

WORKING TOGETHER

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A MAGAZINE OF THE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION FALL 2024



GENEROSITY COMES FULL CIRCLE

TRANSIT EMPLOYEES COMMUNITY FUND CELEBRATES REACHING MAJOR MILESTONE, PROVIDES OUTREACH VAN FOR MAIN STREET PROJECT

THE
WINNIPEG
FOUNDATION



Your Community Foundation
For Good. Forever.





Ziplining at Camp Firefly, a grief camp to help children and youth process losing a loved one while getting out into nature and having some fun. Read the full story on page 7.

OUR VISION

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 situated on Treaty 1 Territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabeg, Ininiwak, Anisininewuk, Dakota, and Dené, and the National Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge that our clean drinking water comes from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation on Treaty 3 Territory. We express our gratitude for these vital resources.

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WORKING TOGETHER FALL 2024

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On the cover: Winnipeg Transit and Main Street Project employees at an event celebrating the new outreach van provided by the Transit Employees Community Fund.



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PRESIDENT AND CEO MESSAGE

As you may recall, when The Winnipeg Foundation launched its Strategic Plan last year, one of our goals under the plan's Champion Pillar was to initiate collaborations and convene with others around key community issues, particularly around children entering and exiting the existing Manitoba child welfare system.

As part of evaluating and fine-tuning our own internal systems connected to this pillar, The Foundation has introduced a new, unified granting stream supporting youth and children to maximize the impact of grantmaking in this area.

This year, three distinct grant programs—Nourishing Potential, Growing Active Kids, and Camp and Summer Program Grants—were amalgamated into the Children and Youth Program Grants stream. The new stream enables organizations to access the same amount of funding, while lessening the administrative burden and reporting requirements.

The goal is to enable organizations to invest their time delivering transformational programs, not in submitting multiple grant applications. For many youth, social, physical, and economic barriers can make programming inaccessible. The organizations supported through new Children and Youth Program Grants help reduce these barriers.

The Foundation is in the fortunate position to be a voice and influence positive results on key issues facing our city and province, recognizing the complex challenges facing our community will not be solved through granting alone.

Streamlining our grant processes to provide easier access for agencies is just one small step we can take to help support better outcomes for youth in, and aging out of, the current child welfare system. We hope you enjoy the many stories in this issue of *Working Together* reflective of youth supports and programming.

SKY BRIDGES | PRESIDENT AND CEO



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Earlier this fall, Imagine Canada convened a series of regional conversations series designed to deepen its relationships with local charities and non-profits, and to help create spaces for exploring regional and national-level sector issues and opportunities.

Winnipeg was thrilled to be one of the 'stops' on the 2024 listening tour, along with Gander (NL), St. John's (NL), Montreal (QC), and London (ON). The Winnipeg Foundation partnered with Imagine Canada to cohost the local gathering, with leaders from our city's charitable/non-profit sector.

Imagine Canada is a national organization that works to amplify the sector's voice and to collaborate to ensure issues and challenges facing charities and non-profits across the country, are elevated and addressed at the federal level. It has been a leading resource and leadership organization for the sector across Canada.

Recent research shared by Imagine Canada indicates, *"organizations across the country are concerned about their long-term sustainability for a host of reasons including rising operational costs, dependence on government funding, donor levels of giving, and current economic volatility."*

And while citizens are overwhelmingly in support of charities and the committed work they do, demand for services is up, donations are down, and the cost of living for all of us has drastically increased in the past few years. These conditions are putting extreme pressure on our local charitable sector.

The findings come as no surprise to our local and provincial charitable sector – at The Winnipeg Foundation we are constantly listening and learning from the sector about its challenges and how we can best support them to address overwhelming, pressing needs.

The Winnipeg Foundation's role is to help the local charitable sector work together, to ensure the voices and issues locally are heard and considered nationally, when decisions are being made about the sector's future. Thank you to Imagine Canada for leading with us in this important work and inviting us to the table.

GEORGE BASS K.C., ICD.D | BOARD CHAIR



“Why did she have to go?”

NEW CHARITY HOSTS
CHILDREN'S GRIEF CAMP

Tamara Prince waves at her children and grandchildren as they zipline through the trees at Camp Firefly. But it is not all smiles and laughs. This camp gives children and youth the opportunity to grieve the deaths of their loved ones while connecting with other kids experiencing loss.

“Even if I am sitting on the sidelines, I want them to know I am here to support them,” Prince says. “I’ll wave and say ‘hey, you’re doing great’ because I want them to have a really good time and have fun, but we will also be addressing why we’re here.”

Prince shares that her family has endured significant losses, including the passing of her daughter, Berlin, who died at 21, leaving behind two young daughters. Prince became a full-time caregiver after Berlin’s death when the girls were just two and four years old. She says the loss deeply affected the children and cites the importance of trying to fill the emotional void with positive and healthy activities.

Camp Firefly welcomed more than 30 children to their second annual one-day event. The camp alternates between grief therapy—where kids create picture frames or write letters to loved ones—and fun activities like rock climbing, swimming, and music therapy.

“This grief camp gives us an opportunity to be able to address our grief and also to be able to do it in a safe space, and to have the children doing activities, so it’s not so heavy for them,” Prince says.

Camp Firefly’s Executive Director, Rhys Williams, discovered the concept of grief camp after watching the documentary *One Last Hug*, which highlighted Camp Erin, a leading grief camp in North America. He said he fell in love with the idea while working as a counsellor in Churchill, Manitoba. “I cried through the whole documentary because it reminded me of a lot of the kids I’ve worked with in my career who have unbelievably difficult experiences with grief and trauma,” Williams says.

Williams has spent his adult life in social work, starting with group homes for autistic adults, then Main Street Project, various shelters, and group homes for at-risk youth. He has also worked in schools and jails, gaining experience in different settings.

“Throughout my career, I’ve consistently worked with marginalized communities, including many Indigenous communities, which I consider a privilege,” Williams says. “I’ve always had a passion for developing programs.”

Rather than franchising Camp Erin, Williams was inspired to put a spin on the adopted model and create a grassroots organization tailored specifically for children and youth in Winnipeg and Manitoba. Williams says there is a diverse set of participants, but many identify as Indigenous. To support varying needs, Camp Firefly has incorporated a strong cultural component, led by a dedicated cultural team, which Williams attributes to the camp’s success.





“We’re going to have kids from many different communities and many different backgrounds and that’s a big part of what makes the Camp work so well,” Williams says. “I’m not an Indigenous man and I’m very happy and thankful to have an amazing cultural team leading the charge.”

The cultural programming features singing, drumming, and dancing - all interested kids are invited to join. Williams says the response has been very positive.

“I’d say 18 of the 30 kids are Indigenous and many of them had never seen or participated in those activities before,” Williams says. “These kids are leaving this activity saying ‘I want to build my own drum one day’ and, ‘I want to bead my own dress.’”

Williams says Camp Firefly is possible because of the overwhelming support he received from his parents, friends, family, volunteers, and industry peers, including former colleague, Nelson Mayer, who says he loved the concept of grief camp.

“We’ve all been touched by loss. We’ve all been touched by grief, and even adults struggle so much with losing somebody, and so, when Rhys told me about it, I thought, ‘How beautiful is this?’ Having an opportunity to sit with kids let them lead the conversations.” Mayer says that even though it can be tough to discuss the loss of a loved one, it’s crucial to teach kids that it’s okay to talk about their feelings, including sadness and anger, instead of burying them inside.

Prince echoes Mayer’s sentiment about how challenging it can be to discuss loss, and says, “Berlin’s children will often say ‘I really miss her.’ But my youngest granddaughter recently asked something that really hurt - she said, ‘did she love us?’ I said, ‘absolutely, with all her heart!’ and she said, ‘Well then why did she have to go?’”

Prince shares that although Berlin passed away eight years ago, Camp Firefly has ‘kick-started’ their family’s grieving process. “We’ve been really putting it off because it hurts, but I think it’s about time we face it.”

Photos: Camp Firefly participants, ranging in age, are given the chance to play and process emotions together at Camp Manitou, an idyllic and sprawling 39-acre recreation facility on the Assiniboine river just a few minutes outside of Winnipeg. From ziplining to swimming to wall climbing, joyful movement provides release, while activities like letter writing and creating picture frames for loved ones offer grief therapy.

UNIFIED FOR YOUTH

ONE STREAM, MORE IMPACT

The Winnipeg Foundation is introducing a new, unified granting stream supporting youth and children to maximize the impact of grantmaking in our community. This year, three programs—Nourishing Potential, Growing Active Kids, and Camp and Summer Program Grants—were amalgamated into the Children and Youth Program Grants stream. The new stream enables organizations to access the same amount of funding while lessening the administrative burden and reporting requirements.

“Our goal is to enable organizations to invest their time in delivering transformational programs, not in submitting multiple grant applications,” says Winnipeg Foundation Senior Program Officer, Aliya Mrochuk. “For many youth, social, physical, and economic barriers make programming inaccessible. The organizations supported through Children and Youth Program Grants change that.”

Staff, food, and transportation accounted for the bulk of funds requested, but the types of projects supported are incredibly varied and include music, art, science, theatre, and sports camps, street outreach, cooking and nutrition programs, mental health supports, and afterschool programs.

Hosting several of these programs is Univillage Preschool and Infant Centre, a non-profit organization established in 1976 as a daycare, that has since expanded to include an infant program. The organization has been serving the community for close to 50 years, and after receiving a grant from The Foundation this year, is continuing to provide robust summer programming to community.

“The daycare was able to accomplish so many things under the Children and Youth Program Grant; we were able to book educational programs and entertainment for our children and newcomer families,” says Univillage Preschool and Infant Centre’s Executive Director, Dorina Bularca. “Children will now have the opportunity of enjoying shows like many other children around the city.”

During the months of July and August, children have delighted in daily programs including hula hoop workshops, mini master chef classes, character shows with figures like Spiderman, book readings, and musical acts while enjoying a daily home-cooked meal.

Bularca says families appreciate the centre’s efforts in applying for grants, as ambitious programming like this wouldn’t be possible without support from The Winnipeg Foundation.

“I feel that our relationship with the families has strengthened due to these grants because they know that we are applying, and this is extra work for us. But at the same time, it is such a big help for them, and it has a positive impact,” Bularca says. “These grants make children’s and their families’ lives easier, maybe even more beautiful... it enables them to create relationships and with each other, families and the children and as well as daycare.”



CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM GRANTS STREAM

Combining three granting areas streamlined the process and broadened eligibility criteria, attracting an influx of applicants.

The Foundation received 136 Children and Youth Program Grants applications, totaling \$2,691,517 in requests, and approved \$1,493,260 for 110 projects.

Of the 136 applicants, 33 had never received Nourishing Potential, Growing Active Kids, or Camp and Summer Program Grants funding, and 11 are new grantees to The Winnipeg Foundation.

Photos: Univillage Preschool and Infant Centre’s educational programming and field trips expand opportunities for children and newcomer families.



“It is personal for me”

says newcomer turned
BGC Winnipeg mentor

FROM NEWCOMER TO BGC WINNIPEG MENTOR

Moving to a new country as a teenager can be daunting, especially when you don't know anyone. But sometimes, unexpected connections can lead to life-changing experiences.

Meet Isaac Aserra, who immigrated from Kenya at 15 years old with his mom. Upon arriving in the city, he didn't know anyone until a girl he met in high school introduced him to BGC Winnipeg (formerly Boys and Girls Clubs of Winnipeg.)

“I had a crush on a girl from school, and she just was like, ‘Yo! there is this leadership thing that kids can sign up for. Do want me to come after school?’” Aserra joked. “We walked across the road, went into this middle school, and then we just walked into a room full of kids. We're talking 50-plus kids at this club,”

In the bustling room, Isaac discovered BGC's free after school programming, which provides education, recreation, social services, and food to more than 3,200 children and youth ages 6 to 18 out of 28 service locations.

“They basically just brought me in offering pizza, scholarship opportunities, things you can use on your resume,” Aserra says. “So, since I was new, like I said, just landed, I was like okay, I should be doing extracurriculars. They said we could sign up for this leadership program, and I was like sure, I'll do it.”

Aserra says the main reason he was so inclined to participate was because of one staff member's enthusiasm. “I saw him, and I was like, I want to be a staff like him. And now I'm a staff like him.” Now, at 21 years old, Aserra is a program coordinator at BGC's Aberdeen club, located in the city's North End neighbourhood, one of 11 community-based clubs.

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.





Over the years, many BGC alumni grow and become staff bringing their own lived experiences to the table, says BGC's Director of Programs, Michelle Schmidt.

"They have lived experience when they work with the kids. They can relate in a way that is very personal and that builds deeper bonds," Schmidt says. "It just builds up the community because now you're looking at a cycle that is about growing young people into leaders, who then grow other young people into leaders."

Aserra agrees that his personal experience with BGC enables him to connect more effectively with youth participants, emphasizing the significance of having positive role models outside of their family. "They need good examples, and I feel like that's where I thrive," Aserra says some kids need structure, while others just need someone to listen. Some kids need perspective, and others simply need freedom.

"Like today, she wants to cook, we're going to cook. I'll put a hairnet on her. She'll call me chef, and I'll call her chef," Aserra says pointing to a youth participant, who acts as his young sous-chef preparing chimichangas, carrots, and a cup of peaches.

Schmidt says nutrition is a basic need. BGC's programming is centered around the recognition that children enjoy their experience more when they have a nutritious meal, and that providing food helps ease financial burden on families.

According to BGC, 73 per cent of youth attending the clubs live in the two lowest income quintiles of Manitoba. BGC staff says support for after school programming ensures under-resourced youth have the opportunities they need to grow and develop a sense of community and belonging.

"It's not just throwing a basketball on the ground and saying here, go and do your own thing," says Schmidt, "It's about mentoring, it's about skill development, and that comes from qualified, trained staff that care about these kids."

From top left: BGC mentor Alex Pasosky crafting with a youth participant, Michelle Schmidt, BGC's Director of Programs, and Isaac Aserra, former BGC mentee who now works as a program coordinator with the organization.

IN OUR EFFORTS TO SHARE INSIGHTS FROM ACROSS THE SECTOR, THE COMMUNITY COLUMN IS A SPACE IN WORKING TOGETHER MAGAZINE FOR COMMUNITY LEADERS TO SHARE ABOUT THEIR WORK, PROVIDING A GLIMPSE INTO DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR.

COMMUNITY COLUMN



CHANGING THE STORY OF CHILD ABUSE IN MANITOBA

BY CHRISTY DZIKOWICZ, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
AT TOBA CENTRE

Each year in our province more than 4,000 cases of child abuse are investigated, and this is likely just the tip of the iceberg as we know many more go unreported. The impacts of child abuse can be devastating and lifelong when children and families don't receive the support and care they need to help heal.

The agencies and services involved in responding to child abuse have always done important, vital work, but they have not always worked together. This has often meant children and families attended appointments at various locations that are not child friendly, spending time stuck in waiting rooms and having to repeat their story over and over again.

Toba Centre for Children & Youth (Toba Centre) is changing this for kids in Manitoba. As Manitoba's first and only child advocacy centre (CAC), Toba Centre provides a coordinated community response to child abuse.

Children and families are at the heart of everything we do. They visit one location and receive wrap-around support from a multi-disciplinary team of professionals – law enforcement, medical, child protection, and other support services – who work together to reduce potential trauma and improve services overall.

“AS PARENTS, FINDING OUT ABOUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO OUR CHILD WAS DEVASTATING, OVERWHELMING, AND EARTH SHATTERING. WALKING INTO TOBA CENTRE WAS ONE OF THE HARDEST THINGS WE HAD EVER FACED; WALKING OUT WAS LIFE CHANGING. WE KNEW NOW THAT WE WEREN'T ALONE, WE SUDDENLY HAD THE MOST AMAZING SUPPORT SYSTEM ANYONE COULD EVER ASK FOR. FROM HELP FILLING IN FORMS TO JUST A QUICK CHECK-IN PHONE CALL, IT ALL MADE THE MOST INCREDIBLE DIFFERENCE TO OUR SITUATION. WITHOUT OUR CASE NAVIGATOR AND THE REST OF THE TOBA FAMILY, WE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO COME OUT OF THIS AS INTACT AS WE HAVE. WE ARE TRULY FOREVER GRATEFUL FOR EVERYTHING YOU HAVE HELPED US WITH. TOBA CENTRE IS A RAINBOW IN THE MIDDLE OF A HUGE STORM.”

– PARENT WHO RECEIVES SERVICES AT TOBA CENTRE



Christy Dzikowicz



While we wish there was no need for Toba Centre and no child had to endure abuse, we are thankful we're able to provide a safe environment where kids and families can feel comfortable and receive the support they need to heal.

Toba Centre for Children & Youth is a charitable organization that coordinates a collaborative approach to interviewing child abuse victims and children who have witnessed violent crimes.

To learn more about their work, visit tobacentre.ca.

Photos: The Toba Centre's space offers one-of-a-kind services to children and families who have been affected by child abuse.

BUILDING HOPE

BY KAITLIN VITT

NEW TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROJECTS ADDRESS NEED FOR SAFE, AFFORDABLE SPACES

With increasing living costs, advocates say there is a desperate need for affordable housing in Winnipeg.

Two new transitional housing projects for people facing gender-based violence have recently received funding through major capital grants from The Winnipeg Foundation. The projects, led by the University of Winnipeg Community Renewal Corporation (UWCRC) and the West Central Women's Resource Centre (WCWRC), are filling critical gaps in the city's need for affordable housing.

"It's hard to find a good, safe place to live with a limited income," says Carey Richards, Interim Executive Director of WCWRC. "Often, places that are affordable are maybe in areas people don't feel safe and with subpar living conditions, such as pest control struggles or landlords who don't maintain the homes."

PROVIDING SAFE SPACES

During the past couple of years, WCWRC has been renovating an apartment building to be used as transitional housing, a project supported by many organizations, including The Winnipeg Foundation. The 16-suite building is made up of one, two, and three-bedroom units for mothers and gender-diverse people, and their children, who have experienced gender-based violence and homelessness. The units are rent-geared-to-income (RGI), meaning a tenant is charged 30 per cent of their household's income for a unit.

The first tenants moved into the building in April 2024, and units were filled by August.

The units are fully furnished, something Richards highlights as important; many people exiting violent situations often leave with nothing more than what is on their back. "Parents and their young kids don't need to start from scratch when they move in; they have all the basic home necessities met," Richards says. "Tenants are feeling like they're able to breathe little bit."

The building also offers a play space for children attached to the laundry room, a rooftop patio with community gardens, and wraparound supports, such as access to gender-based violence caseworkers.

"We're hoping this supportive environment fosters a sense of community and belonging for the folks who are here, so they can feel empowered to step forward in their lives," Richards says. "We're excited to be able to do this work and are really grateful for all of the funders that have helped make this a reality."

The need for safe, affordable housing in Winnipeg is prevalent, Richards says, evidenced by WCWRC filling the transitional housing suites so quickly. There's a waitlist for future tenants, and Richards says referring partners reach out multiple times a week to check in on availability.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Multiple community organizations have come together to work on a second-stage transitional housing project for Indigenous and newcomer women and children who have experienced gender-based violence. Led by the UWCRC, operating partners include New Journey Housing, Ikwe Widdjiitiwin, and Family Dynamics. With support from The Winnipeg Foundation, the 15-unit building in downtown Winnipeg is currently being developed.

"All the organizations working together are supporting the same community," says Kim Fontaine, Executive Director of Ikwe Widdjiitiwin. "We're doing it from different spaces, and maybe our mandates are a bit different, but a lot of the communities we're working with could very easily be tied to any of the organizations."

Bringing together organizations with varying specialties makes it easier for people to access the services they need, Fontaine adds. "People otherwise would be forced to go door to door, but when you create a partnership, you're bringing services to them, and you're reducing the amount of running around they will have to do," Fontaine says. "You're meeting people where they are at."

Ikwe Widdjiitiwin, an Indigenous-led organization, serves as a place of safety for people impacted by gender-based violence. While people stay with them, they offer counselling, advocacy work, cultural programming, and a full-time school for children.

One program Ikwe Widdjiitiwin offers is Red Road to Healing, something Fontaine believes would be a valuable addition to the UWCRC project. Red Road to Healing is a family violence support program done through cultural and ceremonial teachings and led by a Knowledge Keeper.

"It's a great space to bring together a mix of folks," Fontaine says. "When bringing together newcomer and Indigenous participants, like through this transitional housing project, there's going to need to be a cross-cultural training piece as well."

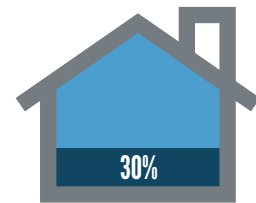
Fontaine says Ikwe Widdjiitiwin will also make its housing support workers available to assist and support tenants with accessing various services, such as medical legal advocacy, promoting cultural ceremonies, supporting folks with protection orders, and helping with affordable housing referral services for when they're ready to transition out.

These additional support services are important offerings in addition to affordable housing, she says.

"For people who are escaping gender-based violence, it's just one layer of what's going on," Fontaine says. "There needs to be a framework where we're providing these wraparound support services to individuals after we've housed them, to help ensure they continue to stay safe and successful."

As Winnipeg faces an ongoing housing crisis, these collaborative projects offer a vital lifeline for those escaping violence.

"Housing plays a role in saving lives and helping people flourish to live in a safe, good way, which is what any human being is entitled to," Fontaine says.



The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) considers housing affordable if it costs less than 30 per cent of a household's before-tax income.

In 2016, about 22 per cent of Winnipeg households spent above the affordable housing rate, according to a report done through the University of Winnipeg's Institute of Urban Studies.

These numbers are even higher for Indigenous people and newcomers in Winnipeg... 26 per cent of Indigenous people and 36 per cent of newcomers spent more than 30 per cent of their income on housing.



Employment and Income Assistance Program (EIA) rates in Manitoba are \$887 per month for one adult, an amount intended to cover all basic necessities including shelter and food. Recent reports place the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Winnipeg in 2024 at around \$1,800.



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

TANSI! First and foremost, I am a Nehithaw iskwewak (Cree woman) from Treaty Six Territory and a proud band member of Mathias Colomb Cree Nation, Manitoba, on my mother's side, with deep roots in Sturgeon Lake First Nation, Saskatchewan, on my father's. My name is Melanie Badger, and I'm a values-based leader who recently joined The Winnipeg Foundation as Manager of Indigenous Philanthropy. This new position was created to develop a program that meets the needs of the Indigenous community to support the establishment of Indigenous-led community foundations in Manitoba. This work is being supported by Endow Manitoba, an initiative of The Winnipeg Foundation that was established in 2019 to advance the sustainability, growth, and impact of Manitoba's community foundation network.

Prior to joining The Foundation, I completed the Master of Arts Executive Leadership program at Royal Roads University. I spent seventeen years at the Indigenous Leadership Development Institute and

eventually became the Director of Executive Training and Executive Director of Empowering Indigenous Youth in Governance and Leadership, an Indigenous youth-led charity in Winnipeg. My early career began in various federal government departments as an administrator; Little Red Spirit Head Start program as a child care worker; a Powwow instructor with the Rising Sun Powwow Club, and Cultural Coordinator with

Seven Oaks School Division's Keeping Balance after school program.

For my master's degree, I chose to focus my capstone on enhancing donor engagement for the next generation of philanthropy in partnership with The Winnipeg Foundation. While not familiar with The Foundation at the time, I took a chance and reached out to Sky Bridges, The Foundation's President and Chief Executive Officer, to see if The Foundation would partner with me to support my research. To my surprise, Sky responded in support which became my introduction to The Winnipeg Foundation. Upon completion of my master's degree in February 2024, I applied for the position and was selected to fill the role as Manager of Indigenous Philanthropy in April 2024.

OPIKITAN; A NEW NAME

It became clear after speaking to some friends and colleagues in the community that the philanthropic sector is an unfamiliar entity to many First Nations people and communities. This lack of familiarity suggests that the philanthropic sector needs to create equitable access to resources for Indigenous people and communities. There is a mutual curiosity between Indigenous communities and the philanthropic sector, but a meaningful connection has yet to be made.

To begin this journey, it was important to ground this work in Indigenous values through ceremony. I just happened to be at the lodge when I asked Cecil Sveinson for help to do this important work. On June 26, 2024, The Winnipeg Foundation's Indigenous Philanthropy Program was gifted the name 'Opikitan', through ceremony led by Cecil Sveinson on Treaty one territory. Opikitan in the Nehithaw language translates to, "Let's grow together." Cecil gifted The Foundation with his story behind the name which further translates to, "coming together for

growth as human beings in the spirit of generosity." The English version of the name is limited; the Nehithaw version offers a greater descriptive story, meaning, and translation. Receiving the name represents a new spiritual journey that The Foundation has embarked on. On September 26, 2024, the name was feasted through ceremony with community for the first time with many more gatherings to follow for seasons to come, grounding The Winnipeg Foundation and Opikitan in Indigenous values and ceremony for future generations.

THE INDIGENOUS PHILANTHROPY PROGRAM

The success of Opikitan (the Indigenous Philanthropy Program) relies on the guidance of Indigenous people, for Indigenous people. The only way to achieve this is to establish meaningful relationships between The Winnipeg Foundation and Indigenous people and communities. In alignment with The Foundation's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, Indigenous Trust Philanthropy is a priority that moves "beyond consultations, and resourcing staff and programming to foster Indigenous community foundation collaborations in all their forms to the benefit of the communities they serve." This priority is driven by community through Opikitan.

My role in the program will need to be flexible and fluid, allowing for transformation, innovation, and growth, and to respond to the needs of communities as they emerge and change.

INDIGENOUS PHILANTHROPY

Philanthropy is a colonial word that can be difficult to articulate for those not familiar with it. Personally, I found it quite difficult to not only articulate the word but also to connect it to the well-being of my community. I was out of touch with the philanthropic worldview on a personal level, but have come to learn that both philanthropic and Indigenous communities are out of touch with one another. This is perplexing, because both have so much in common in terms of gifting, generosity, and volunteering. Opikitan can play a role in bringing the two together, to learn and share their passion of what success looks like for their community. This is where the work can begin.

"MY ROLE IN THE PROGRAM WILL NEED TO BE FLEXIBLE AND FLUID, ALLOWING FOR TRANSFORMATION, INNOVATION, AND GROWTH, AND TO RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF COMMUNITIES AS THEY EMERGE AND CHANGE."



MEET MELANIE BADGER

MANAGER OF THE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION'S
INDIGENOUS PHILANTHROPY PROGRAM

IN THE PRAIRIES AND ACROSS THE COUNTRY, CHARITIES ARE FEELING THE PINCH OF HIGHER DEMAND AND LOWER DONATIONS



BY BRUCE MACDONALD, PRESIDENT & CEO OF IMAGINE CANADA

A survey of charities conducted by the Charity Canada Insights Project highlighted that organizations across the country are concerned about their long-term sustainability. Rising operational costs, dependence on government funding, donor levels of giving, and economic volatility were the top concerns cited. For those of us working in the non-profit sector, these findings are no surprises.

Data on charitable donations from Statistics Canada released this spring show that just less than five million Canadian tax filers declared making charitable donations in 2022, 0.3-per-cent fewer than a year earlier, despite the number of tax filers increasing by 3 per cent year-over-year. It was the lowest number of donors ever recorded, with just 17.1 per cent of tax filers declaring donations. For the first time since 2016, the total amount donated to charities decreased.

And while donations are down, demand is up. In an economy plagued by inflation and the ripple effects of the pandemic, times are tough for many around us. The proportion of individuals who find themselves in a difficult situation, whether due to the cost of housing or food, has increased drastically in recent years. In a December 2023 poll Imagine Canada commissioned with the support of BMO, 17 per cent of respondents' country-wide indicated that they had personally needed to engage the services of a charity or nonprofit to help with the higher cost of living. This had nearly doubled from 9 per cent only a year earlier.

The historically high demand highlights even more the importance of our work. In the Prairies and across the country, people are supportive of non-profits and charities. A new, recent Imagine Canada/BMO poll shows that 90 per cent consider that charities and non-profits are important to our country and our way of life.

In the Prairies, 84 per cent say the services they deliver are essential to the well-being of the country and its citizens. People know that charities and non-profits are there for those in need. But it is becoming increasingly difficult to continue to provide the services the population needs. Many organizations are struggling, and some have been forced to close their doors - a concerning trend we've observed in recent years.

To make matters worse, in its last budget, the federal government went ahead with a series of changes to the alternative minimum tax, or AMT, resulting in a reduction in fiscal incentives for high-income earners making charitable donations. Alongside the sector, Imagine Canada advocated to ask the government to reverse course. While the government modified its initial approach, the remaining changes included in the budget are bad news for charities. At a time when demand is steadily increasing and donations are down, these changes send the wrong message and maybe discourage the wealthiest Canadians - a key group of donors - from supporting charities.

No matter the circumstances, people rely on us to provide essential services, and they trust us to do that work. Still according to our recent poll, across Canada seven in 10 people say they trust charities generally. Moreover, six in 10 agree that charities operate as efficiently as they can and do the most with the resources they have.

Two-thirds also agree that the federal government should be providing ongoing funding to support core administrative expenses to the sector. Canadians understand that charities have costs and that they need to fund specific aspects of their operations, such as fundraising activities, technology, insurance, volunteer recruitment, financial audits, program staff salaries, marketing, and promotion.

We need the government to show the same support that Canadians, in the Prairies and across the country, are showing us. To serve the population properly, non-profits and charities need appropriate funding. It is heartbreaking to see organizations forced to close their doors due to the lack of funding, leaving people in need in the lurch. Other organizations may have to turn down people because of extraordinarily high demand they're unable to meet. With proper government support, we can strengthen our sector and our communities to make sure no one is left behind.

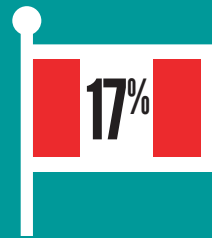


Participants from Imagine Canada's Regional Conversation Series in Gander, NL.

IMAGINE CANADA'S REGIONAL CONVERSATIONS SERIES

In the fall, Imagine Canada convened a regional conversation series to deepen relationships with local charities and non-profits and create inclusive and collaborative spaces for exploring regional and national-level issues and opportunities.

The conversations also aspire to cultivate a deeper understanding of mutual goals, foster collaborative efforts, and strengthen our collective impact within the community. For this first edition, we were excited to meet our sector peers in Gander (NL), St. John's (NL), Montreal (QC), Winnipeg (MB) - where the event was hosted in collaboration with The Winnipeg Foundation - and London (ON). In each city a diverse group of Imagine Canada members and other local nonprofit leaders gathered to discuss a topic customized to the particular region. In Winnipeg, the discussion was around building a provincial nonprofit network. We have been heartened by the warm welcome received from our peers and grateful for their invaluable contributions to these important conversations! We are also grateful to our Presenting Partner, PearTree Canada, for supporting the 2024 Regional Conversations Series.



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90 per cent consider that charities and non-profits are important to our country and our way of life.

7 in 10
people say they trust charities generally.





THE 11TH ANNUAL ENDOW MANITOBA GIVING CHALLENGE TAKES PLACE FROM NOVEMBER 12-17, 2024

Last year's historical Giving Challenge raised more than \$1.54 million in just one week. A record 2,852 gifts were made to 56 Manitoba community foundations; the most gifts in Manitoba's Giving Challenge history. Every gift made as part of the Challenge is stretched by The Winnipeg Foundation and the Manitoba Government, with a maximum potential of \$2,000 from each, if \$10,000 is raised by the community foundation. Last year, 39 participating community foundations reached the maximum stretch.

The Selkirk & District Community Foundation has participated in the challenge since its inception, and received 174 gifts last year, the most raised by a single community foundation during the 2023 Giving Challenge.

"The Selkirk & District Community Foundation believed in the Giving Challenge right from day one," says Beverley Clegg, the Foundation's Executive Director. "We were on board the first time it was offered. It was the perfect fit right from the get-go. It was the stretch that caught our eye. Donors love a stretch, and we knew the community would be right behind us."

The stretch dollars can encourage donors to make their annual contributions during the Giving Challenge, to make those gifts have just a bit more impact.

"Some donors wait all year to give during that week, because they know their generosity and their dollar will go a little further," says Clegg.

"GIVING CAN HELP SUPPORT LOCAL
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR
PROJECTS. EVERYTHING FROM LIBRARIES
TO HOSPITALS TO MUSEUMS TO DAYCARES,
PROJECTS BIG AND SMALL."

One of the projects supported by the Selkirk & District Community Foundation is Project Linus, named after the "Peanuts" cartoon character who carried around his blanket; the project provides blankets for vulnerable folks who could use the warmth.

"There's an incredible group of knitters and crocheters that do their thing, and their blankets are delivered to the hospital, to our local women's shelter," says Clegg. "Project Linus is the gift of a blanket to someone in need."

Project Linus is just one of hundreds of examples of how the Giving Challenge can impact Manitoba communities in a myriad of ways.

The Winkler Community Foundation has also been involved with the Giving Challenge since the beginning, and their Executive Director, Myra Peters, also found the stretch to be inspiring and impactful, especially for Winkler's business sector.

"After experiencing the first year, our board started thinking 'well if they're stretching dollars, why wouldn't we challenge locally to stretch more and maybe we could invite an even bigger impact,'" explains Peters.

In addition to individual donors, Winkler encouraged local businesses and industries to participate through social media and local radio stations, and their local paper.

"We have so many different industries and community businesses that just love to support local initiatives," says Peters. "I always recommend getting on board. Use the resources that are available and participate - it's worth it!"

The 2024 Giving Challenge takes place the week of November 12-17.

To learn more or support a Manitoba community during the Giving Challenge, visit endowmb.org.



TOGETHER WITH C.A.R.E.

The Community Area for Revitalization and Equity (C.A.R.E.) has been identified by community as a priority area for collective action. Many people who frequent or live in the area are experiencing vulnerability. The Foundation is embarking on a collaborative journey to enhance community well-being in this neighbourhood.

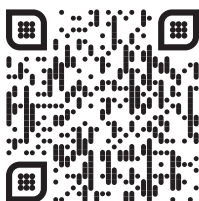
ALL ABOUT C.A.R.E.

Geographically, C.A.R.E. runs from Logan to Disraeli (just behind Our Relatives' Place, also known as N'Dinawemak) up to Higgins, then across to Stanley on the other side of Main. Many of Winnipeg's most vulnerable citizens living in the area need advanced support.



By encouraging collaboration, we want to understand the real issues, the gaps, and the challenges faced by those in C.A.R.E. We will walk together with community to support urgent needs, while at the same time developing thoughtful, long-term community-led solutions - not just quick fixes. This involves comprehensive research to ensure we make informed decisions, that have a lasting impact.

Philanthropy has a long history of celebrating our strengths and finding innovative solutions to our greatest challenges. We understand now more than ever how important it is to be led by the community. Since its launch in early 2024, the C.A.R.E. initiative has focused on listening and learning from community about what it needs, potential solutions, and how generosity can play a role.



The Winnipeg Foundation has launched a C.A.R.E. Fund to support projects in the area. Gifts to this fund are flowed through directly to community.

To give, visit: wpgfdn.org/care, or scan the QR code.

Partner Organizations in the C.A.R.E. area

Healing

- Aboriginal Health and Wellness
- Amoowigamig
- Centre for Aboriginal Human Resources (CAHRD)
- Clan Mothers Healing Village and Knowledge Centre
- Kookum's Place Daycare
- Circle of Life Thunderbird House

Housing

- Bell Hotel (Main Street Project)
- Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre - Astum Api Niikinaahk (Tiny Homes)

Shelters

- Main Street Project
- N'Dinawemak - Our Relatives' Place
- Salvation Army
- Siloam Mission

Food

- Lighthouse Mission
- Main Street Project



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

TRANSIT EMPLOYEES COMMUNITY FUND - GENEROSITY COMES FULL CIRCLE

MAIN STREET PROJECT RECEIVES OUTREACH VAN



With routes that take them to every corner of our city, transit drivers get a picture of life in Winnipeg that most never see. The diverse swath of neighborhoods and people that drivers connect with each shift gives them a front row seat to the complex challenges facing community.

This unique vantage point, along with the murder of transit operator Irvine Jubal Fraser in 2017, led to the creation of the Transit Employees Community Fund.

In 2017, Transit was collaborating with Main Street Project (MSP), a charity supporting Winnipeg's most marginalized residents, to provide drivers with additional training and information about mental health and addiction. Shortly after the tragic death of Fraser that same year, Jon Rost, a transit operator of more than 20 years who was involved with the training initiative, brought the idea of helping community to the table.

"THE VAN HAS ALREADY
GONE A LONG WAY."



Rost says, “I was inspired by what Main Street Project was doing and thought, ‘Boy, that would be nice to be able to help in a bigger way than we are capable of as individuals.’ It was during that process where the inspiration, the catalyst, came for me to look at developing a fund at The Winnipeg Foundation.” Rost teamed up with Denise Aston Devisscher, who had worked with Transit for 30 years, to get the process underway.

Fast forward to today, and the Transit Employees Community Fund is up and running, with between 10-15% of employees making bi-weekly contributions directly from their pay cheques. Despite pandemic-related setbacks, the Fund was able to reach its original goal this September; a brand-new outreach van for MSP.

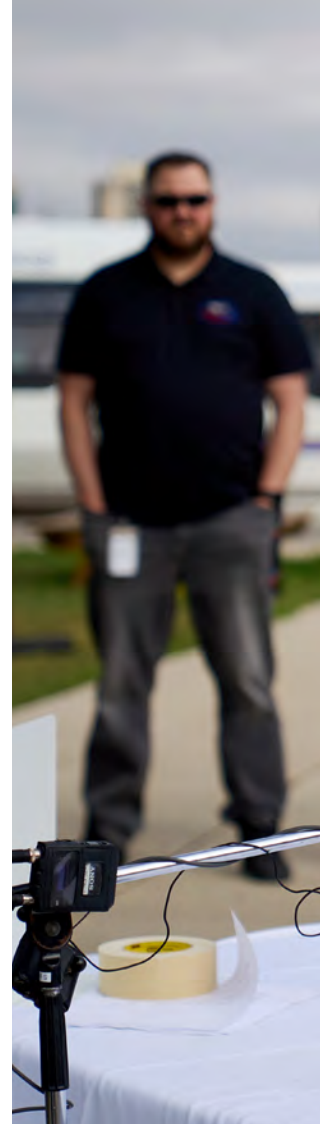
The van, which is being used by MSP’s Indigenous relations team and to support the mobile outreach program, has already put on some miles. Vanessa Gamblin, MSP’s Director of Indigenous Relations, says “The van has already gone a long way. We’ve taken many people to Sundance and medicine harvesting.”

She explains that people who access MSP’s services are often unable to get out of the city to participate in cultural and ceremonial events, which has “always been a barrier.” Having the ability to get program participants into nature, to sweat lodges, and to pick medicine, is a crucial component of the healing journey and a boon for community. Gamblin describes a jubilant scene outside of Thunderbird House, with staff and community members “screaming and cheering,” when the van rolled up for the first time.

Randy Tonnellier, co-chair of the committee managing the Fund, says, “Our donors [Winnipeg Transit employees] are out there every day seeing people in need. I always thought transit operators have more face-to-face interactions with citizens than any other city employee.”

The nature of this service-oriented work runs parallel to the experience of those working with community at organizations like MSP. Jamil Mahmood, Executive Director of MSP, says there is a shared unity between transit workers and MSP staff, with both being “out on the front lines every day.”

Below: Randy Tonnellier, co-chair of the Fund’s committee and Vanessa Gamblin, MSP’s Director of Indigenous Relations (right), speaking at a press event held in September 2024.



“I’VE WORKED THERE FOR CLOSE TO 30 YEARS,” SAYS TONNELLIER, “THERE WERE A LOT OF STORIES ABOUT EMPLOYEES DOING HEROIC THINGS, AND THE FUND WAS A WAY TO RECOGNIZE THAT.”



When discussing the creation of the Fund, Tonnellier explains that 2017 “was a dark time for Transit.” Fraser’s tragic death had impacted morale, making an already tough job even tougher. The Transit Employees Community Fund provided both a boost for employees and much-needed support for the people they serve. “I’ve worked there for close to 30 years,” says Tonnellier, “there were a lot of stories about employees doing heroic things, and the fund was a way to recognize that.”

On the multi-faceted impact of the Fund, Aston Devisscher remarks, “If an operator feels good about giving and the people feel good about receiving because they are going to be in a better situation, than it’s an all-around feel-good thing.”

The Fund is continuing its upward trajectory, according to Tonnellier, who states, “It’s still growing, more employees are donating!” Since its incorporation in 2019, the Fund, which is donor-advised, has given grants to different charities working in areas that are close to the hearts of Transit employees: community well-being, homelessness, animal wel-

fare, and addictions. Tonnellier says, “The committee will continue giving away funds each year to great charities, but we are currently working on setting another long-term goal to help community.”

As for this next big goal, Tonnellier says, “We are really looking to organizations that are serving the same people we are serving.”



The **Community Generosity** Pillar of The Winnipeg Foundation’s Strategic Plan 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.



MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

BY MATTHEW HODGINS, ADDICTIONS COUNSELLOR WITH
ST. RAPHAEL WELLNESS CENTRE

CONTINUING RECOVERY PROGRAM OFFERS CAMARADERIE AND COMMUNITY

St. Raphael Wellness Centre (SRWC) is a nonprofit organization working with those affected by addiction and their families, offering a supportive environment to heal in body mind and spirit.

The Men's Continuing Recovery program at SRWC is designed for male identifying participants who are at least a month sober from drugs and alcohol and wish to maintain their recovery by holistic lifestyle change. This psychoeducational group combines elements of behavioral counselling and health education, offering a supportive environment for men who have completed a residential recovery program.

The group highlights how men are vulnerable to addiction by discussing how rigid gender roles can hinder sobriety. Historically, men have been told that sadness is a sign of weakness, and men shouldn't talk to other men about their feelings; anger is the only emotion that is acceptable to display. To detach emotionally and appear in control feels imperative because society dictates men shouldn't talk about their pain.

Rather than working through things, men often externalize their emotions by taking risks; reckless driving, suicide, alcohol, drugs, interpersonal, and community violence are common outlets. Alcohol use among men has long been associated with masculinity and can serve as a rite of passage. Men often grieve the loss of comradery when they choose to get sober and the men's group at SRWC can provide much-needed social connection.

The recovery programs at SRWC empower individuals in sobriety to build and maintain internal motivation, achieve holistic lifestyle change, manage withdrawal symptoms, live with honesty and transparency while practicing self-love. To treat addiction in the long term involves learning and processing the root causes of addiction, while challenging the negative belief system that many people have carried their entire life. SRWC recognizes the importance of long-term care for addictions and sustained recovery management.

"THROUGH FOSTERING OPEN COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE FAMILY AND EMBRACING SELF-LOVE, INDIVIDUALS CAN NAVIGATE THE COMPLEXITIES OF ADDICTION RECOVERY WITH RESILIENCE AND DETERMINATION. I PARTICULARLY APPRECIATED THE COUNSELOR-LED GROUP MEETINGS AND MATERIALS BACKED BY RESEARCH AT SRWC WELLNESS CENTER. THEIR EMPHASIS ON INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING AND HOLISTIC APPROACHES TO ADDICTION RECOVERY PROVIDED ME WITH THE TOOLS AND SUPPORT NEEDED TO ADDRESS UNDERLYING ISSUES, DEVELOP COPING STRATEGIES, AND BUILD A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR LASTING SOBRIETY."

-KHALEAL, SRWC GRADUATE AND ALUMNI MEMBER

Mental Health

Poor mental health, both a social and health issue, is a key finding in Winnipeg's Vital Signs® 2022. It is unlikely that a person will live a lifetime without experiencing or knowing someone experiencing a mental health issue or crisis. Maintaining connections and having access to appropriate services is vital in supporting good mental health.



Transforming Darkness

MURAL BRINGS LIGHT TO ST. BONIFACE HOSPITAL'S TUNNEL

"I think it's the busiest street in Winnipeg," says artist Toby Gillies. The "street" he is referring to is an underground tunnel at the St. Boniface Hospital, used to transport patients to the McEwen Building, home of the hospital's mental health program.

More than 17,000 patients traverse the tunnel annually, and it can be a daunting journey.

"It was a dark tunnel with no windows, no way out, and really long bends, which could make patients' experience in it even more distressing," says Sandra Torchia St. Boniface Hospital's, Mental Health, Palliative Care and Spiritual Health Program Director. She says patients, staff, and visitors have been advocating for upgrades for more than 20 years.

In December of last year, the grim space underwent a transformation. Natalie Baird and Toby Gillies were commissioned by Artists in Health Care to paint a 300-foot-long mural, titled *Outside Light*. In addition to Baird and Gillies, three outpatients referred by the St. Boniface mental health program helped design and paint the mural.

"It's not just a dark hallway, it's a dark hallway that a lot of people have a very specific experience with," Baird says. "We wanted to make sure we were including that perspective in the project."

Through the funding, outpatient mentees received honorariums for taking part in the mural mentorship program. Two of the patients are practicing artists and were thrilled to be participating in one of their first professional arts opportunities.

As artists and facilitators working in the community, Baird and Gillies have both witnessed the positive impact of art for people experiencing illness and transition.

"To have people come and share generously about their story is very touching," Baird says. "Mentees would say, 'It's just really nice to be here in a positive way, and to be back on my own terms, and to be doing something creative that gives back to people who are here now.'"

Artists Toby Gillies and Natalie Baird with *Outside Light*.



Gillies shared a similar sentiment, saying it was a joy to see how the artistic process uplifted the team, especially having patients, staff, and families engaging with the mural and providing feedback throughout the project.

"It was nice to have people engaging with the work, wanting to learn about the project, and hearing that the mural was joyful, colourful, and makes them feel good," Gillies says.

Artists in Health Care is a non-profit organization bringing live music and arts to patients receiving treatment in oncology, palliative care, rehabilitation, and dialysis on units throughout hospitals in Manitoba. The organization's unique programs provide relief for patients, families, and staff from the stress and anxiety often found in healthcare facilities. To learn more about Artists in Healthcare, visit artistsinhealthcare.com



Tracy Stople (above) started the Stople Hope Fund to honour her late mother.

On a warm June day, Tracy Stople gathered with a group of 20 participants at Victoria General Hospital's Miracle Garden for this year's Art in the Garden workshop. The one-day event aims to provide creative opportunities in a safe space for individuals living with schizophrenia and other mental health issues.

The day, June 14, holds personal significance for Tracy, as it commemorates the passing of her mother, Jennie, who lived with schizophrenia. "She would have just loved it," Tracy gushes, referring to her mom. "She was legally blind, but she would have been right in the front trying to do everything."

Tracy established The Stople Hope Fund through The Winnipeg Foundation in 2009 to honour her late mother. Since then, the fund has grown and now grants back to the community. For the past three years, it has hosted Art in the Garden workshops in partnership with Artbeat Studio and the Victoria Hospital Foundation.

When Tracy started the fund, she was uncertain about its vision but remembered her mom attending weekly women's groups at the Manitoba Schizophrenia Society, where art and writing classes significantly improved her well-being.

Glenna, a participant whose post-traumatic stress disorder manifests as schizophrenia, looks forward to the event every year. "I've attended for three years now, and I appreciate it so much," she says. "When my symptoms are there, one of the first things I turn to is drawing."

Art facilitator Logan Powell also extolls the benefits of blending art with mental health initiatives. "Art is like mindfulness. It shifts my attention to smaller problems, focusing on details like my brushstrokes or shading, making me forget about what else I might be facing."

The Stople Hope Fund has created opportunities to create, connect, and heal through creativity. Emphasizing the importance of starting such initiatives, Jaime Kyle, a Winnipeg Foundation Generosity Advisor says, "anyone starting a legacy fund or something similar should know that the possibilities are endless."

To learn more, head to thevicfoundation.ca/stay-connected/news/main-blog/2022/08/30/art-class-brushes-up-creativity-and-compassion-for-people-living-with-mental-health-concerns

Art saves



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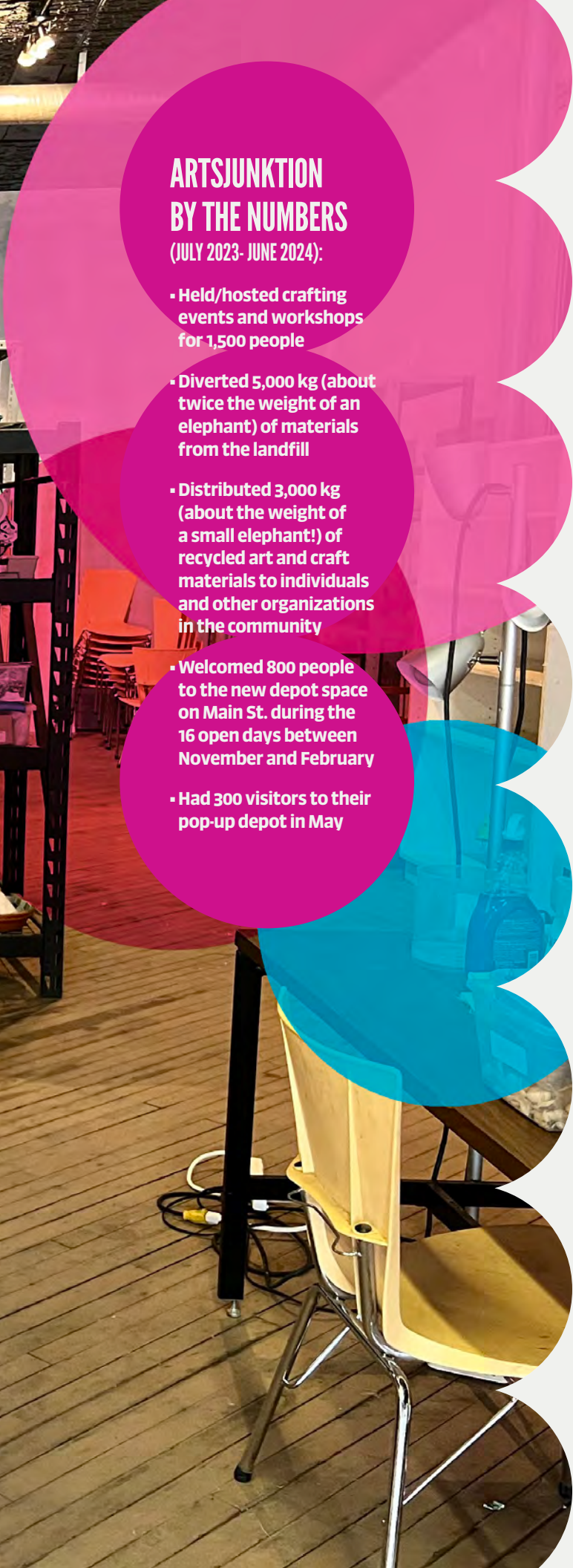


lives

THROUGH A LEGACY OF GENEROSITY

PERSEVERANCE & ART WORK





ARTSJUNKTION BY THE NUMBERS

(JULY 2023- JUNE 2024):

- Held/hosted crafting events and workshops for 1,500 people
- Diverted 5,000 kg (about twice the weight of an elephant) of materials from the landfill
- Distributed 3,000 kg (about the weight of a small elephant!) of recycled art and craft materials to individuals and other organizations in the community
- Welcomed 800 people to the new depot space on Main St. during the 16 open days between November and February
- Had 300 visitors to their pop-up depot in May

ARTSJUNKTION CONTINUES TO IGNITE CREATIVITY AFTER EXTINGUISHING THE FIRE

Founded by three teachers in 2007, Artsjunktion is a creative re-use depot with a mandate to share resources, repurpose 'waste' materials, and provide teachers, artists, organizations, and all community members with access to high quality arts and crafts supplies.

Mahri White, Artsjunktion's administrative coordinator, says the organization operates on a "take what you need, pay what you can" basis, making art as accessible as possible."

Artsjunktion recently moved to a new location but has not had the easiest of transitions. Shortly after moving from 312 William Avenue to 594 Main Street in March, 2024, a large fire took place in the neighbouring building. The fire took 12 hours to put out and resulted in major water damage to the Artsjunktion depot basement, destroying 90% of the stored items (programming materials, overstock, shelving, furniture, and specialty equipment).

To make matters worse, Artsjunktion experienced two break-ins and another smaller container fire at their pop-up depot after the disastrous damage incurred in March. An emergency grant from The Winnipeg Foundation helped Artsjunktion with the clean-up, which was extensive, and saw multiple workers fill five bins with reams of damaged items over multiple days. Artsjunktion's dedicated staff and volunteers are still working diligently to restore their space and hope to be open to the public again soon.

Staffed by four remarkable individuals, the perseverance of Mahri White, Nancy Nguyen, Sappfyre Mcleod, and Louis Stevens, along with a supportive Board and volunteers, is keeping Artsjunktion afloat.

"In addition to financial donations, people's time - helping to sort and organize - goes a long way," says Sappfyre Mcleod, programming assistant.

The new Artsjunktion location remains closed to the public as staff and volunteers continue working to preserve supplies and repair the building to ensure public safety. In the meantime, art lovers can enjoy community programs like Artsjunktion's "Crafternoons" at third-party, neighbourhood partner locations throughout the city, including the Millennium Library, Bijou Park, and C2 Centre for Craft.

"We've received so much support," says Nancy Nguyen, programming coordinator. "Not being able to host things at the depot has given us the opportunity to branch out into the community."

To learn more about Artsjunktion, visit their website at artsjunktion.mb.ca and follow @artsjunktion on Instagram for updates!

Photo: Artsjunktion staff Sappfyre Mcleod, Nancy Nguyen, and Mahri White at 594 Main St.

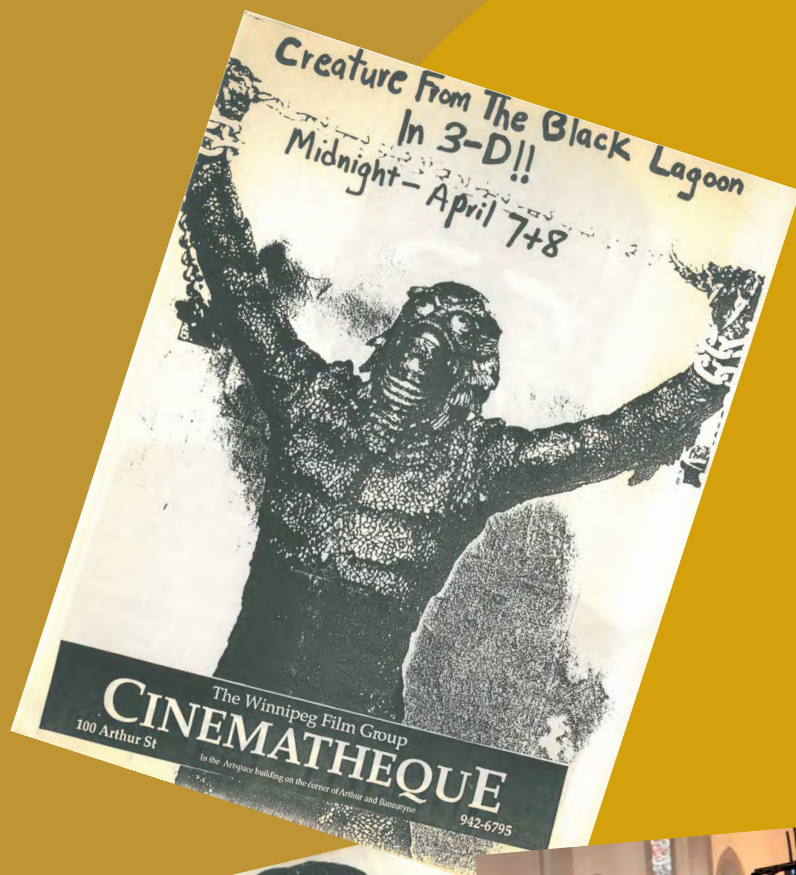


WINNIPEG FILM GROUP CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

BY BOB ARMSTRONG



“IT ALL COMES BACK TO THE CINEMA,” SHE SAYS, “SITTING IN THE DARK AND WATCHING A FILM TOGETHER.”



Archival posters and images courtesy of Winnipeg Film Group.

Winnipeggers have grown accustomed to bumping into the big white trailers that signal film shoots, often featuring A-list Hollywood stars. But the heart of the city's growing and internationally acclaimed film community isn't so obvious a sight.

It could be the room where the 50-year-old, member-run, Winnipeg Film Group stores cameras and sound and lighting equipment it rents out to filmmakers wanting to bring a vision to life.

Or maybe it's the temperature-controlled archive of films and videos, installed in 2011 with financial support from The Winnipeg Foundation and various government sources, which preserves countless hours of creative work by Winnipeg Film Group (WFG) members.

Or perhaps it's Cinematheque, the Film Group's little art house theatre on the ground floor of the Artspace Building that has introduced audiences to independent, foreign, and classic films since the 1980s.

Leslie Supnet, the filmmaker who has been Executive Director of WFG since 2018, might endorse that last suggestion. "It all comes back to the cinema," she says, "sitting in the dark and watching a film together."

"I was lured in through Cinematheque and then stuck around. I really enjoyed watching movies, but then I got involved with the group through taking workshops on filmmaking and that introduced me to a community of filmmakers."

Since 1974, WFG has brought makers and lovers of film together to create, enjoy, and preserve independent cinema and to learn the skills required to make their own films.

The philosophy of its training mission is "artists teaching artists," says Supnet.

"Through training we can empower people to tell their own stories. It's a meeting place and a place to make your films in a very accessible way and it has an active community of volunteers who will help you."

In addition to supporting training of filmmakers and the making of films through equipment rentals, the group helps to find audiences for its members' work at festivals, galleries, and other venues.

"It's really important work because it shines a spotlight on local film and makes sure Manitoba filmmakers get the attention they deserve," she says.

Throughout the years, the group's prominence has taken leaps forward. In 1989 three WFG members were nominated for Genie Awards: Ed Ackerman for *Primiti Too Taa*; Norma Bailey for *The Milkman Cometh*, and Guy Maddin for his debut feature film, *Tales From the Gimli Hospital*. A few years later, in 1993, several WFG members had their work featured at a Canadian film retrospective at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. In the years since, numerous films by WFG members – some shot in a small black-box space in the Artspace Building – have played the Toronto International Film Festival and festivals in Cannes, Venice, Berlin, and elsewhere.

The group's origins are in the post-Expo '67 spirit of cultural nationalism, when artists and audiences called for support for a domestic arts and culture sector. At a 1974 symposium at the University of Manitoba, filmmakers signed a manifesto beginning "We, the undersigned filmmakers, wish to voice our belief that the present system of film production / distribution / exhibition works to the extreme disadvantage of the Canadian filmmaker." By year's end 10 of them submitted an application to the Canada Council for the Arts for funding to establish the WFG. Two years later, the first film produced through the group was completed.



"I'm looking at the signatories of the original application, and a lot of them, I worked with," says Leonard Yakir, one of the original signatories and the director of the first made-in-Manitoba feature film, *The Mourning Suit*.

"WFG was forming just as I was working on putting together *The Mourning Suit*. A film takes over your life, so I must give credit to my colleagues who really created the group."

Indeed, several early members of the group, who went on to long and fruitful careers in the industry, worked on Yakir's film. Among them were producer/director/writer Norma Bailey, who handled wardrobe and props on the film, and Leon Johnson, who worked as a sound technician on the film.

Because of its prominent place in Manitoba film history, *The Mourning Suit* is being brought back in a 4K digital version as a 50th anniversary project for the film group. Originally shot on 35mm film, the film

was recently presented at the Winnipeg International Jewish Film Festival in a 2K digital format and Yakir, who now lives in Massachusetts, returned to the city for its premiere.

In addition to supporting the new version of *The Mourning Suit* the film group has also commissioned five short films – all in some way inspired by the Winnipeg Film Group – that will be presented at an anniversary screening next year.

One of them is directed by Ian Bawa, a Winnipeg-born filmmaker who credits all aspects of the group, including Cinematheque, low-cost equipment rentals, training workshops, and the group's One Take Super 8 (OTS8) film competition, for much of his success. "WFG was our gateway drug to film," says Bawa. "We figured out a community and connected with other people who love film."

Today, WFG members create more than 50 short films in any given year, says Supnet. During special juried screenings of locally shot films, held each year at Cinematheque, 10 to 15 films will be shown to sold-out audiences.

The WFG supports several programs focused on building up Winnipeg's film community. The group's resources are used in the RBC Pitch Competition at the Gimli Film Festival and in the Reel Pride Festival. WFG also offers workshops for junior high and high school students through the Quantum Arts Program at Winnipeg School Division. Through this program, young people learn how to develop a screenplay, operate a camera, edit video, and work with others on a group project.

Growth in local independent film production has occurred hand-in-hand with the growth of the commercial film industry in Manitoba. Many group members who use WFG's resources to create their independent projects also work on out-of-town productions that shoot in the city.

While there are many filmmaking accomplishments to celebrate, the group's 50th anniversary will also be a tribute to two staff members who passed away recently.

Dave Barber, who died in 2021, was hired in the 1980s as program coordinator at Cinematheque and shaped the theatre for decades through his ideas, energy, and passion for film. He also stored massive amounts of documentation about the history of the WFG. The film group is looking to make use of Barber's archive in a book on the history of the group, with grant support from The Winnipeg Foundation. Barber's successor as program coordinator at Cinematheque, Jaimz Asmundson, died early in 2024 and the group also plans to honour his contributions to the film community.

"While we're very excited to celebrate the 50th anniversary, we're very much reflecting on the loss of Dave and Jaimz," says Supnet. "We're hoping this will honour their legacy."

To learn more about Winnipeg Film Group visit winnipegfilmgroup.com.



As part of the year-long celebration of Winnipeg's 150th anniversary, The Winnipeg Foundation is supporting organizations as they celebrate our past while building a bright future: a robust and thriving arts scene that ensures **access** for all; a strong sense of **belonging** with collective action in the areas of community pride/beautification and mental health; and opportunities for **connection across cultures**, through the act of artmaking and sharing cultural traditions and new ideas.

This three-pronged approach has been designed to ensure representation across cultural and generational community demographics, and to increase access for people facing barriers. The projects will unfold through the year and involve several organizations, selected for their dedication to supporting these areas and in-depth knowledge of community.

\$350,000 has been approved for these projects, and will be supporting the following organizations and initiatives:

ACCESS \$125,000

Grant recipients include:

- Arts AccessAbility Network Manitoba
- Immigrant Centre Manitoba
- Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre
- Family Resource Centres via United Way (For Every Family initiative)
 - Acorn Family Place
 - Canadian Muslim Women Institute
 - Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre
 - North End Women's Centre
 - NorWest Co-op Community Health
 - North Point Douglas Women's Centre
 - South Winnipeg Family Information Centre
 - West Central Women's Resource Centre

BELONGING \$175,000

Grant recipients include:

- Artbeat Studio
- Graffiti Art Programming
- Art City
- Martha Street Studio
- Rainbow Resource Centre

CONNECTION \$50,000

Grant recipients include:

- Ethnocultural Council of Manitoba
- Manitoba Craft Council

**Project details to be guided through partnerships with Social Planning Council*

HOW MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS SECURE SUCCESS

Anis Abdisalan, 27, dekes around 15-year-old Akram Boulhout in an attempt to score a basket during Rahma Community and Youth Centre's weekly basketball match.

With no refs, this game is about more than keeping score; it's an opportunity for participants in Rahma's Bright Beginnings mentorship program to build relationships one shot at a time.

"Going through the program, I realize that it's not just a mentorship; it's more than that, a mentor can become a friend," says Akram, who looks forward to shooting hoops every week.

Rahma is a non-profit helping children and youth from diverse ethnocultural backgrounds thrive through settlement support, educational support, employment training, summer programming, computer classes, and mentorship – including Bright Beginnings. The one-year program matches refugee and immigrant youth, aged 12 to 17, who have experienced interrupted schooling or other educational challenges with mentors from their community.

"The long-term impact or goal of this program is to enhance self-esteem, confidence, motivation, resilience, and social skills among youth," says Feisal Adem, Rahma's Executive Director.

Youth who have a mentor growing up report positive outcomes, including pursuing future education, experiencing a greater sense of belonging in their local community, and having better mental health, according to a Mentor Canada report.

"The Bright Beginnings program has been really good so far. Any time I need help with school, work, or just need to chat, I can," Akram says.

In one short year, the program tripled in size. The program includes regular one-on-one meetings between mentees and mentors at a location of their choice. These meetings focus on discussing goals set at the program's start, which mentees aim to achieve

within three months. Progress is reviewed, and challenges are addressed. In addition to one-on-one meetings with mentors, the program offers weekly recreational activities like basketball, workshops, and bi-monthly field trips.

Anis says it's been an incredible honour to work so closely with mentees and

witness their growth. "When you're a teenager, and you don't feel like anyone is respecting you or listening to you, you might end up resorting to things that you regret later on in your life," he explains. This program gives youth a platform where they feel comfortable sharing.

Akram says he enjoys the goal-setting portion of the program. "Whenever I have a personal goal, I just tell my mentor, and he will help me reach them."

Photos: Rahma Community and Youth Centre mentors and mentees shooting hoops at the Bright Beginnings program's weekly basketball game.



"THE LONG-TERM
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Camp Quality

“No one can do anything about the quantity of life, but we can do something about the quality”





Each summer in Manitoba, a special camp for children living with cancer and similar blood disorders runs for one week; Camp Quality invites these children and their family for a one-of-a-kind camp adventure.

"It's hard to put into words. You get here, and these kids are incredible," says Lauren Lambert, Camp Director at Camp Quality Manitoba. "To know what they've experienced, whether they've been in treatment or been a sibling of someone who has, to realize they're so advanced for their age because of what they've experienced, and to be able to see them let go and just be kids... it actually brings you to tears of joy."

Lauren joined Camp Quality Manitoba in 2022, so this was her third summer running the show. This year there were 45 campers ranging in age from seven to 17, and 45 volunteers helping run the camp. Junior campers ages 7-12 have a one-to-one counselor to camper ratio, with teens getting roughly a one-to-three ratio.

"We have this pairing system to ensure campers are getting the attention, engagement, and activity they deserve," says Lauren. "We can fine tune our programming and give them the best possible week."

To have a space for an entire week where children can meet others who have similar experiences is very special and makes for some instantaneous connections.

"You know, they don't have to explain if they've lost their hair, they don't have to explain why they're going to see the nurse four times a day. It's very normal here," says Lauren.

Grace Bakan has been attending Camp Quality since 2016. She'll be 'aging out' next year but plans to volunteer with the camp once she turns 18.

"There are no strangers here. Everybody is friends, you know? You feel safe and okay to talk to everybody, and everybody's going through the same thing," says Grace. "If you're in treatment, still out of treatment, everybody knows and understands what it's like. We all can relate to each other, no matter if it's the kids in the little kid cabins, or me at 17 in the teen cabins, we all get it."



Rowan Keagan, Assistant Director, has been with Camp Quality since 2019.

"I was a little scared at first, but I felt very welcomed, instantly, into this camp family," says Keagan. "It's pretty life changing. It's hard, but it's worth it. They're long days, but seeing the kids smile and seeing them happy, and for once they're not 'the sick kid' in their life. They come here and they're just ordinary kids. It makes it all worthwhile."

"It's such a big family here. Everyone is so welcoming," agrees Steven Harrison, who has volunteered with Camp Quality Manitoba since 2019. "I've never experienced such a warm and happy and inclusive space."

Counsellors and campers create bonds that remain strong over multiple years, and campers are often quick to reconnect.

"They're such good friends and the bond they have for others experiencing similar struggles, and knowing it, it's just so wonderful to see," says Steven. "There's no judgement here. There are no issues. Everyone knows what each other have been through and support each other because of that."

Although the actual camp only lasts for a week, Lauren and her team prepare year-round to ensure an unforgettable camp experience.

"We really try to go 110% and push the extra mile. Our theme this week is 'Dino Camp' and it's all dinosaurs. Our Programs Team has been incredible," says Lauren. "We want to deliver extra special moments individually to every single camper."

"We only get rave reviews from the families. To know that all your kids are safe and taken care of, and you get a moment to just breathe, right? We feel the love and the gratitude from these parents."

Camp Quality Manitoba is on beautiful Brereton Lake and has been operating since 2004. The original Camp Quality was founded in Australia in 1983 by Vera Entwistle, when she was told by a pediatric oncologist, "No one can do anything about the quantity of life, but we can do something about the quality." Camp Quality was brought to Canada in 1988 and currently operates in Australia, Canada, USA, New Zealand, UK, and Hong Kong.

To learn more about Camp Quality Manitoba, visit campquality.org/cqmb

Promising Projects

GRANT **\$20,000**

ÉCOLE PRÉCIEUX-SANG SCHOOL, SCHOOL YARD IMPROVEMENTS

École Précieux-Sang School is a kindergarten to grade 8 school in Division Scolaire Franco-Manitobaine; 40% of the school's students are from new immigrant families. The school is home to the largest French speaking daycare in Manitoba. The grant will support accessible play structures and an outdoor classroom for over 500 children and the surrounding communities.

"This project will ensure the school yard redesign meets the needs of current and future student populations for years to come, ensuring a sense of belonging for all." Anna-Maria Pozzi, Program Officer

GRANT **\$100,000**

MA MAWI-WI-CHI-ITATA CENTRE, STRATEGIC MANAGER AT GREY BUFFALO GRANDFATHER HEALING LODGE

Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre was established in 1984 to reclaim Indigenous peoples' inherent role and responsibility as the caregivers for Indigenous children and families. It recently opened Grey Buffalo Grandfather Healing Lodge, a land-based healing and program space for clients, at Hillside Beach.

"This project will support programming and sustainability of the Lodge, contributing to community resilience and advancing reconciliation and healing." Kerry Ryan, Senior Program Officer

GRANT **\$100,000**

MAIN STREET PROJECT (MSP), HARM REDUCTION SERVICES

This grant will advance the implementation of harm reduction services by addressing an epidemic of sexually transmitted blood-borne infections, drug poisonings, and deaths from toxic street drugs. Working with Keewatinok Inniniw Minoayawi, Klinik, Manitoba Harm Reduction Network, College of Pharmacists, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Lakeshore Research, Mount Carmel Clinic, Substance Consulting and Ekosi Health, MSP will provide stabilized drug use and connection to wraparound supports to improve health outcomes.

"This project brings together various social agencies and health professionals in a collaborative effort to help save the lives of those falling victim to the toxic drug crisis. It will also be an important part of the community's overall approach to providing addiction treatment and mental health services." Noah Erenberg, Senior Program Officer



GRANT **\$30,000**

HEROS (HOCKEY EDUCATION REACHING OUT SOCIETY), WINNIPEG PROGRAMMING

HEROS (Hockey Education Reaching Out Society) hockey programs are designed for young people for whom sport is out of reach due to financial, social, or physical barriers. At no cost to families, HEROS works with schools and community organizations in the North End to provide equipment, transportation, and food to all players, and adaptive programs for neurodivergent youth and youth with disabilities.

“HEROS participants have been excluded from sport for most of their lives. Through HEROS, they build positive relationships with their teammates and mentors while connecting with other players in the Winnipeg hockey circuit. This shows players that they do belong—both in the game and in their broader communities.” Aliya Mrochuk, Senior Program Officer

GRANT **\$75,000**

NORTH END COMMUNITY RENEWAL CORPORATION, NORTH END FOOD SECURITY NETWORK

This grant will support the relaunch the North End Food Security Network, which includes regular food distribution, community gardens, and urban agriculture projects, and the Selkirk Avenue Farmer’s Market, which uses a pay-what-you-can model to increase access to affordable fresh produce. The Network will also offer regular nutrition education workshops and cooking classes focused on budget-friendly meal planning, preserving seasonal produce to reduce food waste, healthy eating habits, and food literacy.

“Food insecurity is at an all-time high as the cost of living continues to increase due to factors such as inflation, making access to healthy and nutritious food difficult for so many community members in our city. The North End Food Security Network will address this need and work with communities to find sustainable solutions for the future.” Kathleen Vyrauen, Senior Program Officer

GRANT **\$50,000**

ARTISTS IN HEALTH CARE MANITOBA, COMMUNITIES COLLABORATING!

Artists in Health Care Manitoba (AHCM) works to improve the patient, family, and staff experience in healthcare and to address the needs of the whole person through meaningful engagement with the arts. AHCM will collaborate with Indigenous Health to bring expanded programming to each of the five Indigenous Health sites in Winnipeg. Musical offerings will be mindfully curated and presented by artists from the community for patients from the community.

“This project takes a meaningful approach to healing through art and to ensuring cultural access.” Joanna Turner, Senior Program Officer.

GIFTS OF SHARES

BY MARY BETH TAYLOR, CFRE, VP,
COMMUNITY GENEROSITY



IN 2022, THE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION WAS HONOURED TO ANNOUNCE A GIFT FROM THE ESTATE OF MIRIAM BERGEN. HER BEQUEST – WHICH INCLUDED A GIFT OF PRIVATE SHARES – WAS AN INCREDIBLE ACT OF GENEROSITY. HER GIFT OF PRIVATE SHARES, VALUED AT AN ESTIMATED \$500 MILLION, WAS THE LARGEST GIFT FROM AN ESTATE EVER RECEIVED BY A CANADIAN CHARITY. WE CONTINUE TO BE GRATEFUL FOR HER VISIONARY SUPPORT OF OUR COMMUNITY.

SO, WHAT ARE GIFTS OF PRIVATE SHARES AND HOW CAN OTHERS SUPPORT CHARITIES THIS WAY?

Charities have a history of accepting gifts of publicly traded shares but accepting gifts of private shares is less common. When public shares are donated in-kind to a registered charity the capital gains tax is reduced, and possibly eliminated. Over the years, these tax savings allowed more donors to make major gifts and in Manitoba, this meant many dream projects came to happen.

Through the collaboration of the donor, the charity, and the donor's financial advisor, gifts of **private shares** are also possible. Although there are not the same capital gains tax savings as gifts of publicly traded shares, there may still be benefits to making an in-kind gift of private shares (e.g., realizing a taxable capital gain instead of a taxable deemed dividend). Donors still receive a charitable tax receipt if CRA requirements are met.

THINGS TO CONSIDER IN PLANNING A GIFT OF PRIVATE SHARES:

Valuation – Private shares may need to be appraised to determine their fair market value. The donor will generally need to provide corporate documents to support the value of the shares, as well as outline any share rights, before the charity accepts the gift.

Choose a charity – The donor should select a registered charity that can accept donations of private shares. Not all charities have the capacity, infrastructure, or expertise to manage private shares. The Winnipeg Foundation can accept gifts of private shares under certain circumstances and may be able to flow the gift through to the charity if the charity is unable to accept them directly.

Transfer of shares – Legal documents are often required for the transfer, such as a share repurchase agreement, Directors' Resolution, and deed of gift.

Donation receipt – The charity will generally issue a donation receipt based on the fair market value of the shares on the date of the donation.

Redemption or sale of shares – In most cases, the charity does not hold the shares and will want to have a plan in place for the redemption or sale of the shares before accepting the gift. Since the shares

are not sold on the public market, often the company will buy back the shares as part of the gift arrangement. However, the donor may also work to identify a buyer who is deemed appropriate.

It is essential for the donor and the purchaser to work with financial and tax planning specialists to ensure this is the right form of philanthropy for them to use. It is also essential for charities accepting gifts of private shares to have board-approved policies like a gift acceptance policy and proper documentation like gift agreements and redemption schedules. The Winnipeg Foundation advises charities to speak to their legal counsel before accepting these types of gifts. We also recommend donors contact the charity well before making the gift, as these arrangements are complex and require careful planning to ensure a tax receipt can be issued.

For business owners, donating shares to a registered charity may be a way to both achieve their generosity goals while leveraging the tax benefits provided to donors when they make a charitable gift.

Making an impact in the community doesn't have to be taxing!

For more information, contact the Community Generosity team at The Winnipeg Foundation.

In the fall of 1999, The Winnipeg Foundation launched Youth in Philanthropy (YiP), a three-year pilot project to engage with Winnipeg youth by providing a hands-on experience of grantmaking, and a deeper understanding of our city's charitable sector. Nine high schools participated in the first year of YiP and this year 26 schools and 2 community organizations participated.

The Winnipeg Foundation's Youth in Philanthropy (YiP) program is made possible thanks to the generosity of donors from all walks of life who make gifts through The Foundation. YiP was established to introduce local high school students to philanthropy and community development.

YiP is



In 2024, more than 400 students representing 26 schools and 2 community organizations allocated more than \$178,000 in grants to 75 local charities based on each committee's interest.

This year youth committees worked to align their vision and grantmaking with the goals identified in The Winnipeg Foundation's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. Each committee researched community needs, visited charitable organizations, and made grant recommendations accordingly.

During the past 25 years, The Winnipeg Foundation's youth programs have granted more than \$3.2 million to the community.



More than 100 Youth in Philanthropy participants celebrated the program's 25th anniversary at the YiP gala in May.

AWARDS SUPPORT RADY WOMEN AS EMERGING LEADERS

BY ALISON MAYES, RADY FACULTY COMMUNICATIONS, UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

When Dr. Shay-Lee Bolton was earning her master's and PhD in community health sciences at the University of Manitoba (UM), she didn't view herself as a leader.

Bolton, whose field is psychiatric epidemiology, studies mental health in populations, using complex data analysis methods to reveal patterns.

"I always kind of saw myself as the person running the stats," says Bolton, who joined the Max Rady College of Medicine faculty in 2020 as an assistant professor of psychiatry, with an adjunct appointment in community health sciences.

"My role has really shifted dramatically."

Bolton gradually took on mentorship and leadership roles during her graduate and postdoctoral work.

Now, as a faculty member, she is responsible for co-leading a large interdisciplinary team, ranging from psychiatrists and social workers to technical support staff, that provides and evaluates a virtual mental health skills training program for Manitobans through the CBTm (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy with Mindfulness) Hub.

The assistant professor is one of seven faculty members or students in the Rady Faculty of Health Sciences who have received The Winnipeg Foundation Martha Donovan Women's Leadership Development Awards in the 2023 round of funding.

Bolton's award supported her attendance at a two-day program, Leadership Skills for Engineering and Science Faculty, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Boston earlier this year.

"All my leadership training has been through experience and on the job," she says. "I've modelled my leadership style after my own mentors, who have been fabulous, but the majority of them are men."

Women still face unique challenges in terms of proving themselves as capable leaders and role models, often while juggling family responsibilities, Bolton says.

"I'm hoping the program at MIT helps me recognize areas where I can improve my leadership skills and develop my strengths. I also hope it will help me to become a strong female role model to my team and students."

The \$250,000 Winnipeg Foundation Martha Donovan Fund was established in 2019.

"I'M HOPING THE PROGRAM AT MIT HELPS ME RECOGNIZE AREAS WHERE I CAN IMPROVE MY LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND DEVELOP MY STRENGTHS. I ALSO HOPE IT WILL HELP ME TO BECOME A STRONG FEMALE ROLE MODEL TO MY TEAM AND STUDENTS."

"ALL MY LEADERSHIP TRAINING HAS BEEN THROUGH EXPERIENCE AND ON THE JOB," SHE SAYS. "I'VE MODELLED MY LEADERSHIP STYLE AFTER MY OWN MENTORS, WHO HAVE BEEN FABULOUS, BUT THE MAJORITY OF THEM ARE MEN."

2023 Martha Donovan Fund other award recipients:



DR. LAURA CHISICK, assistant professor and section head of general internal medicine, will attend the Leadership Strategies for Evolving Health Care Executives program at Harvard University.

“I believe this program will give me the tools I need to navigate our health care system at this pivotal time,” Chisick says. “As a general internist, I work every day towards improving patient care.”



DR. RENÉE DOUVILLE, associate professor of pharmacology and therapeutics, is taking online courses through the Yale School of Management in the areas of Women's Leadership, Leading Teams and Leading with Power and Influence.

“My overarching goal is to grow as a female role model and leader by gaining dynamic, transferable leadership skills.”



DR. AMANDA FOWLER-WOODS, assistant professor of community health sciences, will attend the Intermediate Indigenous Women in Leadership program at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity in Alberta.

“This course will support the development of my leadership skills through connecting with other Indigenous women, teachers and Elders through land-based learning, ceremony and culture.”



DR. ZULMA RUEDA, associate professor of medical microbiology and infectious diseases and Canada Research Chair in sexually transmitted infection – resistance and control, will attend a program at Harvard University called Women Leaders: Advancing Together.

“My dream is to become a mentor who empowers and supports other women to rise and lead.”



ELLIE JACK, a PhD candidate in community health sciences with a research focus on mental health service access and financial well-being, will participate in a program called Leading Strategic Student Success through the Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

“This training will help me refine my leadership skills so that in future roles as a post-secondary instructor, I can best support student development.”



ABIGAIL KAWADZA, a master's student in the administration stream at the College of Nursing, will participate in the LEADS Leadership Foundations online program for health-care professionals through the Canadian College of Health Leaders.

“My area of research interest is the dynamic between nurses and leaders. Specifically, what do nurses expect from their leaders, and how can leaders improve the nursing work environment?”

HEARTS OF FREEDOM

HEARTS OF FREEDOM - STORIES OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN REFUGEES is a travelling museum exhibition showcasing a collection of stories sharing the experiences of Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian refugees who came to Canada between 1975 and 1985.

Starting with a research grant in 2018, the project's goal was to explore the stories behind the statistics, sharing refugees' journeys to freedom and their contributions to Canada's history of immigration.

"I remember growing up, going into history classes and social studies classes, and no one talked about this movement," says Dr. Stephanie Phetsamay Stobbe, the exhibition project's lead researcher and curator. "We really wanted to document their stories and pass them on to the next generation, to add that information to our Canadian history."

Stobbe and her team visited 10 cities and conducted 173 interviews for the project. She says, "The people we interviewed are now medical doctors, dentists - they helped build the country. They're professors, they're teachers, engineers, and they're contributing to Canada."

Although more than 80% of the interviews were with refugees, Stobbe also interviewed a few key political figures including former Prime Minister Joe Clark and former Minister of Employment and Immigration Lloyd Axworthy, to provide context about the state of Canada's immigration policies before, during, and after this period.

"It's a human story. It's a story about positive resettlement, integration, and welcoming refugees and immigrants here in Canada," says Dr. Stobbe. "In 1986, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees awarded the People of Canada the prestigious Nansen Medal for their assistance to refugees... The people of Canada need to celebrate their involvement."

With support from The Winnipeg Foundation, the exhibition is travelling across Canada to national and provincial museums, universities, libraries, the Senate of Canada, and other venues.

To learn more about the Hearts of Freedom project, visit heartsoffreedom.org.

Thorlakson Family Legacy

In 2007 Dr. Ken and Lorna Thorlakson established a family endowment fund. Both Ken and Lorna thrived in community service and volunteering, taking on leadership roles in heritage, arts and education organizations, notably the Manitoba Museum, where Lorna was a founding board member, and Ken's long-standing commitment to the Icelandic community newspaper Lögberg-Heimskringla.

The Thorlaksens' late daughter Carla distinguished herself in her career with Canada's Foreign Service, notably in implementing the private sponsorship of refugees program.

Dr. Ken Thorlakson passed away in January 2024, at age 100. Lorna passed away in 2014.

Ken and Lorna Thorlakson's family chose to contribute to the Hearts of Freedom initiative, through their fund, to advance this work to broader audiences.



Dr. Stephanie Phetsamay Stobbe, Associate Professor of Conflict Resolution Studies at Menno Simons College (a program of Canadian Mennonite University) at University of Winnipeg and Business at Canadian Mennonite University, is the exhibition project's lead researcher and curator.

HOW PRAIRIE CLIMATE CENTRE IS
LEARNING CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON
CLIMATE CHANGE FROM WINNIPEG'S
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

CLIMATE CONVERSATIONS

BY RILEY CHERVINSKI

On a scorching July day, the air shimmers with heat, and the usually bustling downtown Winnipeg streets are quiet as people seek refuge from the relentless sun. This is the new reality of climate change in Winnipeg—heat waves last longer, floods rise faster, and wildfires inch closer. These extreme weather events are becoming life-altering—especially for those in the city who are most vulnerable.

Prairie Climate Centre (PCC), a leading research hub based at the University of Winnipeg, is working to address these challenges.

With a mission to carry out evidence-based science and communications to drive innovative climate change solutions, PCC is working to make climate data and information accessible to the public. Their projects span Canada, but funding received in May 2024 from The Winnipeg Foundation allows them to focus on the local community, particularly those disproportionately affected by climate change.

A Gap in Research

As Winnipeg began to experience the effects of climate change more intensely, the team at Prairie Climate Centre started to notice something alarming: there was very little research on how these changes were impacting the community organizations that support the city's most vulnerable populations.

These organizations—providing essential services in housing, food security, addiction management, and mental health—are on the front lines, dealing with the daily realities faced by people disadvantaged by the system. But now, they're also grappling with the added pressures of a changing climate.

"We're all being impacted by climate change, but certain populations are being impacted disproportionately. Many groups working with these populations are also impacted," says Christey Allen, Managing Director of PCC.

For instance, shelters are seeing a surge in demand for bottled water as heat waves become more frequent, and they need larger, cooler spaces to accommodate people seeking refuge from extreme temperatures. The strain doesn't stop there—rural populations from across the province are increasingly being evacuated to Winnipeg to escape floods and wildfires in the province, putting even more pressure on city resources.

The impact can be particularly harsh on individuals with mental health issues. During heat waves, some are unable to seek the support they need and can suffer from serious heat-related illnesses. Organizations are doing their best to meet these challenges, but their capacity to respond is often stretched thin.

"Everyone is busy doing the actual work of being a community organization, so there's a lack of research and resources. These conditions can be a case study for how communities are being impacted by this," explains Allen.

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.

CLIMATE CONVERSATIONS (CONTINUED)

Co-Generating Knowledge

Prairie Climate Centre's approach is rooted in collaboration and dialogue. Allen and her team believe the best way to address the impacts of climate change is by co-generating knowledge with those directly affected.

"A large part of [our work] this year will involve having conversations around a table to start co-generating information about what climate change looks like in Winnipeg," says Allen. "Here's what this means for your community services. Here's what this means for your daily life. And how do you respond?"

This collaborative process is not about imposing solutions but about creating a space where knowledge can be shared and developed, collectively. It's an approach that recognizes the expertise already existing within these organizations.

"They're the ones that know. They're the ones that actually see what's happening on the ground on a day-to-day level," explains Allen.

Stories of Climate Change

One of the most powerful tools in PCC's arsenal is storytelling. Through narrative, the abstract and often overwhelming concept of climate change becomes real. Erika MacPherson, a filmmaker working with PCC, is helping to bring these stories to life. "We put a strong emphasis on knowledge translation and mobilization. The knowledge products will be in plain language and publicly accessible," she says.

MacPherson's work includes projects like *Crippling Climate Adaptation*, a video developed in collaboration with disability advocate Karina Cardona. The series explores the intersections of climate change and health equity, highlighting the unique challenges faced by people with disabilities in the context of a changing climate.

"We're using storytelling to shine a light on the ways climate change is affecting those who are often left out of the conversation," says MacPherson.

Building Capacity for the Future

Prairie Climate Centre's work is only in its first phase. The project, funded by a \$75,000 grant from The Winnipeg Foundation, is laying the groundwork for more comprehensive climate adaptation strategies in the city. One of the project's key goals is to equip community organizations with the knowledge and resources they need to advocate for themselves and their communities.

"[We want to] make it possible for organizations to lobby better for themselves for funding, and also at a broader scale, collaborate or partner with other organizations to be able to help push some policy around," explains Allen. She says the funding from The Winnipeg Foundation was crucial in making this work possible, allowing PCC to compensate community organizations for their time and contributions so even those with limited capacity can participate in the project.

As Prairie Climate Centre continues its work, there is a clear vision for the future: a city that is resilient to climate change and one where all communities, especially those facing barriers, are equipped to adapt to the challenges ahead. The conversations that PCC is facilitating today are the first steps toward that vision.

"This is just the beginning," Allen reflects. "We're starting to really articulate what it will look like in the future and what is needed to better respond." Prairie Climate Centre's work with Winnipeg's community organizations is an encouraging reminder that while climate change is a global issue, the solutions must start at home.



From the desk of... Climate Change Connection



Jennifer MacRae,
Public Engagement Outreach Associate

Curt Hull,
Project Director

Curt Hull and Jennifer MacRae are two of three staff members with Climate Change Connection (CCC). Their focus for the past couple of years has been to educate Manitobans about climate in a credible and science-backed way, and to provide solutions that help communities adapt to the effects of climate change. CCC was formed in 2002, and Project Director Curt Hull has been with CCC for the past 17 years.

“Our first step is to connect to whatever organizations are already in the sector,” says Hull. Climate solutions affect numerous industries, so Hull, along with his colleague MacRae, Public Engagement Outreach Associate for CCC, have focused on renewable energy solutions; agriculture, public transportation, sustainable buildings, and most recently carbon emissions from food waste.

“Food waste is a huge climate concern. Our global food system from production through to consumption emits around one-third of total annual greenhouse gas emissions. Access to food is also a humanitarian social issue, in terms of helping to alleviate food insecurity. A lot of food is perfectly edible and safe, but because of our supply chain distribution system it winds up in the landfill,” explains Hull. “When food waste is covered with dirt in the landfill it doesn’t decompose like in properly mixed compost, and instead releases methane.” According to Hull, the methane from food waste in landfills can contribute up to 25 times the global warming potential compared to properly composted food.

When it comes to Manitoba’s emissions, agriculture accounts for approximately 33%, transportation about 40%, buildings 20%, and landfills around 6%. MacRae is focusing on food waste and food recovery.

“Finding synergies and ways for people to connect and collaborate is such rewarding work,” says MacRae. “Most recently, we’re working with different neighborhood community groups and all sorts of other service agencies and meal programs like The Leftovers Foundation. We’ve been finding out ways to connect groups so they can come up with better solutions.”

CCC offers climate change ‘boot camps,’ workshops, and presentations, and its website features an array of climate information, including tangible solutions, research, science, impacts, and more. It also offers a suite of resources to individuals, educators, schools, organizations, and policymakers in the hope of educating and inspiring meaningful change.

To learn more about Climate Change Connection, visit climatechangeconnection.org

A Rhama Community and Youth Centre mentor shooting hoops with a mentee at the Bright Beginnings program's weekly basketball game.

