an exciting new housing project, and a sold-out fall fundraising gala, Rainbow Resource Centre is ready for the next 50 years.

Rainbow Resource Centre has had many iterations since it was founded as a campus club at the University of Manitoba called *Gays for Equality* in 1972. During the past half century, the organization morphed from a groundbreaking, student-led club that provided peer support and opportunities for the 2SLGBTQ+ to combat isolation, to an advocacy group fighting for the rights of its community, challenging political candidates on their platforms, and working to encourage anti-homophobia training within Winnipeg School Division.

Today, Rainbow Resource Centre defines itself through three pillars: space, services, and advocacy, according to executive director Norreen Mian.

“Space really means ensuring that we can nurture inclusive spaces, whether within Rainbow [Resource Centre] or out in the community. We do this through diversity, equity, and inclusion training in workplaces and schools,” says Mian.

At Rainbow Resource Centre’s new location at 545 Broadway, an entirely new type of space is being built – Canada’s first housing for 2SLGBTQ+ adults. The Winnipeg Foundation is proud to support this project, which is a partnership with Westminster Housing Society, a non-profit housing developer that rehabilitates and constructs affordable housing in West Broadway and surrounding neighborhoods.

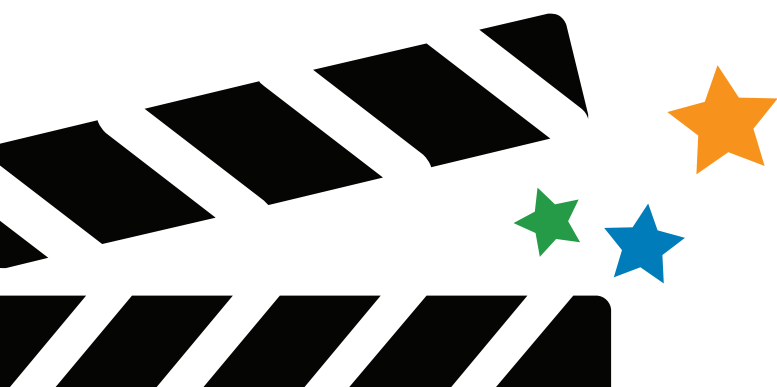
“Our goal was to build affordable housing for 2SLGBTQ+ seniors, because there’s a real fear of the possibility of seniors going back into the closet when they enter a congregate living or long-term care setting,” says Mian.

The housing complex, which will consist of 21 units, is a way to provide seniors with an opportunity to age in place for as long as possible. The housing will be attached to Rainbow Resource Centre’s main location, increasing the organization’s footprint, and creating a campus that will serve as a third space – a place that is neither home nor a workplace, but a place people can go to feel comfortable in themselves and free to spend their time. The project is expected to be completed in the spring of 2024.

To learn more about Rainbow Resource Centre, its history, housing project, or to join the wait-list for its upcoming 50th anniversary gala, visit www.rainbowresourcecentre.org.

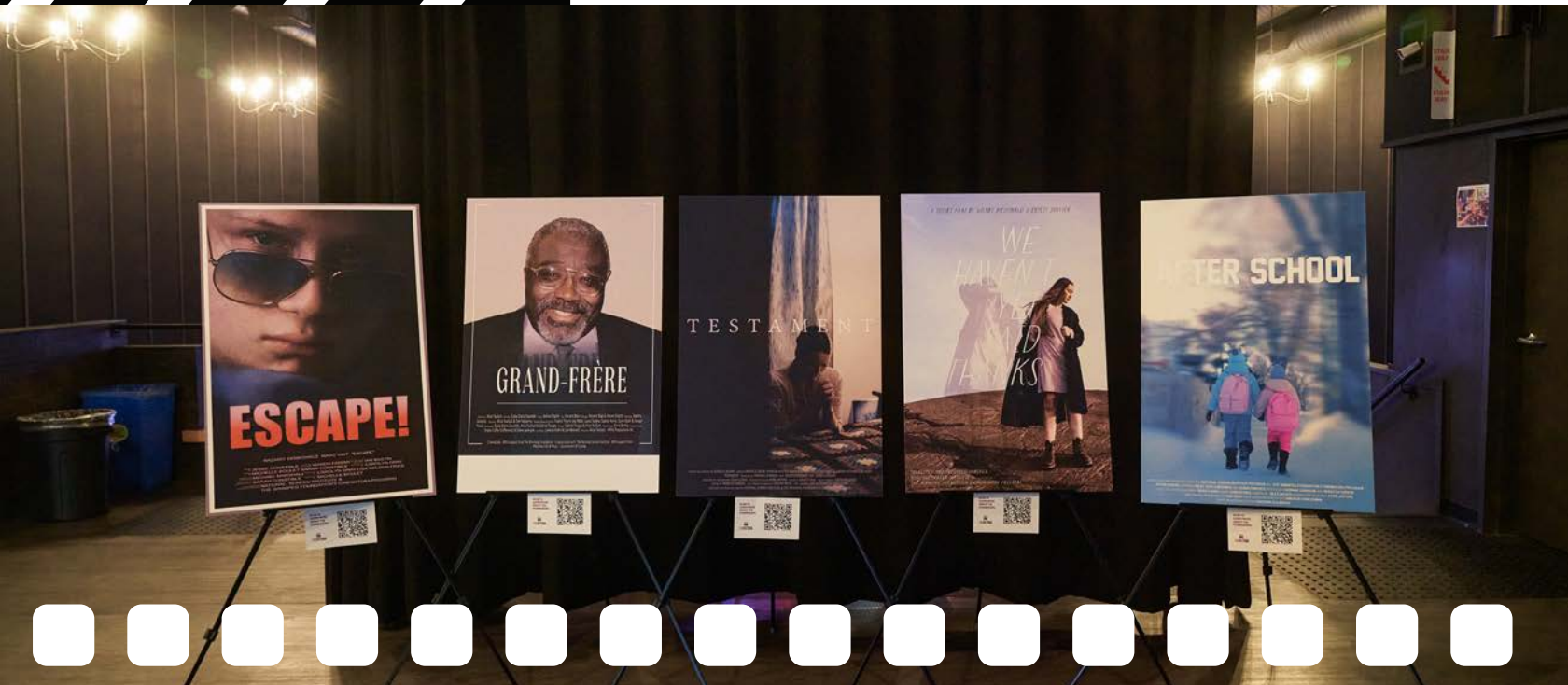
Sense of Belonging

Having a sense of belonging is a key finding in Winnipeg’s Vital Signs® 2022. A sense of belonging is a human need, much like food and shelter, and is linked to positive social participation and engagement, stronger feelings of safety, and better health overall. Being part of a community and having access to places that foster connection are crucial components of well-being.



CINEMATOBA FILM FESTIVAL

Cinematoba posters welcome movie-goers in the lobby of The Park Theatre.



CELEBRATING GENEROSITY THROUGH FILM

The Park Theatre marquee illuminated the September night sky as people streamed through its doors to attend the screening of five short films celebrating generosity.

“We are so excited to finally be able to bring this project to life. Sharing stories of generosity in all its forms enriches everyone’s lives. The Winnipeg Foundation is proud to have been a partner with NSI [National Screen Institute] in such a creative and important project for our community,” said Winnipeg Foundation President and CEO Sky Bridges at the screening.

In 2021, The Winnipeg Foundation, marking its centennial year, sought to collaborate with community to showcase the spirit of generosity through the eyes of Manitobans while supporting Winnipeg’s vibrant arts community. In partnership with the National Screen Institute – Canada (NSI), the organizations created Cinematoba, a program pairing five filmmakers with various levels of experience, each with a mentor.

"It takes a lot of bravery to share your story for screen," says Joy Loewen, CEO at NSI. "I am proud of all the filmmakers for committing to this project. The process of filmmaking is one that can be really intimidating, and we wanted to address that."

Although the pandemic stalled the project, it resumed with vigor in May 2022 when nearly 50 applicants from across the province pitched their ideas. Loewen notes the process was competitive, with an independent jury meticulously sifting through submissions and ultimately selecting five talented Manitoba filmmakers: Alice Teufack, Carolyn Gray, Faustina Dalmacio, Hilary McDonald, and Jessica Landry, who each possess varying levels of production knowledge and film experience, from first-time filmmakers to seasoned cinema experts.

Although having five female filmmakers was not deliberate, it is also not something to shy away from, says Loewen. "We need to hear the stories that have not been told and, in this case, they are being told by female filmmakers. These were the five strongest projects at this time, and we hope there will be more rounds so we can get more perspectives in the future."

Cam Bennett, the NSI project manager for Cinematoba, expressed his delight at the diverse range of projects that emerged, stating, "It's refreshing because you never know what you're going to get, and we got a nice variety of projects."

The application process was not genre-specific, which allowed the filmmakers to capture the essence of the theme and portray generosity on screen in various ways, Bennett says. "I think the most exciting thing is that we didn't make five films that are the same."

The mentor/mentee program ran for approximately nine months and filmmakers were each granted \$10,000. Based on their level of experience, the successful applicants were paired with industry mentors; Danielle Sturk, Elise Swerhone, Leona Krahn, Rebecca Gibson, and Shereen Jerrett. The mentors supported filmmakers through the different phases of the storytelling project.

No filmmaker made their film as an independent entity, Bennett notes. "They worked with cinematographers, they worked with editors, they worked with composers, they worked with actors...and it's gratifying to see that work come to life."

There is an incredible diversity within those stories, which each dig into subject matter, cultures, and geographical location, explains Loewen. The films, which center around various manifestations of generosity, serve as bridges to essential conversations, prompting viewers to reflect on what generosity means to them, Loewen says.

Loewen and Bennett both shared their hopes for the project's legacy. Bennett says, "I think that what the legacy of this commitment will be, are these five beautiful films that will hopefully travel and find their audience." Loewen, who has announced her departure from NSI, views Cinematoba as a community builder with a lasting impact, saying, "It's my hope that we started something here that will live beyond my tenure, because it can and will take on different forms."



From left to right: NSI CEO Joy Loewen with filmmakers Carolyn Gray, Alice Teufack, Faustina Dalmacia, and Jessica Landry, and The Winnipeg Foundation's President and CEO Sky Bridges. Hilary McDonald was unable to attend in-person but participated virtually.

Opposite page: A bustling evening saw attendees mingle, take in short films, and enjoy a vibrant panel discussion with the filmmakers.

“THEY WORKED WITH
CINEMATOGRAPHERS, THEY
WORKED WITH EDITORS, THEY
WORKED WITH COMPOSERS,
THEY WORKED WITH ACTORS...
AND IT'S GRATIFYING TO SEE
THAT WORK COME TO LIFE.”



From its hyper-local roots in New York in the 1970s, urban art has grown on a global scale. Although the genre tends to be associated with younger demographics, hip hop and graffiti's artistry appeals to a surprisingly broad range of people.

In Winnipeg, a unique creative partnership between Gwen Sector Living Centre and Graffiti Art Programming (GAP) is allowing forms of urban art to be explored by older adults.

Modelled after a senior's program in Chicago, the Golden Age club in the North End of Winnipeg was Canada's first senior's drop-in centre. In the 1980s the centre was renamed Gwen Sector Creative Living Centre, as a tribute to a prominent community organizer and volunteer at the Golden Age Club.

Celebrating its 35th anniversary as Gwen Sector Creative Living Centre this summer, the organization's offerings have evolved over the years. Through holistic programming ranging from fitness classes, lunch programs, lectures, and workshops, Gwen Sector has something for people with a variety of needs and interests.

Urban art has been a welcome addition to Gwen Sector programming, with the creative artform being selected for two seniors workshops this summer. By partnering with GAP, older adults were shown a new way to 'ignite their creativity and unleash their inner artists!'

"This particular one with Graffiti Gallery, is one of these wonderful workshops where we get to work with a community partner, bringing in someone from another organization and sharing their experience with our seniors," says Dan Saidman, program coordinator at Gwen Sector.

URBAN ART

FOR OLDER ADULTS

GRAFFITI CROSSES GENERATIONAL AND CULTURAL LINES



From left to right: Ethan Baranyk, Dan Saidman, and Trude Shastel making art at Gwen Sector.

Dan had a relationship with GAP's executive director, Steve Wilson, prior to joining Gwen Sector. Steve, a personal mentor to Dan, reached out to Gwen Sector during the pandemic, wanting to connect more with seniors. The collaboration was based on the idea of developing arts and craft kits that could be used in nursing homes and retirement centres by recreation facilitators to run progressive art programming. Workshops at Gwen Sector were held to help to develop kits that would resonate with older adults.

The workshops, which are supported by The Winnipeg Foundation, are based on GAP models that have been adapted to provide programming for seniors in a progressive way. It's less about traditional graffiti art, made with a spray can, and more about urban graphic design and the artistic side of urban culture.

Ethan Baranyk, the program coordinator at Studio 393 - GAP's primary outreach program - has led the Gwen Sector workshops and has found his own community through this experience.

"The people at Gwen Sector are very aware of community and of what that word means, how it affects them, and how it helps them," says Ethan. "I love the community here. I love coming here, working with everybody, and creating some great art and just being a part of everything that is going on here."

Though urban art is a new form of creativity for most participants, little was needed to adapt GAP's programming. "Participants at Gwen Sector are a little bit more advanced [than youth participants] in what they're able to take in," says Ethan. "So, I guess in that way we've had to adapt our programming to better tailor to what their skills are."

One of the participants in the workshop, Trude Shastel, has taken part in Gwen Sector programming for four years. For Trude, Gwen Sector programming was a family affair, as she would accompany her mother. Trude learned about different program offerings and has been hooked ever since.

"I was out in left field when I saw the word graffiti - I thought we would be spray-painting. I was excited. I came in with a dirty shirt and everything else," says Trude. "I saw all this nice white paper on the table, I thought this wasn't graffiti. It was something else."

For Trude, it expanded her understanding about and enhanced her appreciation of the urban art form. "I had no idea what it was until Ethan was brought on board and offered these craft courses," says Trude. "It's just really an enjoyable afternoon for all of us!"

The Gwen Sector/GAP workshops are less about the final product, and more about creating community. They provide an opportunity for participants to have a space where they feel comfortable, a space to reach across cultural and generation divides to make something new.





VITAL CONVERSATION AT THE GATHERING

Anchoring in Community

The Vital Signs® 2022 report played an important role in developing The Winnipeg Foundation's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan and has been central within The Foundation's outreach to different communities, organizations, and donor groups. The report's key findings include more easily observable issues such as homelessness and addiction, but also found that a lack of confidence in institutions is widespread in our community.

The loss of trust includes all three levels of government as well as government-run systems like health care, the justice system, and the police. Winnipeggers are similarly mistrustful of media and major corporations.

The Foundation recognizes the implications a lack of confidence in institutions has on community and invited local leaders to participate in a panel discussion at The Gathering, a community building event hosted by the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet). CCEDNet is a nation-wide network of organizations and individuals dedicated to strengthening community economies by challenging the status-quo and developing place-based strategies.

The theme for The Gathering in 2023 was Anchoring in Community, and the event took place in late

October. The Winnipeg Foundation was pleased to sponsor the event and present "In our hands – leading change," a Vital Conversation featuring Sky Bridges, CEO of The Foundation, Louise Simbandumwe, co-director at Supporting Employment and Economic Development (SEED) Winnipeg, and David Kron, executive director of the Cerebral Palsy Association of Manitoba.

This Vital Conversation explored the loss of confidence in the social systems designed to support and protect the well-being of citizens, a key finding of The Foundation's Vital Signs® 2022. When asked why the panelists believe our community has more trust in the non-profit or charitable sector than they do in established institutions, Simbandumwe touched on the difference between the business sector and the charitable sector.

"I would say it is a question of values and scale. When it comes to values ... the businesses that we create are there to maximize profits, and they behave that way," says Simbandumwe, "When it comes to the charitable sector, we are governed by values that are very people centered."

Bridges noted that society may trust charities more than institutions due to government stepping away from providing services over time, and charities and non-profits stepping in to fill those gaps.

"Often when those gaps are filled by not-for-profits and charities, they do a better job than what was previously being done," says Bridges, "I think that's something to celebrate, and I think that as a model, my hope is that government recognizes



From left to right: Michael Barkman, Louise Simbandumwe, Sky Bridges, and David Kron.

sometimes, ‘okay, this model is actually better, we should fund them more.’ What’s interesting is, without being planned, a better solution has been created.”

Bridges spoke about how research completed for Vital Signs® 2022 informed the development of The Winnipeg Foundation’s new Strategic Plan, sharing that as The Foundation looked at Vital Signs®, it became apparent that we can’t grant our way out of community challenges.

“There are other things we need to look at as an organization to shift us forward, and that’s going back to the conversation on systems. As we look at the ecosystem, we can continue granting as a 360-degree funder, but we want to look higher up, and say what does the ecosystem need, and what can we do?”

In a poignant moment in the conversation, Simbandumwe demonstrated how small wins can have a great impact, both when it comes to trust, and when it comes to accessing social systems. Asking the audience how many times they have needed to show identification to access a service in recent months, the audience was prompted to consider what day-to-day life is like for people who don’t have identification.

Simbandumwe explained that without ID, people aren’t able to access necessities such as housing, banking services, employment, or health care. She added that 75 per cent of the participants in Supporting Economic and Employment Development (SEED) Winnipeg’s identification program are Indigenous.

“There are questions that are asked to get ID that we just take for granted,” she said, “What’s the maiden name of your mom? Where were you born? What hospital were you born in? If you were part of the 60s Scoop, if you were separated from your family to a residential school, if any number of traumatic things that happen to you, those are questions you aren’t going to be able to answer.”

Simbandumwe says that though the work is challenging, it is life changing when a client receives their identification. Still, it is only the first step in accessing housing and other services needed to obtain economic stability, and she says that is where relationships with other community partners are necessary.

The panelists left the audience with some parting thoughts on how individuals can create change. For Kron, that means saying yes.

“When you get the opportunity to support somebody, whatever way that is, say ‘yes,’” Kron asked of the audience. “At the end of the day, there’s a person attached to that statistic. If you have a little money left over at the end of the day, give it to a charity, give it to someone you care about.”

For more information on CCEDNET, visit www.ccednet-rcdec.ca.

WHY X MATTERS

The Winnipeg Foundation ignites meaningful dialogues in compelling podcast series

This four-part series did a deep dive into critical issues highlighted in Winnipeg's Vital Signs® 2022 report, which points out a worrying decline in trust in institutions and a diminishing sense of belonging within the community. Hosted by Nolan Bicknell, each episode brought together three leading experts to explore vital themes: **trust in institutions, sense of belonging, the environment, and empathy and compassion fatigue.**

EPISODE ONE: TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

Cecil Rosner, an adjunct professor at the University of Winnipeg, Ayn Wilcox, executive director of Klinik Community Health, and Molly McCracken, director of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, examine the erosion of trust within their industries and propose solutions for rebuilding it.

Cecil Rosner emphasizes the need for comprehensive fact-checking to counter the growing influence of powerful interests in media, saying, "It's not just (Donald) Trump that needs to be fact-checked, everything needs to be fact-checked because of what's happened with media over the last few years. The ranks of media and reporters are shrinking, and the ranks of communications and publicists are increasing. Therefore, it's easier for powerful interests to get their messages into the media."

EPISODE TWO: SENSE OF BELONGING

Guests Michael Redhead Champagne, community leader in Winnipeg's North End, Ashley Smith, director of advocacy at Rainbow Resource Centre, and Shereen Denetto, executive director at Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba, explore how individual's social and environmental connections contribute to overall well-being and discuss strategies for creating a more inclusive Manitoba.

Champagne passionately advocates for a revolutionary approach to amplify voices that have long been silenced, saying, "In work that I'm doing today, I talk about revolution and how we're going to break these systems down, get rid of the ones that are hurting us, and build up new systems that are based on love and equity."



EPISODE THREE: THE ENVIRONMENT

Julia-Simone Rutgers, an environmental reporter, joins Natured United's Indigenous community engagement coordinator Marshall Birch, and Ron Thiessen, executive director of CPAWS Manitoba, to discuss ways to navigate conversations surrounding the climate emergency.

Rutgers highlights the importance of amplifying community voices, explaining, "They are the eyes on the ground. They see where the gaps are. They see where their communities are not being protected properly. Their fears, and the things that they notice, deserve to be brought forward."

EPISODE FOUR: EMPATHY AND COMPASSION FATIGUE

Daniel Lussier, CEO of Réseau Compassion Network, Grace Schedler, a facilitator and presenter at Circles for Reconciliation, and Jamil Mahmood, executive director of Main Street Project, explore how to hold space for those who hold different opinions by remaining curious.

Lussier offers his perspective, "A simple way for me to think about empathy is our ability to feel with someone else that allows us to understand, relate, and be in relationship with."



Give the podcast a listen and start sparking conversations of your own by scanning the QR code or visiting wpgfdn.org.

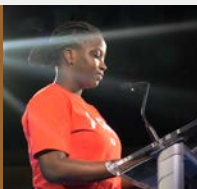
REAL LIFE STORIES WITH REAL LIFE LEADERS

A PODCAST SERIES BY THE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION AND CanU

Real Life Stories with Real Life Leaders is a captivating new podcast series presented by CanU and The Winnipeg Foundation, aimed at showcasing the remarkable journeys of five extraordinary youth from Winnipeg.

The partnership between the two organizations created a platform for these young voices to be heard, celebrated, and shared with the world. The stories have the power to inspire hope and confidence in all of us, proving that the possibilities for our youth are limitless.

Since 2010, CanU, a partner-based out-of-school program held on the University of Manitoba campuses, has made significant impact in our community. With more than 800 CanU kids, 1,000 post-secondary student volunteers, and more than 20 corporate and community funding partners, CanU's mission revolves around inspiring hope, confidence, and action in Winnipeg youth between grades five to 12.



MEET ABIGAIL:

In this episode, we follow Abigail's inspiring journey from Nigeria to Canada at the age of 11. Abigail candidly shares her challenges and adjustments to a new country, school, and culture. She emphasizes the importance of saying "yes" to new opportunities.

"Keep trying new things, keep moving forward, just keep exploring that's all you can really do. There's so much to do in this world, there's so much to see, there's so much to try."



MEET AMA:

Originally from Ghana, Ama shares about her journey to Canada and her desire to make a difference through healthcare. Ama's childhood experiences with frequent illnesses and hospital stays served as a driving force behind her aspiration to become a doctor, primarily focusing on children in need.

Since joining The Foundation's Youth in Philanthropy program, Ama discusses how her involvement with The Foundation and CanU provided her with the opportunity to research and donate to organizations that support new mothers and immigrants.



MEET SALENA:

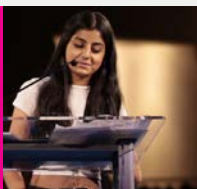
Salena's story of resilience and determination takes us from foster care to leadership. She started her life in foster care in Winnipeg but found her true self through CanU, where she discovered her passion for public speaking. At only 18-years-old Salena is the president of Community of Big Hearts.



MEET TARUN:

A young videographer and content creator, Tarun shares his journey to pursuing his passion for videography and photography. He emphasizes the importance of starting small, practicing, and not focusing on money as being the path to a fulfilling career.

"Anything can change your life as long as you put the time and effort into something you love."



MEET GUNEET:

A remarkable lacrosse player, Guneet's journey showcases her leadership and determination. She encourages others to always say 'yes' to opportunities and believes in the power of self-belief, resilience, and embracing new experiences.

"Always say yes to opportunities because you never know where it will go. I said 'yes' to a speech at the CanU Gala, and now I'm here."

These stories serve as a reminder that, with the right support and opportunities, and the power of mentorship, young leaders can thrive and make a lasting impact on their communities.

To learn more about CanU, visit www.canucanada.org.



Credit: Travel Manitoba

MANITOBA'S NEWEST COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

We are excited to welcome The Pas Tri-Community Foundation to Manitoba's community foundation network! Established in 2022, this foundation serves the communities of The Pas, Opaskwayak Cree Nation and the Rural Municipality of Kelsey. It is the first community foundation in Manitoba to be established through a trilateral agreement that includes a First Nation and a municipality.



The Pas
Tri-Community
FOUNDATION

MANITOBA'S COMMUNITY FOUNDATION NETWORK

Community foundations positively impact community well-being by investing gifts from donors, supporting local projects, and engaging in leadership initiatives. The success of Manitoba's community foundation network is a testament to what can happen when people work together to make a difference.

Today, there are 57 community foundations in Manitoba, the largest number of community foundations in a single Canadian jurisdiction and the largest number, per capita, in North America. Each community foundation is governed by a board made up of local representatives.

Community foundations outside The Winnipeg Foundation held endowed assets valued at more than \$180 million at the end of fiscal 2022. That year, they distributed more than \$6 million to their communities.

MANITOBA'S COMMUNITY FOUNDATION NETWORK AT A GLANCE

These are statistics about community foundations outside Winnipeg for the year 2021. Information is drawn from data shared by community foundations in the annual Endow Manitoba survey.



1,556

Grants disbursed

\$6,273,752.91

Value of grants disbursed



\$180,605,058.72

Assets at market value



6,138

Donors

7,014

Tax receipted gifts

\$8,167,005.00

Value of tax receipted gifts



500+

Community volunteers

33

Staff driving Manitoba's
56 community foundations
(outside Winnipeg)

What is the Endow Manitoba program?

The Winnipeg Foundation has supported Manitoba's community foundations since the late 1990s, when it began offering investment management and grants support. As the community foundation network grew, The Winnipeg Foundation responded by offering more fulsome programs and supports and, in 2018, this was formalized as the Endow Manitoba (Endow MB) program.

Today, the Endow MB program, housed within the newly established department of Capacity Building and Programs, offers an interconnected suite of support services, including capacity building, research and development, and incubation programming, all designed to strengthen the community foundation network.

Capacity building is the process of developing and strengthening skills, abilities, processes, and resources needed to thrive. The Capacity Building and Programs team develops customized capacity building supports for community foundations delivered through board workshops, the bi-annual Community Foundation Conference, and more.

The Endow MB program uses a research-based and systematic approach based on a Sustainability, Growth, and Impact (SGI) Model that was co-developed with Manitoba's community foundations. This SGI Model reinforces community foundations' organizational and operational "best practices," and is used by the Capacity Building and Programs team to identify potential areas for enhancement and appropriate programming supports and services. See the sidebar for more information.

The Capacity Building and Program's approach has achieved measurable success in its work with our province's community foundations through the Endow Manitoba program. As a result, The Winnipeg Foundation is being asked to share the model in other provinces, creating opportunity for broader application.



Photos (top to bottom):

2023 Provincial Advisory Board members with Endow MB staff.

The Endow Manitoba Shared Staff: Chloé Arbez-Rondeau, Caddie Crampton, Maia Vicente.

ENDOW MANITOBA SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

PROVINCIAL ADVISORY BOARD (PAB)

The PAB is an opportunity for community foundations to provide ongoing input and feedback about the Endow MB program and its services and initiatives. The PAB is comprised of volunteer representatives from community foundations across the province.



SHARED STAFF

Qualified professional staff are provided for community foundations using a cost sharing arrangement between The Winnipeg Foundation and participating community foundations. This builds capacity that would otherwise be unattainable for smaller community foundations.



GIVING CHALLENGE FUNDRAISING PROGRAM

This province-wide initiative builds the community (unrestricted) funds of participating community foundations. A stretch incentive is provided by The Winnipeg Foundation and the Manitoba government to encourage gifts. In its nine years in existence, the Giving Challenge has added almost \$9 million to community foundations' undesignated funds.



MICHAEL AND MARY GNUTEL

GRATITUDE FUND

Growing into giving

Michael and Mary Gnutel feel they are standing on the shoulders of generations that came before them. Both come from a Ukrainian Catholic background and have great grandparents who came to Canada with a goal of settling on the prairies and building a better life for their families. The couple married in 1980 and dreamed early on about starting a family foundation or endowment fund.

With Michael working for Canada Revenue Agency during the day and Mary coaching professional figure skating in the evenings, they worked together to raise three sons, living a comfortable but frugal life. Now, 43 years later, Michael and Mary feel they're in a more settled stage of their lives, with children who have their own flourishing families. Grateful for all the blessings they have received, the Gnutels want to do something for their community.

Helping others has always been important to the Gnutels. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic Michael volunteered at Agape Table through the Knights of Columbus at their parish. Michael and Mary saw the challenges some people face in our community. A member of Mary's family has mental health challenges that lead them to access shelters and housing resources.

The Winnipeg Foundation's 2022 Vital Signs® report, released earlier this year, identified availability and access to safe affordable housing as one of gaps in our community. In Winnipeg, for every 20 low-income renters there are only three housing units available – well below other cities like Regina that have eight units and Calgary that have nine units. Affordable housing is at a crisis point in Winnipeg.

The Gnutels are aware of the growing number of people experiencing homelessness and feel compelled to help. "We need to be a part of that picture in some way," says Mary. "It's affecting our family. It's affecting other families too."

In 2022, they established the Michael and Mary Gnutel Gratitude Fund, a donor advised fund at The Winnipeg Foundation.

The Gnutels are focused on supporting people experiencing homelessness, especially those unsheltered – living in places like parks, bus shelters, along riverbanks, vacant lots, or encampments. Many unsheltered people are unable or afraid to access services at shelters or government organizations, and Michael and Mary want to make sure they are supported physically, mentally, and spiritually with dignity and respect. "It's our challenge, our opportunity to be better human beings, to make sure that they feel loved, they feel comforted, they feel that nobody has forgotten about them," says Michael.

Through their fund Michael and Mary are able to choose the projects they want to support. They are interested in programs – like Main Street Project's Van Patrol – that reach out and build relationships with people that are unsheltered, providing them with supports and services where they live.

The Gnutels know poverty and homelessness is a complicated issue with no easy solutions. It can be disheartening to put energy and resources into trying to make a difference but not see any progress. For Michael and Mary, it's about providing comfort and dignity to people so they feel that they matter and belong. For Mary, "Even if it makes a difference to one person for one hour on one day, it's worth it."



Top: Michael and Mary Gnutel during their 2017 trip to Ukraine when they were able to visit the village where Mary's great grandparents came from. Photo courtesy of Michael and Mary Gnutel.



Bottom: Michael Gnutel volunteering at Agape Table. Photo courtesy of Michael and Mary Gnutel.

LEAVING A LEGACY, TOGETHER.

ROBERT AND MARY HARRISON

Robert and Mary Harrison met for the first time at the Winnipeg Roller Rink in 1949 and were married that same year. Robert would always joke that he ‘picked the right Mary’ as Mary was with her friend, also named Mary, when they met. Robert grew up on a farm outside of Orkney, Saskatchewan, and Mary grew up in Niverville; the values of a close-knit community were part of their lives from an early age.

The Harrison’s both came from humble beginnings and built a fulsome life and family through perseverance and hard work. Although the two raised five children of their own (Tracey, Tannis, Trent, Todd, and Tyler), their warm, open household was a home away from home for children from the neighbourhood.

Robert, also known as “Bobby Radio” by his customers, had a strong background in technology and was considered a pioneer in his field. Alongside his business partner, John Nowell, Robert started Harrison-Nowell Mobile Radio and Paging Services. The company installed some of the first mobile radios in police, fire, and taxi vehicles in Winnipeg, effectively ushering our city’s communications landscape into a new era.

Mary was quite a good seamstress, and her children remember her as “a fashion plate,” albeit a thrifty one. In keeping with her modest upbringing, Mary would find designer pieces at used clothing stores and was ahead of her time when it came to altering and recycling clothing. She was a dedicated home-maker and partner who cared for her family and supported Robert in his career.

Celebrating the endeavors and accomplishments of their children, and remaining supportive to each other and their community was a constant and important part of their lives. They also both valued education and were eager to learn new things, picking up hobbies like skiing and cycling later in life, with Robert continuing to hit the downhill ski slopes until he was 85.

Throughout their lives, the couple contributed to the community in many ways, from volunteering at their local community club and church to installing lifeline medical alerts on behalf of Victoria Hospital into local seniors’ homes. Robert and Mary were thankful for what life provided them and their legacy will continue to show their gratitude For Good. Forever.

After 73 years of marriage, Robert and Mary peacefully passed away just 16 hours apart in January 2023. Leaving a gift to The Winnipeg Foundation in their will ensures their generosity will continue to support the community through one of their many interests, education.

Left and right: Robert and Mary Harrison

Bottom right: Steve Wright, John Nowell, and Robert (Bob) Harrison.



ASPER FAMILY \$10 MILLION GIFT REACHES MILESTONE

On Nov. 22, 2000, Izzy Asper shocked everyone with twin donations: \$10 million to The Winnipeg Foundation and \$10 million to the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba. At the time, they were the two largest donations ever by an individual in the city. - *The Winnipeg Free Press*

In 2023, that gift came full circle with the amount granted to community matching the initial gift. We caught up with the Asper Foundation about the importance of generosity and Izzy Asper's legacy.



Izzy and Babs Asper



Illustration courtesy of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

The Winnipeg Foundation (TWF): When Izzy decided to make the gift to The Winnipeg Foundation, he also made a gift of equal size to The Jewish Foundation, at the time these were the two largest gifts to both Foundations in Winnipeg. Can you speak about what inspired him to do this? Was there a specific moment or event that ignited a commitment to giving back to community?

The Asper Foundation: Izzy and Babs Asper strongly believed that philanthropy is a driving force behind positive change in people's quality of life. This is why they established The Asper Foundation forty years ago to build on their and The Asper family's philanthropic objectives. It's this belief that prompted the gifts to The Winnipeg Foundation and The Jewish Foundation. More important than a specific moment that inspired them, given the long history of strong community support from both foundations, they knew that these institutions appreciated the value of strategic giving and its powerful impact on people.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE IS THE BEST WAY TO PASS ALONG THE TRADITION OF GENEROSITY.

TWF: Are there any specific values or principles that guide The Asper Foundation's philanthropic endeavors? If so, how do these principles shape their giving strategy and decision-making process when directing funds to different charitable organizations?

The Asper Foundation: The original impetus for Izzy and Babs to found The Asper Foundation was the Jewish concept of Tikkun Olam, meaning to repair and improve the world, and it continues to drive the Foundation's vision and decision-making process. The Foundation appreciates it has the capacity and responsibility to play a significant role in repairing the world and improving the quality of people's lives, while bringing joy to them.

TWF: Could you highlight some of the key areas or causes that The Asper Foundation is particularly passionate about supporting? What motivates the Foundation to invest resources in these specific areas, and what outcomes do you hope to achieve?

The Asper Foundation: The Asper Foundation is passionate about developing major projects and provides general support to the Jewish communities in Manitoba, Canada and

Israel while also supporting the broader Winnipeg and Canadian communities in the areas of culture, education, the environment, health, sports, community development and human rights. The desire to focus on these areas is motivated by the belief in the importance of Tikkun Olam and the desire to repair the world and improve the quality of people's lives.

TWF: Of the many philanthropic projects The Asper Foundation has led, can you highlight one that holds special significance for it? How did this experience shape The Asper Foundation's perspective on philanthropy and reinforce the importance of giving back?

The Asper Foundation: There is no question that the most significant philanthropic project that The Asper Foundation has led is the development of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. It was the inspiration of Izzy and came to life through the tireless work of Gail Asper and Moe Levy. The Asper Foundation gave more than \$28 million towards this institution and was instrumental in completing the required fundraising from government and private funders. It was the fifth national museum to be established in Canada and the first to be developed outside of the National Capital Region. Its mandate is to explore the subject of human rights, enhance the public's understanding of human rights, promote respect for others, and encourage reflection, dialogue, and action.

Since it opened in 2014, hundreds of thousands of people from around the world visit the Museum annually. It is one of only a few museums in the world dedicated to the subject of human rights. The feedback that the CMHR receives from visitors has consistently shown that it impacts them deeply to stand up for human rights. We're very proud that the Museum has received over 50 national and international recognition awards.

The establishment of the Museum fundamentally shaped The Asper Foundation's perspective on philanthropy by highlighting the importance of never giving up on a vision until it becomes reality. As well, it demonstrates that big philanthropic dreams require the contributions of many individuals, organizations, institutions, and different levels of government. We must give back as a community.

TWF: Can you describe how the tradition of generosity is passed along?

The Asper Foundation: Leading by example is the best way to pass along the tradition of generosity. It's how the philanthropic passion of Izzy and Babs was passed on to their children, David, Gail, and Leonard, and their eight grandchildren. They embrace the responsibility of carrying out Tikkun Olam for the Jewish and general communities in Canada and Israel through the many initiatives supported by The Asper Foundation and their own individual philanthropic work.

DISABILITY MATTERS



Melissa Graham

CHANGING THE CONVERSATION, ONE VOTE AT A TIME

Black and white signs adorned lawns this past provincial election, telling neighbours and door-knocking politicians that for the voters in this household, disability matters. The signs are part of the third campaign for Disability Matters Vote (DMVote), a non-partisan public awareness campaign organized through efforts of the disability community.

The collaborative approach of New Directions for Children, Youth, Adults and Family Inc., Barrier Free Manitoba, Manitoba Possible, Abilities Manitoba, and DMVote is unique, strategic, and successful, and received a grant from The Winnipeg Foundation to support the 2023 awareness campaign and launch.

The campaign launch saw well over 100 people gather at the CN Stage at The Forks on a hot, sunny July day. The event included Election Manitoba voting information, sign and t-shirt give aways, ice cream, and comments from the political parties in Manitoba.

"We're a lot bigger constituency group than people realize. The issues that matter to us, matter to a lot of people," said Melissa Graham at the launch. Graham is the executive director of Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities and spokesperson for DMVote.

The Manitoba Disabilities office states that "nearly every Manitoban has a disability, knows someone with a disability, or will have a disability in the coming years. Disability has no social, economic, or educational boundaries, and can occur at any age, and may be temporary or permanent."

And yet there is much to be done. The focus of the campaign lay in five priority areas including accessibility, fair wages, access to services, employment, and dignified incomes. The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, passed in 2013, is also central to the advocacy of DMVote. Enacted with a legislated 10-year implementation plan and due this year, advocates say it needs to be stronger than it is right now.

David Kron, executive director of the Cerebral Palsy Association and spokesperson for DMVote, talks about changing the narrative. "It's not about what I can't do but what I can do. Let's change the conversation. Let's change it so that people don't look at folks with a disability as a liability."

Read more about Disability Matters Vote and priority issues at www.dmvote.ca



From the desk of...



David Kron

Cerebral Palsy Association of Manitoba

David Krohn wears many hats. As both the executive director of the Cerebral Palsy Association of Manitoba and one of the organizers and spokespersons for the recent Disability Matters Vote campaign, David is constantly discussing and advocating for issues related to cerebral palsy, disability advocacy, and accessibility in Winnipeg.

“Cerebral palsy is just one of my stories. One of my things. One of the chapters,” says David. “I was born early, my lungs weren’t very well developed, and my body wasn’t processing oxygen, so I had brain damage. I’m missing the signal to tell my legs to relax. The wiring’s all there, but the part that generates that signal isn’t there, or it’s been damaged.”

David went to school at the University of Winnipeg and graduated with a political science degree, and then worked for the City of Winnipeg’s Handi-Transit service for nine years.

“I answered the phone and got yelled at,” says David, jokingly. “It was actually a good job for me because I understood the folks I was talking to, what they were going through. When they got upset and swore and slammed the phone because their ride was late, I got that too.”

Because conditions can vary, David also emphasized that it’s crucial to ask individuals about their preferences for how to address their conditions. Language and terminology surrounding disabilities is always evolving, and David emphasizes the importance of respectful and person-centered communication.

“There’s certain words I won’t even say because I find them offensive,” says David, “But I have no problem with the word ‘disability.’ It’s a culture. It’s not who I am, but it’s part of my story. Like I said, what I say to people when they ask that question, I say, ‘well, how do you talk to your friend?’”



Although there have been advances in medical science and technology related to cerebral palsy, such as Botox treatments and the use of iPads and other technology to assist in communication, David also stresses the need for continued research and improvements in treatments.

One thing in the works that David is particularly excited about is the Cohabit program, an initiative of the Cerebral Palsy Association, which will create an inclusive housing community for individuals with cerebral palsy. Cohabit is still in the planning phase, but when completed it will provide affordable and market-rate housing options with various support services, fostering a sense of community among residents. Cohabit will strive to provide essential services within a close radius to individuals, emphasizing the importance of both physical and social interaction for a fulfilling life.

“Disability matters, and folks with disabilities are here, in their community, they’re knocking on the door, and we want to be counted,” says David. “We’re here and we’re not going away.”



A still from *Grand Frère*, Cinematoba filmmaker Alice Teufak's documentary about André Doumbé, a Cameroonian refugee and Franco-Manitoban. He was one of the first African and Cameroonians to settle in the province. Over the course of his life, he led many initiatives that assisted members of his community and acted as a communal big brother.