

WORKING TOGETHER

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A MAGAZINE OF THE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION FALL 2025

WATER IS LIFE

PROTECTING CANADA'S FRESHWATER FUTURE AT
THE WORLD'S ONLY LIVING LAKE LABORATORY

THE
WINNIPEG
FOUNDATION



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For Good. Forever.

Winnipeg Students Win Big with Kitchen Brigades





Kitchen Brigades, an after-school culinary program, empowers youth and fosters community through food. This year, Winnipeg students made history, winning the national Kitchen Brigades final for the first time.

[Read more on page 29.](#)

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 located on Treaty 1 Territory. We acknowledge that Manitoba is on Treaty Territories and the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anisinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuliné, and Nehethowuk Nations, and the Homeland of the Red River Métis. The City of Winnipeg's clean drinking water comes from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation in Treaty 3 Territory. The electrical and natural gas systems that we rely on are located and operate across Manitoba, in Treaty Territories 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. We express our gratitude for these vital resources. We are committed to working with everyone in our province towards a shared goal of Truth and Reconciliation.

WORKING TOGETHER FALL 2025

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On the cover:

The International Institute for Sustainable Development's Experimental Lakes Area is a natural laboratory consisting of 58 small lakes where researchers can study the environmental impacts on our freshwater.

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BUILDING MOMENTUM, MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER



MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

Since 1921, The Winnipeg Foundation has been a vital part of Winnipeg's story, quietly shaping our city through steady support of the charitable sector.

In 2023, we launched an ambitious four-year strategic plan to address long-standing issues in our city. As we focus on enhancing well-being in Community Area for Revitalization and Equity (C.A.R.E.) and improving the outcomes for youth aging out of care, it's clear that access to affordable housing is a critical factor for both. Over the past two years, The Foundation has invested \$3 million in plans, studies, construction costs, and amenities which contributed to 100 housing units for vulnerable individuals. We continue to actively engage with government partners and provide support to charitable organizations working on sustainable housing solutions.

The Foundation has also made a multi-year commitment to the Main Street Community Action Plan, an inspiring collaboration involving community members, organizations, and City of Winnipeg staff working to improve the C.A.R.E. area and the well-being of those who live there.

While there is still much work ahead, I'm proud of the momentum we've built together and confident in the path forward.

Under Sky's outstanding leadership, our Strategic Management Team and dedicated staff continue to support our charitable sector as a 360-degree grant-maker, and to champion bold, thoughtful ideas that respond to the evolving needs of our city.

The Foundation is fortunate to work alongside generous donors who love Winnipeg and believe in its future. Their gifts allow us to invest in hundreds of organizations each year and move forward with our strategic initiatives. We honour their trust by stewarding their gifts with care, integrity, and a commitment to long-term impact.

As the end of my term as The Foundation's Board Chair draws near, I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve The Foundation and contribute to its enduring legacy. Leading our diverse and dedicated Board has been a true honour. Together, we've engaged in meaningful dialogue and made decisions rooted in our shared values of truth, generosity, equity, transformation, and responsiveness.

Looking ahead, I'm filled with optimism. The challenges facing our charitable sector are real, but so is the strength of our community. The Winnipeg Foundation is well-positioned to continue its work with our donors and charitable organizations to help build 'a Winnipeg where community life flourishes for all.' **For Good. Forever.**

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

COMING TOGETHER FOR OUR COMMUNITY



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

As the seasons change, many of us find ourselves settling into new routines and rhythms. For me, reflection often happens on my evening walks with my dog, Henri, taking in the cool air and the smell of autumn. It's a simple reminder to pause, take stock of where we've been, and re-energize for what's still to come.

In this issue of *Working Together*, we're highlighting the many ways The Winnipeg Foundation supports our community through our ongoing commitment to granting across all aspects of community—Arts, Culture and Heritage; Community Services; Environment; Health, Wellness and Recreation; and Literacy, Education and Employment. This edition shines a special light on the **Environment**, reflecting a growing call for action through more climate-related and community-led initiatives.

Our cover story features the **International Institute for Sustainable Development's Experimental Lakes Area (IISD-ELA)**—the only freshwater research site of its kind in the world, where scientists study how our actions affect the health of our lakes. We also highlight **âniskômohcikan**, which brings environmental learning to children in underserved neighbourhoods, and **Youth Climate Lab**, a youth-led group addressing climate anxiety and empowering Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) youth to lead change. Together, these stories remind us that caring for our planet is deeply connected to caring for one another.

This summer, Manitoba faced its worst wildfire season in history, displacing thousands and devastating communities. In response, The Foundation launched the 2025 **Manitoba Wildfire Response Fund** to support both immediate relief and long-term recovery (see page 15 for an update). Our commitment to help communities heal, rebuild, and prepare for the future remains strong.

We also welcomed **Lisa Thomson Stifora**, Vice President of Community Generosity, and **David Hawthorne**, Vice President of Communications and Marketing, to our Strategic Management Team. Each brings more than 20 years of experience and a deep passion for our city's charitable sector. I'm excited about the insight and leadership they bring to The Foundation.

Finally, I want to express heartfelt thanks to **George Bass**, whose term as Board Chair concludes at year-end. Since joining the Board in 2017, George has served with integrity and generosity, contributing to nearly every committee and guiding the Board with wisdom and care. His leadership has made a lasting impact, and we are deeply grateful.

Thank you for continuing to walk alongside us. The stories in these pages remind us that when we come together with generosity, compassion, and purpose, we truly can strengthen our community for all.

Miigwetch. Thank you. Merci.

SKY BRIDGES ICD.D | PRESIDENT AND CEO

IN THIS ISSUE OF
WORKING TOGETHER,
WE'RE HIGHLIGHTING
THE MANY WAYS
THE WINNIPEG
FOUNDATION
SUPPORTS OUR
COMMUNITY THROUGH
OUR ONGOING
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GRANTING ACROSS
ALL ASPECTS OF
COMMUNITY

The Winnipeg Foundation Is Pleased to Have Two New Members Join Its Team

EFFECTIVE AUGUST 18, 2025

Lisa Thomson Stifora is the new Vice President of Community Generosity at The Winnipeg Foundation. Lisa is a seasoned leader, strategist, and project manager with more than 20 years of experience in the nonprofit sector. She formerly served as the Director of Communications & Stewardship at St. Boniface Hospital Foundation. Previously, she led stewardship and donor communications efforts at Assiniboine Park Conservancy, the University of Manitoba, and Brandon University.

Lisa brings a deep passion for creating outstanding donor experiences, a talent for building and inspiring high-performing teams, and a strategic mindset grounded in values and purpose. She has also volunteered with AFP Manitoba and the Manitoba Conservatory of Music and Arts, and continues to grow her knowledge through professional development, most recently completing the AHP Madison Institute's Philanthropy Operations course.

Lisa is a proud Winnipegger and a prouder parent to two children, Lily and Maisie.



David Hawthorne has joined The Winnipeg Foundation as the new Vice President of Communications & Marketing. David formerly served as Vice President of Marketing at United Way Winnipeg. In this role, he led that organization's marketing, communications, and events teams, advancing key initiatives that strengthened brand presence and deepened community engagement.

With a career that includes leadership positions at The Winnipeg Blue Bombers, Magellan Luxury Hotels, and McNally Robinson Booksellers, David brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record of driving innovation and achieving meaningful results. David is passionate about leading people and building accountable, action-oriented environments. He is known for fostering creativity, championing collaboration, and delivering strategic impact across complex projects.

A respected voice in the marketing and communications field, David is frequently sought after for his insight and guidance across sectors. He is widely regarded as a candid, proactive, and values-driven leader who brings clarity, momentum, and integrity to every opportunity.



An aerial photograph of a serene landscape featuring a calm lake, a dense forest of green and yellowing trees, and several small buildings nestled among the trees. Large, white, abstract circular shapes are overlaid on the right side of the image.

Water is life



Clean, safe, potable water is essential to the wellbeing of our city, province, and country. Climate change, over-extraction, habitat destruction, and pollution all threaten one of Canada's most valuable and sacred assets.

IISD Experimental Lakes Area (IISD-ELA) is the only place in the world where scientists can test and manipulate real freshwater lakes (in this case, 58 lakes and their watersheds in northwestern Ontario), to replicate and understand what human activity is doing to our freshwater reserves.

The site was previously opened in 1968 and was run by the Government of Canada, until the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) stepped in to save it in 2014, and since then IISD-ELA has continued to test, examine, maintain, and protect our water resources.

For more than ten years, IISD-ELA has continued being a leader in ecosystem-based science, with an independent, evidence-based approach to inform policy recommendations and tools, create and maintain important partnerships, and build capacity for freshwater science and policy action in Canada and all around the world.

"So, spoiler alert: Canada is really big, and we all assume that there are these networks of scientists that are covering and tracking the health of our freshwater systems at all times," says Sumeep Bath, Editorial and Communications Manager of IISD-ELA. "Another spoiler alert: They're not! But there is a way that everyday citizens can get involved, one where you can actually sample local bodies of water and send them into central facilities and systems for testing. It's not a perfect science, and there are obviously limitations, but it's a way of engaging [citizens] in broader scientific initiatives that have a great impact."

Part of that impact is informing and engaging with individuals, but the other part is educating and engaging with governments and policymakers.

"[Policymakers] are just people like you and me," says Bath. "These are people who are not necessarily experts in the sector but are actually quite similar to many of the other audiences we're trying to reach; politicians, the general public, and even other scientists."

Climate change is a complex topic, and in recent years there's been a push and pull, a public debate between individual responsibility versus industrial contribution, one that IISD has had to discuss and navigate carefully, and advocate for policy adjustments for government, and for industry.

"I noticed that there was a concerted effort to try and place the responsibility of the environment solely on individuals and the decisions they make," says Bath. "But the second piece of this is where policy comes in. The decisions made by government, the decisions made by industry, will have so much more of a broad effect, so actually trying to lobby govern-

ments and industry to change their practices can be far more impactful."

In celebration of ten years under IISD, they've made it a long-term goal to grow the "IISD Experimental Lakes Area Fund" at The Winnipeg Foundation to \$10 million, and thanks to an extraordinary matching gift of \$1 million from Gail Asper and Michael Paterson, they're just over halfway there.

"It is really only through the endowment that we can be sure that we will be here forever," says Pauline Gerrard, Executive Director of IISD.

"It's a testament to the importance of fresh water, the importance of fresh water here in Canada, the importance of the environment and where we are in the world right now," says Gerrard, of the support for IISD-ELA. "And I think it's a testament of what we're doing and how unique we are in terms of being able to really understand the impacts that we're having on our freshwater systems and then make recommendations for how we can manage things better."



IISD is headquartered in Winnipeg, but IISD-ELA's science and testing all takes place in northwestern Ontario, where Gerrard and her team conduct controlled experiments and research projects to explore the impacts of—and find solutions to—algal blooms, climate change, agricultural runoff, contaminants, and other threats to freshwater ecosystems.

"I have the most beautiful office in the world, in the Experimental Lakes Area," says Gerrard. "It is an incredible place, and very remote. In the Boreal Shield of Canada, these small lakes, I get to go out on them and study fresh water and show people around, and it is just a beautiful, beautiful place."

To hear more information about IISD-ELA, listen to Sumeep Bath on the BeCause & Effect podcast by scanning the QR code.



FUNDING SUPPORTS CONTINUE CLIMATE NEWS COVERAGE THROUGH UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP

Since 2022, the Winnipeg Free Press (WFP) has partnered with the digital environmental news site The Narwhal, to support a reporter who produces climate news content shared by both media outlets.

The Winnipeg Free Press is a 152-year-old daily newspaper, and Canada's largest independent newspaper. The Narwhal News Society is a registered journalism organization (qualified donee status under the Canada Revenue Agency) that reports on climate and environmental issues. An award-winning online publication with national scope that focuses on the natural world, The Narwhal has bureaus in British Columbia, the Prairies, and Ontario. It serves a diverse audience of 350,000 readers per month.

The partnership was initially a three-year pilot project between the two news organizations, funded in part by The Winnipeg Foundation. The Winnipeg Free Press provides editorial oversight, office space, and resources such as photography, while the reporter writes for both The Narwhal and WFP.

The success of the initial partnership and the impact of local climate reporting has included investigative journalism stories covering a range of environmental issues; a close-up look into proposed mining and pipeline projects in Manitoba, human interest stories about climate impacts on Indigenous communities, and profiles of innovative local climate adaptation and mitigation ideas.

The partners agree there is a critical need for high quality, independent journalism, particularly in providing reliable information on the climate crisis—a topic prone to misinformation. The request for further funding for the climate reporter position is supported by the tenant that journalism is a pillar of democracy, and the decline of local news is eroding public trust.

"We all know climate change is one of the most critical issues of our time. And yet, not many newsrooms have someone covering climate change. I think part of the problem is that newsrooms far and wide are often struggling to ensure they are covering the basics given the challenges facing the news industry," says WFP Editor Paul Samyn.

"This partnership is a different model of cooperation – that is very successful," says Sharon J. Riley, Managing Editor for the Prairies, at The Narwhal. "It is a different kind of collaboration that maintains trust and the belief that a strong and independent press is critical to community success," she added.

"Our partnership with the Narwhal allows us to deliver something that might not otherwise have been possible. The reputation of a trusted legacy brand like the Free Press working with a digital startup, is a recipe for success and a model others should look to in order to ensure Canadians get the climate coverage they deserve," Samyn said.

The partnership between The Narwhal and Winnipeg Free Press has shown the climate reporter, Julia-Simone Rutgers, is increasingly seen as a trusted source by the public, other media outlets, and government decision-makers. Currently the only journalist in Manitoba dedicated to climate coverage, Rutgers has won several awards for her reporting from Manitoba and has received positive feedback from Indigenous communities for bringing attention to Indigenous climate issues with sensitivity.



Julia-Simone Rutgers, climate reporter in partnership between The Narwhal and Winnipeg Free Press. Photo courtesy of Jessica Lee, The Free Press.

Resilient Youth Leaders Drive Climate Crisis Coalition

The youth demographic is at times ignored in the conversation surrounding climate anxiety, but there are some incredible organizations that are looking to change that, through both local and national programming, as well as grassroots community engagement.

Youth Climate Lab is a youth-led and youth-serving organization that focuses on empowering youth to become leaders in the climate space through programs, resource sharing, and professional development. They work on climate policy as well, through policy briefs like their Northern Climate Manual and Art for Climate Justice programs. The organization's staff is all under the age of 35 and their board is 50% youth, with some programs focused on high school students, but most often geared towards the 18-35 demographic.

Photos courtesy of
Finance Engage Sustain
and Youth Climate Lab.



“A big part of it is: who is bearing the brunt of the climate crisis,”

says Corry Witter, executive director of Youth Climate Lab. “Being in neighbourhoods next to industrial plants that are creating pollution, as well as the disproportionate BIPOC folks that are in those frontline communities or doing this kind of work and experiencing these more negative effects, compounded with their higher levels of burnout with BIPOC youth.”

Finance Engage Sustain partnered with Youth Climate Lab for the **From Root to Sky** program, which included an initial virtual pilot year and has since transitioned to in-person and place-based events that focus on youth, especially Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) participants, through art, peer support, and land-based learning.

“There’s a lot of tokenization that exists, especially for indigenous folks, who are expected to be the spokesperson, and ‘do all of the things’. It’s incredibly draining,” says Witter. “But youth are more aware and more willing to talk about mental health, which is great.”

“I do think it’s affecting youth more because a big part of the anxiety is... what is the world we’re going to inherit?” says Witter. “Youth are often put in those decision-making spaces but they don’t have that authority. So the stress of what’s going to happen, without a lot of means to change what’s going to happen, is very frustrating. That’s why we’re trying to get youth in leadership, trying to get youth positions and ideas in front of [decision-makers].”

Witter blames “eco-anxiety” on the increased burn out and turnover for folks working in the climate space, which is exacerbated by a lack of accessible opportunities for youth to make a lasting difference.

“Part of why I really love Youth Climate Lab is we are very positivity-oriented, very action-oriented,” says Witter. “Instead of focusing on the stuff we can’t do, we focus on the changes we can make, the accomplishments we can achieve. Like, ‘this is what we CAN do. This is what we’re good at, and let’s do that really well.’”



From Root to Sky is a program that fits a not-commonly-talked-about niche, addressing both mental health and climate action. It has been effective in increasing awareness, and in reducing negative outcomes for individuals—as well as socially and politically.

“Having that peer support and having people that are actively listening and creating those spaces is one of the most helpful things you can do to help mitigate that,” says Witter. “Our core principles are around radical collaboration and bringing unlikely actors and different ideas and energies together.”

Finance Engage Sustain is an organization that Witter and her team has been working with basically since inception, where Youth Climate Lab provides the programming and implementation, while Finance Engage Sustain provides the overall capacity and engagement.

Witter has also noticed a growth in the desire for organizations and individuals to meet in person, to gather in groups, and to work together on a common goal.

“There’s been so many more coalitions, so many more group things coming out of people saying like, ‘let’s get out there, let’s do that in-person work!’” says Witter. “Youth are [also] feeling the housing crisis, the affordability crisis, when in reality the housing crisis is directly tied to climate.”

Still, she remains hopeful.

“I’m not expecting magic, or stuff to suddenly change. I know it’s going to be a lot of work that will extend past my lifetime as well, as it gets more severe, it might need to get worse before it gets better,” says Witter. “But that doesn’t mean you stop, because none of these other people before me stopped.”

To learn more about Youth Climate Lab’s *From Root to Sky* program, visit youthclimatelab.org/frts.

âniskômohcikan

Land, Learning, and Legacy in Winnipeg's Inner City

âniskômohcikan (an sko mo chi gun) is nêhiyawêwin (Cree) for *connecting* —to land, teachings, and traditions. The name is set in lowercase to honour a nêhiyawêwin teaching: no letter is more important than any other. Led by Nature Manitoba, âniskômohcikan brings land-based learning to over 700 youth annually, with plans to reach 1,000 in the coming year. The program serves children aged 7–11 from diverse, low-income neighbourhoods like Point Douglas, West Broadway, and Lord Selkirk.

Winnipeg's inner city is home to a large Indigenous and newcomer population. Green space within these areas is sparse and there is little opportunity for cultural connection to the land. Working primarily with schools in the Winnipeg School Division, âniskômohcikan provides environmental education tailored to meet the needs of children living within these neighbourhoods.

Each session is co-facilitated by Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, embodying a “Two-Eyed Seeing.” This approach is based on the work of Mi'kmaq Elders Albert and Murdena Marshall and is an inclusive way of learning that draws on the strengths of both Indigenous and Western knowledge systems. Children explore ecosystems through field trips to places like Assiniboine Forest and Living Prairie Museum, while learning about traditional teachings, language, and ceremony. Every activity from tracking animal prints to painting with natural pigments is rooted in reciprocity and respect.

During the 2023/24 school year, Britt Ross and Jamie Vann, âniskômohcikan's program coordinators, had an outdoor schoolyard session with a class comprised of mostly Indigenous students. During the lesson, the students learned about Cree/Métis teachings on animals and used this knowledge to create art with animal tracks. The next time the program coordinators met with this class was on a field trip to Assiniboine Forest where the students surprised them by acquiring a drum and singing the Bear Song. For Britt and Jamie, this moment stood out as it highlighted how empowered the students felt through their connection to land, culture, and the teachings of reciprocity.

The program's impact reaches beyond its curriculum. It fosters mental wellness, cultural pride, and environmental stewardship, which is important in a time of climate crisis and rising youth mental health concerns. With support from The Winnipeg Foundation, âniskômohcikan has expanded staffing, deepened relationships with Elders, and continued to offer honoraria to Indigenous Knowledge Holders.



MANITOBA MARATHON FOUNDATION is an organization that hosts the Manitoba Marathon (MM). Since 1979, participants in the MM have raised funds for programs and services that help people with intellectual disabilities to live, work and thrive in Winnipeg. MM hosts numerous events and programs including “Fast and Furious Run” in support of The Winnipeg Humane Society and their Champions in Training Program, in partnership with schools, to encourage children to live active and healthy lifestyles. Its largest event, the Manitoba Marathon, is held annually in June. The grant will support MM to attain its Evergreen Certification from the Council for Responsible Sport. Certified Evergreen would mean an achievement of 90 percent or more of the best practices promoted in the standards for responsible sport. The Responsible Sport Standards are organized into five broad categories of action: planning and communications, procurement, resource management, access and equity, and community legacy. Support would allow MM to make progress on becoming only the third event in Canada that holds Evergreen Certification.

NORWEST CO-OP COMMUNITY HEALTH (NORWEST) provides medical care, counseling, education, early learning, childcare, and community development programming. It operates three community Resource Centers (Gilbert Park, Blake Gardens, and Alexander), four Teen Health Clinics, the Community Food Centre (CFC), and a Youth Hub. The grant will address the soil contamination in the southwest corner of its urban community farm through either soil remediation or risk management. The urban farm is 2.8 acres located a short block from their CFC just behind Billy Mosienko Arena. NorWest's urban farm works to address the vital priority area of hunger and food insecurity through access to fresh, healthy produce. In fall 2023 they harvested 3,162 pounds of vegetables at the farm to use at their CFC and to share with the community.

SUMMARY OF SOME RECENT GRANTS IN THE AREA OF ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE FROM THE COMMUNITY GRANTS ANNOUNCED IN JUNE 2025

SUPPORTING GREEN INITIATIVES

ROTARY CLUB OF CHARLESWOOD CHARITABLE FOUNDATION (RCCCF) supports the work of the Charleswood Rotary Club, a volunteer-driven chapter of Rotary International that raises funds for specific community service projects. A primary focus of RCCCF is stewardship of Assiniboine Forest, a partnership with the City of Winnipeg for more than 30 years. The grant supports the installation of an accessible, three-season washroom and outdoor classroom in Assiniboine Forest. Located in Charleswood, Assiniboine Forest is a city-owned park of 700 acres of aspen-oak forest, year-round walking and biking trails, a wetland, and boardwalk. The washroom will be housed in a recycled shipping container, which minimizes cost as well as ecological footprint on the site. The outdoor classroom (comprised of reclaimed logs arranged for seating) will provide a place for groups to gather. Assiniboine Forest provides a free, accessible opportunity for Winnipeggers to connect with nature—known to have mental health benefits. Visiting wild spaces also helps build connection to the land and inspire sustainable living.

GREEN KIDS is a volunteer-run organization that uses performing arts to engage young people in climate education and action. The recent grant will support the organization's area of greatest need within three projects underway: development of a new play, its annual Bikes and Circuses event, and strategic planning. Green Kids fills a niche role and creates impactful experiences for children and families.

LAKE WINNIPEG RESEARCH CONSORTIUM (LWRC) facilitates scientific research and monitoring on Lake Winnipeg that supports watershed management decision-making in Manitoba. It offers unique, hands-on experiential learning for children of all ages. The grant will help with the installation costs of new generators for the Namoo research vessel, which are required to ensure the Namoo can reliably continue providing water quality data and fulfill research partnerships. LWRC works with University of Manitoba, University of Winnipeg, City of Winnipeg, municipalities/communities around Lake Winnipeg, federal and provincial governments, Manitoba Hydro, and Indigenous communities.

For a complete list of Community Grants in the area of Environment and Climate Change, visit wpgfdn.org/recentgrants

AN OUTPOURING OF GENEROSITY

Wildfire Relief Fund Update

This summer Manitobans experienced the most devastating wildfire season our province has seen in decades. Thick smoke and advancing flames encroached on communities across the province, forcing more than 17,000 people to leave their homes.

As busloads of evacuees arrived at hotels, conference centres, and community halls, Manitobans lived up to our reputation as the most generous province in Canada, coming together to give to the Manitoba Wildfire Response Fund. The Fund was established by The Winnipeg Foundation with an initial \$200,000 to ensure that critical supports reached those who needed them most.

People from across the province quickly followed suit, making 58 gifts, each one a heartfelt gesture of solidarity for displaced families and first responders. Thanks to these collective efforts, The Foundation was able to move swiftly, providing grants to organizations supporting those who were displaced.

Together, these grants addressed urgent needs, from safe shelter and child protection to food access and culturally grounded healing. As communities begin the difficult journey of rebuilding, The Winnipeg Foundation and its donors remain steadfast.

Organization	Description	Amount
The Canadian Red Cross Society	Contribution to 2025 Manitoba Wildfires Appeal	\$100,000
Ka Ni Kanichihk	Outreach and support for Elders	\$80,000
Ka Ni Kanichihk	Recreation support for evacuee families	\$10,000
Ka Ni Kanichihk	24-hour Child Protection Support Safe Space	\$69,000
Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre	Culturally appropriate youth programming	\$50,000
Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO)	Support for evacuees from Northern First Nations	\$100,000
Northern Neighbours Foundation	Strengthen food security for families returning home	\$50,000



A PROFESSIONAL ADVISOR'S ROLE – PRESENTING ALL THE OPTIONS AVAILABLE FOR AN INFORMED DECISION

Professional advisors play a vital role in helping individuals align their financial plans with personal values. For Alex Bainov, lawyer and owner of Contrast Law, philanthropy is a natural extension of estate planning.

"Philanthropy and giving is part of a full financial picture and planning for clients," Bainov says.

As one of the many advisors who recommend The Winnipeg Foundation to clients, Bainov integrates charitable giving into broader conversations about retirement, education, and succession planning.

"We've got to look at it like an integrated picture and see where different pieces of the puzzle fit in," he explains. "Philanthropy alongside other goals. It's not one or the other."

In speaking to clients and understanding their goals, Bainov recommends The Foundation as a philanthropic option because of its significant community knowledge and impact.

"It's the professional stewardship that The Foundation brings to the table," he says. "They have a great team of advisors that can offer advice and guidance. There are several advisors on The Foundation's giving team to whom clients can speak and discuss their goals, and its reputation and track record in terms of annual reporting and the administrative fees being very reasonable."

He also highlights the benefits of establishing donor-advised funds.

"From an administrative standpoint, in my view, it's a much easier process to have a fund managed through a foundation (like The Winnipeg Foundation) instead of having a private foundation and having to deal with the administrative complexity, such as CRA filings, making decisions, and making sure the compliance side is satisfied properly," says Bainov. "People can actually focus on their goals and what they want to do."

When asked if he has observed generational shifts in giving, Bainov mentioned that, speaking only on his personal experience, older generations often prioritize legacy and long-term preservation, while younger donors appear to be more focused on impact and transparency, caring deeply about social justice and environmental issues.

"Some clients may not be in a position to give now," Bainov explains. "But they're revising their plans to give later through insurance policies or estate gifts."

He believes professional advisors have a responsibility to present charitable giving as an option, not to persuade.

"It's about helping clients make informed decisions that reflect their values and goals," he says.

On a personal level, Bainov sees giving as a way to strengthen the community.

"There are circumstances beyond people's control," he reflects. "We have a responsibility to lift each other up. The tide lifts all boats."

The Winnipeg Foundation is honoured to collaborate with professional advisors and their clients to help achieve their philanthropic goals of generosity. Together, we are working towards a Winnipeg where community life flourishes for all.



Alex Bainov

CARDS OF GENEROSITY ON THE TABLE



Estate Planning and Choosing an Executor

Congratulations – you've done a great job creating your Will! As you've gone through this process, you've faced many important choices, and one of the most crucial is selecting an executor.

You may ask yourself, “How do I select an appropriate representative?” This is a question we hear frequently at The Foundation. Choosing an executor is a deeply personal decision, and it's no small task. Being named as the executor of a loved one's estate is both an honour and a significant responsibility.

An executor is who you choose to carry out the instructions in your Will. In Manitoba, an executor must be at least 18 years old to perform the duties. As a legal representative, they are responsible for administering your estate. You may choose a trusted family member, a close friend, or, alternatively, a professional executor. A professional executor is a neutral, regulated institution who takes on the responsibility of the administration of your estate, Will, or trust.

Please note that The Winnipeg Foundation's Gift Acceptance Policy does not permit us to act as an executor or trustee for anyone. We always recommend appointing a qualified individual or capable organization to administer your estate or serve as a trustee.

Whether you're creating your first Will or updating an existing one, if you're considering a charitable gift to support a cause or charity that has had a meaningful impact in your life and would like to learn more, we would be pleased to speak with you.

Over the years, our community has witnessed an extraordinary outpouring of generosity through estate planning. These contributions help shape a brighter future for our community and ensure our donors' values and passions continue to thrive. We are deeply honoured by the trust our donors place in The Foundation. This trust reflects our community's confidence in The Foundation's ability to manage contributions responsibly and in alignment with a donor's wishes. It is built on years of transparent and accountable stewardship.

Estate gifts are more than financial contributions—they represent a strong culture of stewardship, trust, and commitment to our community's future. By honouring donor intentions and managing these gifts with care, we continue to build a legacy of generosity that will shape our community for generations to come.

For further information, please contact Patricia Hrymack CFRE, MFA-P, Manager of Planned Giving either via email at phrymack@wpgfdn.org or by phone directly at 431-804-8850.



Patricia Hrymack, CFRE, MFA-P
Manager of Planned Giving
The Winnipeg Foundation

YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FROM THE FOLLOWING:

Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living

1610-155 Carlton Street,
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3H8
Phone: 204.945.6565
Toll Free: 1.800.665.6565
Email: seniors@gov.mb.ca
www.gov.mb.ca/shas

Community Legal Education Association

301-441 Main Street,
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 1B4
Phone: 204.943.2382
Email: community@communitylegal.mb.ca
communitylegal.mb.ca

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR GENEROSITY!

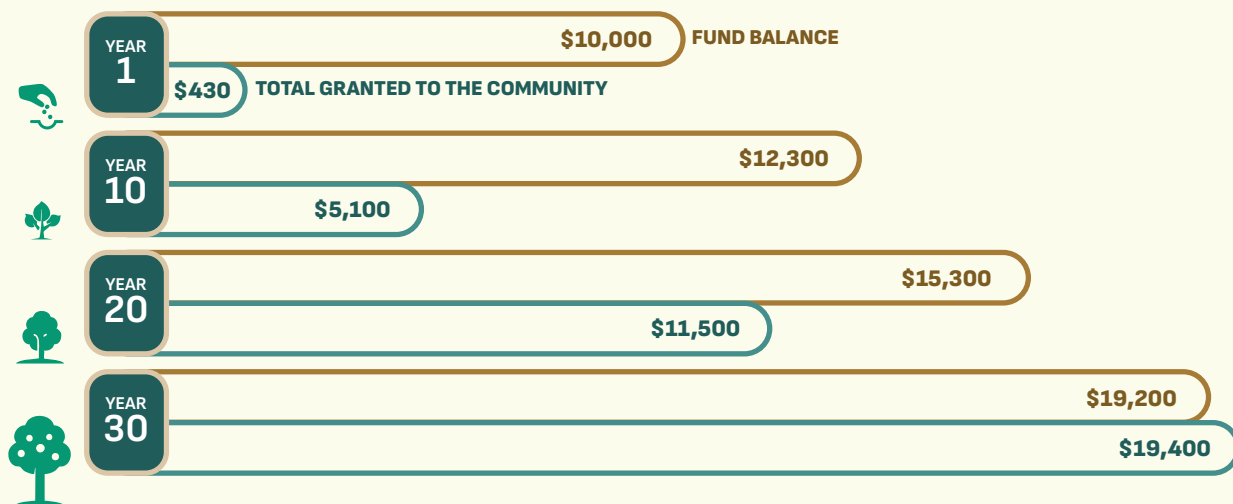
The Foundation's **Giftabulator®** allows you to try out different giving scenarios via a special online calculator which provides details tailored to your choices about giving. It will also provide resources you can share with your financial advisor when you are discussing your giving options. Try it now at wpgfdn.giftabulatornow.com



The Power of Endowment

Because an endowment fund lasts forever, a gift to your community foundation is a powerful choice for supporting your hometown over the long term.

Consider this: if you make a one-time \$10,000 gift to a charitable organization, it will be spent on immediate needs. If you make a gift of \$10,000 to an endowment at a community foundation (of course, you can make a gift of any size!) its impact will snowball over time. Contributing to an endowment at your local community foundation is a way to create a lasting legacy and ensure the causes you hold dear receive support forever. **Here's an illustration:**



Learn more at wpgfdn.org or contact us today.

THE
WINNIPEG
FOUNDATION  Your Community Foundation
For Good. Forever.

Why Choose The Winnipeg Foundation



Relationships: A Foundation for Impact

The Winnipeg Foundation prioritizes relationships, ensuring donors are supported throughout the giving journey. We strive to build strong personal connections, understand donors' interests, and tailor generosity plans to reflect individual goals.



Service: Customizable Giving Options

We work with donors to understand their charitable goals and how they can best be aligned with community. From establishing a fund or making an immediate gift to community, to making a gift of securities or a gift through your will, we offer multiple giving options that can be customized to your needs.



Community: Learning Together

Through our network of community organizers, we strive to provide peer learning opportunities and build connections between donors and charities. Practicing trust-based philanthropy allows us to build long-term relationships with grantees, which in turn fosters equity and creates deeper impact for community.



Expertise: 360 Degree View

The Winnipeg Foundation has deep connections across our city. We listen to and learn from community and can offer sound advice and information about charities and grantmaking.



Forever: Strong Financial Stewardship

We are trusted for our reliable and transparent financial management and the stability these long-term investment strategies afford our charitable community. As a donor, you'll learn about the impact you're making and receive reports on The Winnipeg Foundation's financial health. As a fund holder, you'll receive annual statements about fund performance and grantmaking.

Thank you for your interest in giving through The Winnipeg Foundation!

PHIL- ASSIST



“I Can’t Score the Winning Goal for Winnipeg, but I Can Help Make It Happen”

Phil Chiappetta has lived in Winnipeg his entire life and wouldn’t have it any other way. For Phil, our city has the potential to be a beacon of hope and a leader in reconciliation, showing how community generosity can transform lives and neighborhoods.

Phil’s journey to establishing a fund with The Winnipeg Foundation didn’t begin with a windfall, it began with a realization; philanthropy isn’t only for the wealthy.

“I come from a modest background, and I used to think an endowment fund was for someone with a ton of money,” he recalls. “But then I saw how effective it could be, how things grow over time. I realized you just have to give at your level—do what you can do.”

After serving on The Winnipeg Foundation’s Grants Committee, he witnessed firsthand how every contribution, no matter the size, was a catalyst for positive change. “Every time I was in a meeting, I knew how important that money could be to kickstart a project and give an organization leverage,” he says. “One night I was watching a Jets game, and I thought to myself, ‘I want to be the guy who gives the assist!’ I can’t score the winning goal for Winnipeg, but I can help make it happen.”

Throughout his longstanding tenure as the executive director of Rossbrook House and his connection to numerous other non-profits, Phil saw how grassroots organizations relied on that first grant to gain traction. “Anybody who ever did a project knew the immense

benefit of getting The Winnipeg Foundation’s support. It was a binding thing; it brought people together.”

That spirit of unity has shaped not only his philanthropy, but also his vision for Winnipeg’s future. “Because of my work at Rossbrook House I moved into an area of the city I was unfamiliar with, and I fell in love with it,” he says. “Even the community that is looked at as ‘needy’ was so generous in terms of their spirit and helping each other out. The real generosity came from within the community. There is so much potential in the city.”

“Some agencies don’t have broad appeal, but their work is essential,” he reflects. “That’s why we all have to pitch in together. We are here for each other.”

Phil’s Fund, Phil-Assist, is a named fund within The Foundation’s Community Fund, which is unrestricted and provides responsive grants based on community need.

To learn more about the Community Fund visit www.wpgfdn.org/giving/.

FUTURES *forward*

Manitoba has the largest proportion of youth in government care in Canada, with approximately 10,000 children currently in the system. As these young people approach adulthood, many face transitioning out of care without the stable, supportive environments they deserve.

Futures Forward is a program that works alongside youth to navigate this transition.

Led by Youth Employment Services, Community Financial Counselling Services, and the Canadian Mental Health Association of Manitoba and Winnipeg, the program offers holistic, wrap-around support to youth aged 15 to 29 who are currently or formerly in Child and Family Services care.

Futures Forward supports youth through the complex realities they may face as they age out of care: poverty, housing instability, unemployment, limited education and mental health challenges. The program's multi-service approach meets individuals where they are, offering housing support, career and education planning, financial counselling, life skills development, mental health services, and Indigenous cultural programming.

In 2023-2024, 717 new participants accessed Futures Forward. Of those, 177 received employment planning support, and 141 enrolled in further education or training. These numbers reflect more than just service utilization—they represent young people taking steps toward their goals.

EMPOWERING MANITOBA'S YOUTH IN CARE



This work aligns with The Foundation's current Strategic Plan, which prioritizes better outcomes for youth aging out of care. By supporting community-led, collaborative programs like Futures Forward, The Foundation contributes to a broader effort to ensure all young people have the opportunity to thrive.

The program's impact is evident. A 2024 survey found 86 percent of participants felt supported by staff, and three quarters reported improved knowledge of community resources. Most meaningfully, 88 percent said they felt more hopeful for their future.

That sense of hope is at the heart of Futures Forward. The program doesn't just offer services, it helps create a space for youth to be heard, supported and empowered as they shape their own futures.



Support from The Winnipeg Foundation has helped Futures Forward expand its reach and impact. New initiatives such as a youth advisory council, graduation and holiday celebrations, and post-secondary backpack bundles were introduced to strengthen youth engagement, cultivate a sense of belonging, and recognize achievements.

Futures Forward supports youth aging out care. Photos courtesy of Futures Forward.



THE ESSENTIALS FOR BUILDING A HOME



For individuals who have experienced homelessness or housing instability, moving into a new place is a huge step forward—but it's only the first step in building a home that feels enjoyable, stable, and dignified. Transforming a space into a true home requires gathering household items, a process that can be both costly and time-consuming. For those transitioning, resources are often limited, making it difficult to obtain essential items.

To address this need, Amiko-giba'igan was created to support those transitioning out of homelessness, by providing essential household items at no cost. The space functions like a houseware store and offers a variety of items, including furniture, small appliances such as mini fridges, coffee machines and microwaves, along with mattresses, linens, kitchen items, cleaning supplies, and even décor. This gives those needing the supplies an opportunity to hand-select items, allowing them to craft a space they are proud of.

Beyond providing goods, Amiko-giba'igan plays a vital role in helping individuals feel settled and empowered in their new homes, which allows them to focus on other essentials, such as finding employment and accessing social services.

In the first 11 months, Amiko-giba'igan supported 126 individuals and six families. Remarkably, 80 percent of those who have accessed the houseware store have maintained housing six months after moving in.

The name 'Amiko-giba'igan' means beaver dam in Ojibwe.



Beavers collect materials to build their dams, just like Amiko-giba'igan gathers household items to help people create homes for themselves. Beavers also symbolize wisdom because they illustrate to us that by working together, we can build stronger, healthier communities—making the name perfect for the space.

The Winnipeg Foundation is proud to support the Amiko-giba'igan project with a \$100,000 grant. The grant helped Siloam Mission upgrade its 280 Princess Street building into the houseware store by renovating the space for storage and item selection. The space now emulates a real store, ensuring visitors feel welcome, comfortable and dignified as they shop.

The Winnipeg Foundation's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan identifies a priority area in downtown Winnipeg called the Community Area for Revitalization and Equity (C.A.R.E.). Many of the city's most vulnerable citizens live in this area and experience ongoing challenges. Amiko-giba'igan aligns with The Foundation's goal of improving the well-being of people living in C.A.R.E., while also expanding the local network of community supports available.

Amiko-giba'igan thrives on community support, and your gifts can make a real difference. If you have new or gently used household items, consider contributing to help someone turn their space into a true home.

To donate goods or learn more, visit [siloam.ca](https://www.siloam.ca)



Top: Siloam Mission staff during Amiko-giba'igan's grand opening and donation drive.

Bottom: Amiko-giba'igan provides household items for people transitioning out of homelessness.

“People who use drugs and the Peer Advisory Councils they belong to are impacted by structural violence, colonial violence, the war on drugs (and people who use drugs), STBBIs, poverty, and other social inequities,”

FRONT LINE HARM REDUCTION DURING A CRISIS



The Manitoba Harm Reduction Network (MHRN) started as a network of 20 in 2002 and has grown to a network of networks with a provincial reach.

Included in the network are over 30 community-based organizations and representatives from Winnipeg's Regional Health Authority, working with Peer Advisory Councils (PACs) made up of People Who Use Drugs (PWUD). This lived experience is vital to inform the networks and guide programming.

“Many great people in my life use substances,” says Shohan Illsley, executive director of MHRN. “Some of them experience unjust harms related to their substance use not necessarily from the substances themselves but from the systems they interact with, that reinforce the war on drugs... which is really a war on people who use drugs.”

Illsley has been working in harm reduction for the majority of her career and started at the MHRN in 2007.



“Our work is not necessarily designed to stop people from using drugs, although this is often an outcome,”

“People who use drugs and the Peer Advisory Councils they belong to are impacted by structural violence, colonial violence, the war on drugs (and people who use drugs), STBBIs, poverty, and other social inequities,” says Illsley. “We work directly with PWUD to identify capacity building needs, program needs, and gaps in services. [PWUD] are experts in identifying their needs and the needs of their community.”

One of those needs identified is supplying people with safer drug use supplies, like needles or pipes. The goal in providing these supplies is to prevent transmission of sexuality transmitted and blood borne infections (STBBIs) like HIV and hepatitis C. Across Canada, Manitoba has the highest rate of hepatitis C, and the second highest rate of HIV, which are both transmitted through the sharing of injection drug use supplies.

Six years into the drug poisoning crisis in Canada, Manitoba is the only province west of Quebec that does not yet have a safe injection site, so staff at local social service organizations are having to respond to an increasing number of people experiencing a drug poisoning in their space, on their property, or in their neighbourhood.

In Manitoba, 3,000 people have died of drug poisonings/toxic drug supply between 2014 and 2024, with 570 people dying in 2024 alone. The service providers on the front lines of this crisis are housing coordinators, outreach workers, maintenance people, project coordinators, executive directors, and more.

“Service providers at our community-based organizations are responding to drug poisonings in hallways, stairwells, bathrooms, and back lanes,” says Illsley. “Service providers that never signed on to be first responders, who are not trained beyond basic first aid or CPR, who had no choice but to become trained in overdose prevention and response, who themselves are now administering countless doses of naloxone and continue to show up for our relatives.”

It is because of this work that the MHRN developed the *More Than Naloxone* workshop, to inform, educate, and train employees who are acting as first responders, providing lifesaving services on how to recognize a drug poisoning and how to administer naloxone.

“Our work is not necessarily designed to stop people from using drugs, although this is often an outcome,” says Illsley. “Research shows that 70-80% of people have used an illegal or illicit substance in their life. The data from our harm reduction training shows that 83% of the people who attend our training, who are health and social service providers, report using an illegal or illicit substance in their lifetime. We recognize that people use substances for many reasons and that sometimes it is complicated. In harm reduction, we want everyone who chooses to use substances to be able to be as safe as possible regardless of what substance they are using and their relationship to that substance, whether it is occasional use or substance dependence.”

The MHRN has already trained many organizations throughout Manitoba and will continue to do this work. To learn more about this work follow their Instagram: @mbharmreductionnetwork or facebook.com/ManitobaHarmReductionNetwork/

For more information about naloxone kits, visit manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/naloxone.html

ARTS ORGANIZATIONS A CORNERSTONE OF COMMUNITY

NEW COLLABORATIVE GRANTING
STREAM HELPS KEEP IT THAT
WAY FOR YEARS TO COME

In a promising collaboration to fortify Manitoba's arts and cultural sector, Manitoba Arts Council (MAC) and The Winnipeg Foundation are working together to create a new funding program for arts organizations. The initiative, called "Sector Capacity Building," arose from two engagement events held in May 2025 to gather insights from across the sector. These discussions were a critical step in understanding the evolving needs of the arts community and the barriers they face.

Sixty-eight participants from 64 organizations came together to brainstorm strategies, with arts leaders from Alberta and Ontario providing insights into how they successfully approached similar challenges in their home provinces. The overarching theme that emerged from the dialogue was clear: Manitoba's arts organizations, an integral aspect of community life, are struggling to catch up to pre-pandemic levels of funding and participation. Many organizations are caught in a cycle of applying for project-based grants while desperately needing stable, core funding to support their staff and long-term goals.

Despite these challenges, arts organizations are uniquely positioned to contribute to the social fabric of Manitoba. Through vibrant programs, they foster creativity, inclusivity, and civic engagement, and provide vital spaces for community connection. In this context, the new funding program will enable organizations to deepen cross-sectoral partnerships, expand their reach to rural and northern communities, and strengthen their infrastructure.

By addressing gaps in funding, staffing, and access, the partnership between MAC and The Winnipeg Foundation aims to help the arts sector continue to be a cornerstone of community life in Manitoba.

**To learn more about the
MAC grants program for
the arts, scan the QR code.**



Arts organizations coming together in spring 2025
to discuss challenges in their sector.



MEDIA LITERACY PROGRAM WILL HELP STUDENTS BUILD CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

In our 24/7 world of information overload, and with an increased volume of misinformation and disinformation available, media literacy is becoming critical. A unique partnership between the Winnipeg Free Press (WFP), Winnipeg School Division, the Manitoba Department of Education and Early Childhood Learning, funded in part by The Winnipeg Foundation, focuses on delivering media literacy training for Manitoba students.

The project responds to digital media literacy gaps among children and youth, as well as a lack of teacher resources and training in this area. The goal is to build critical thinking skills to combat rising misinformation, propaganda, and deceptive marketing, particularly targeting young audiences.

The curriculum, designed by Winnipeg School Division and the Manitoba Government's Department of Education and Early Childhood Learning, also features a media literacy platform designed and delivered by the WFP, to support the program.

The multi-faceted project includes creation of learning bundles for teachers (including audio/visual content, adaptable classroom activities, and free access to WFP resources), media literacy professional development for teachers, and a shared school newspaper platform. Learning bundles will be curriculum-aligned and leveled for ages K-12.

Content is being developed and tested by teachers and

administrators, with a focus on making it easy to integrate into teachers' already busy workloads. For example, the content of one learning bundle relates to food and nutrition. Alongside the traditional health curriculum, a bundle will provide resources that discuss social media and marketing claims around nutrition fads, and how learners can access trustworthy sources of information.

The student press site will feature tutorials and materials to create a school newspaper, as well as an online platform to share school news and network with both professional and student journalists from other schools. The Media Literacy Micro-credential, a free, self-guided course in media literacy for teachers and other adult learners, is being offered as part of the project.

According to WFP Paul Samyn, the media literacy project is motivated by current challenges within the media landscape.

"Despite a trusted reputation built up over 152 years of service, there are one or maybe even two generations of Manitobans who have never had any contact with a newspaper like the WFP. How do we get this product into the hands of those who not only have never read WFP but might not even understand the importance of fact-based journalism," asks Samyn.

"The second motivation relates to the growing societal problem of a fundamental lack of understanding of media, and the misinformation/disinformation that is increasing polarization and threatening the social contract. And that's a problem that's only going to get worse with the rise of AI and the increasing role U.S.-based tech giants have in shaping discourse everywhere," Samyn added.

The WFP believes that helping the next generation of Manitobans navigate the media landscape in a way that allows them to reap the benefits and avoid its pitfalls, will strengthen our province. The innovative program is due to roll out initially to middle-school students in the fall and will expand the program—with age-appropriate content—across all grade levels. The program was supported through The Winnipeg Foundation's Community Grants Program.



Youth in Philanthropy (YiP) entered my life when I was still a high school student, sitting at a table with other youth wondering how our voices could possibly shape real change. We were tasked with something big: deciding which community organizations would receive grants from The Winnipeg Foundation. At first, it felt impossible, how could a group of students make decisions that mattered so much? But as we researched, visited organizations, and debated together, I began to realize that our voices carried weight, and that we could make a meaningful difference in our community.

YOUTH IN PHILANTHROPY IS EMPOWERING YOUTH TO LEAD WITH GENEROSITY

YiP didn't just teach me about philanthropy; it gave me the confidence to see myself as someone who could contribute to community change. I credit YiP with kickstarting my passion for the social impact sector; a path I continue to walk today. And I know I'm not alone, a few of the staff at the Foundation, and leaders across the city, are also YiP alumni. Quietly and steadily, the program has shaped a generation of changemakers.

Over the past 26 years, YiP and its variations have granted more than \$3.4 million to organizations across Winnipeg. That's real money going directly into the hands of initiatives tackling urgent issues—from homelessness and hunger to arts, education, and mental health. But beyond the dollars, the deeper impact is in how YiP has evolved. What began as a bold experiment in youth-led granting is now an international initiative where youth learn about generosity, collaboration, responsibility, and leadership.

Shaping Changemakers

BY MERCY OLUWAFEMI

In recent years, YiP has also grown to reflect the times. Alongside traditional focus areas like climate change and mental health, youths now consider pillars such as Truth and Reconciliation, equity and underserved communities, and the child welfare system. These shifts reflect the realities young people see and care deeply about, and the evolving needs of our community.

After more than two decades, the story of YiP is still being written by the youth who bring their passion and curiosity to the table each year. The program's success lies not only in dollars granted, but in the next generation of leaders it nurtures, leaders who, like me, will carry forward the lessons of generosity for years to come.

YiP has shown us that when we trust youth with responsibility and give them the space to lead, they rise to the challenge. As we look ahead, The Foundation is excited to continue supporting young people in the program, giving them the platform to lead, and to build a better future for us all.

Joy and Belonging

Manitoba Possible Provides Inclusive Summer Camp Experiences

Some of the best memories from childhood are those at summer camp: sunny days filled with laughter, the smell of sunscreen and pine trees, adventures that stretch into the afternoon, and group songs echoing around a glowing campfire. These moments help shape a child's sense of joy, independence, and belonging.

Yet for many children with disabilities, these cherished experiences remain out of reach. Barriers—often access-related—can stand in the way, limiting opportunities to participate in inclusive and enriching summer camp programs.

Thankfully, Manitoba Possible has been paving the way for accessible summer camps for more than 20 years. As a community leader, the organization is dedicated to breaking down barriers to full and equal participation through a wide range of programs and services for children, youth, and adults with disabilities.

"Many camps do not support diverse needs, leaving families with few inclusive options," says Jaylene Irwin, Program Manager at Manitoba Possible. "With the support of donors, we're able to hire trained staff who understand each child's needs, offer low or subsidized registration, and provide free accessible transportation, which is essential."

Manitoba Possible's camps offer more than just fun—they provide a safe, inclusive, and engaging environment where participants can explore new activities, build friendships, and develop essential life skills. Programming is designed to foster independence and confidence, ensuring every child, regardless of ability, can participate and thrive.

Campers enjoy activities like swimming, archery, high ropes, rock climbing, zip lines, cycling, fire building, and field games. Day camps also explore the city, visiting places like Assiniboine Park Zoo, local pools, and parks.

The impact is deeply felt by families.

"My son felt an immediate sense of inclusion and community at camp. He usually hides his hearing aids or refuses to wear them, but this week, he happily put them on in the morning before camp," shares one parent.

Another parent adds, "Our son is able to do fun things like other kids in the summer. It's a safe place that doesn't judge and allows him the space to grow in his independence and be the best version of himself."

"Summer camps are funded entirely by the community," says Irwin. "Each year our waitlist grows as demand continues to rise. Every child deserves a chance to attend and making that possible relies entirely on the generosity of organizations like The Winnipeg Foundation and the support of our community donors."

Over her 14 years with Manitoba Possible, Irwin has seen how the programs empower children, youth and adults to build confidence, independence and meaningful connections.

"It's the families we meet along the way who leave a lasting impact, and being part of creating these opportunities continues to inspire me every day. Our programs truly change lives."



Campers enjoying activities during Manitoba Possible camp programs. Photos courtesy of Manitoba Possible.



Kitchen Brigades

Building Skills and Creating Connection

With more than one in five children across Manitoba affected, food insecurity remains a pressing issue for many families. Kitchen Brigades is helping address this challenge in a hands-on, hopeful way.

Run by the national non-profit organization La Tablée des Chefs, Kitchen Brigades is an after-school culinary program for youth aged 12 to 17. Through nearly 40 hours of professional chef-led workshops each school year, students learn to cook and reduce food waste, while also building healthy habits, food autonomy, and essential life skills like teamwork, leadership and creativity.

Founder Jean-François Archambault said the program's impact became clear from the start.

"I remember when we did the registration desk at our first school," he said. "A tall young boy came up to me and said, 'I want to do this.' I asked what interested him, expecting something like 'I love cooking.' But he said, 'At least on Tuesdays I'll be able to eat.'"

That moment reshaped the program's priorities.

"It was never an angle I had considered," said Archambault. "He showed us how vital this program was. We've prioritized schools in high poverty areas ever since."

Kitchen Brigades teaches youth how to cook with limited resources—an essential skill in low-income households. Workshops often include lessons on maximizing fridge contents and reducing food waste. These practical skills help students become more independent and contribute meaningfully at home.

Beyond cooking, the program fosters community and connection. Students from diverse backgrounds come together to cook, connect, and give back. One initiative involves preparing and donating meals to local food banks, families, or schools. Another sees students cook festive meals for their loved ones, strengthening family bonds.

The program currently operates in almost 400 schools across Canada, including 27 in Winnipeg. Last year, 13 new schools joined the initiative, three of which were supported by The Winnipeg Foundation.

"The Winnipeg Foundation has believed in and supported us," said Archambault. "That means a lot."

Winnipeg is now the second-largest city in Canada for Kitchen Brigades participation. This year, students from Gordon Bell High School made history by winning the national Kitchen Brigades final—the first time a Winnipeg team took home the title.

In a city where food insecurity persists, Kitchen Brigades proves that a simple meal can spark connection, confidence and change.

"Food is a unifying element that connects people," said Archambault. "The kitchen is where we all share and build bridges together."

Students participating in the Kitchen Brigades final competition in June 2025. Photos courtesy of La Tablée des Chefs.

In the heart of Winnipeg, Mosaic Newcomer Family Resource Network is transforming lives through its strength-based parent groups. The programs are designed to support newcomer families as they navigate the complexities of parenting in a new country.

Mosaic's strength-based approach centers on meeting families where they are by partnering with schools, community centers, and agencies to bring programming directly into neighbourhoods.

"Language and transportation are the two biggest issues newcomers face," explains Maisa'a Haj-Ahmad, Director of Family Programs. "So instead of expecting them to come to us, we go to them, by partnering with other agencies and offering programs in multiple languages."

Beyond parenting skills, Mosaic's programs build capacity. Many participants go on to become facilitators or childcare workers through Mosaic's Family Engagement Mentorship program. Haj-Ahmad has been with the organization for ten years and has seen the impact Mosaic has on our community.

"We empower women to contribute to their communities," Haj-Ahmad says proudly. "Some even become full-time staff."

Mosaic's Strength-Based Parent Groups Empower Newcomers

Parents have reported that they are better able to manage their stress, self-regulate their feelings, and work with their children to build healthy relationships, while gaining confidence to parent in a Canadian context. A key component is the 'Parenting in a New Country' presentation, which demystifies Child and Family Services and fears rooted in misinformation.

The programs, often co-facilitated by trained newcomer educators, are delivered in over 21 languages. This multilingual model ensures accessibility and builds trust. With childcare and snacks provided, Mosaic removes barriers to participation, ensuring every parent feels seen, heard, and supported.

"Warmth and structure," Haj-Ahmad reflects, "are the tools we use to build relationships and guide families forward."

Access to mental health support for parents and reducing the number of children involved in the child welfare system are priorities of The Winnipeg Foundation and one of the Champion Pillars as mentioned in the most recent strategic plan.

To learn more about Mosaic Newcomer Family Resource Network, visit mosaicnet.ca.

Newcomer parents attending a drop-in program at Mosaic's Family Place. Photo courtesy of Mosaic Newcomer Family Resource Network.



For more than 25 years, the Charleswood Active Living Centre has been a vital community space for seniors in Winnipeg—offering more than just programs, also providing a true sense of connection, and belonging. In 2022, with support from its donors and a Major Capital Grant from The Winnipeg Foundation, the Centre took a significant step forward by securing a new permanent home.

With 400 active members and many more community supporters who regularly participate in its fundraisers, the Centre had long operated out of the former Charleswood Library on Roblin Boulevard. In 2019, they were informed their lease would not be renewed beyond fall 2025. Facing an uncertain future, the Board of Directors began searching for a sustainable, long-term solution.

At the same time, the Charleswood area was home to Winnipeg's fastest growing population of aging people, and was facing a lack of senior's housing in the neighbourhood. Board member Sherry Mooney recalled trying to downsize into a local independent living complex, only to find that even the waitlist had closed. It was clear there was both a need and an opportunity.

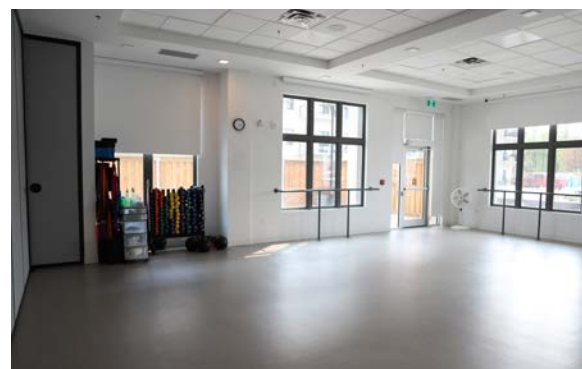
The Centre began conversations with developers, advocating for the idea of co-locating an active living centre within a senior housing development. Their efforts gained momentum when then-City Councillor Kevin Klein backed the vision, helping to pass a zoning variance for an empty lot on Oakdale Drive. The new zoning required any development on the site to include the Charleswood Active Living Centre.

With Klein's help, a deal was brokered with Exemplar Developments, securing a space for the Centre on the main floor of one of the new buildings—along with a 10-year, low-cost, renewable lease. Thanks to grants and community fundraising, the Centre renovated its new space to include a large gym with a retractable wall, an outdoor patio, accessible offices, and other features tailored for members with mobility or hearing challenges.

Since the move, membership has grown, and demand for more programming and longer hours continues to rise. For many, the Centre is more than a place to gather—it's a vital part of their lives. As one member put it simply, "This place saved my life."

For more information about the centre, visit charleswoodseniorcentre.org

A New Chapter for the Charleswood Active Living Centre



Top and Bottom Photos: Charleswood Active Living Centre moved to its new location in Spring 2025

Middle Photo: Centre board members Daniel Graham and Sherry Mooney outside the Charleswood Active Living Centre.

From the desk of... Manitoba Craft Council



Tammy Sutherland

Executive Director, Manitoba Craft Council

For 16 years, I've had the privilege of working with the Manitoba Craft Council (MCC), a non-profit supporting professional craftspeople in our province. Founded by craftspeople in 1978, MCC has long been a vital part of Manitoba's craft community. From exhibitions and sales to workshops and professional development, we offer opportunities for artists to grow and connect from our home at the C2 Centre for Craft, shared with the Manitoba Crafts Museum and Library.

When people ask what we do, I often start with our craft sales, highlighting our two annual holiday craft sales. *Crafted*, held in partnership with the Winnipeg Art Gallery, features 100 top makers from Manitoba and the North plus a fashion show; and *Vinterfest*, a fun collaboration with IKEA, showcases 20 artists in the store's self-serve area. These accessible, welcoming events are a great way to discover the craft community.

We're frequently asked, "What is craft?" We define craft as handmade work—often functional—created from materials like clay, fibre, glass, wood, metal,

and paper. It includes furniture, clothing, jewellery, homewares, instruments, and unique artworks made with traditional techniques. Our 300+ members span all career stages. While craft is sometimes dismissed as art's "poor cousin," we see it as a discipline rooted in skill, respect for materials, and a commitment to excellence.

One of the hardest parts of our work is turning people away. For a recent sale, 60 artists applied for just 20 spots. It's tough knowing this affects their income and morale. We hope they find other opportunities and stay encouraged.

On the flip side, celebrating exceptional makers is pure joy. In 2024, MCC, alongside Mentoring Artists for Women's Art (MAWA) and the Manitoba Crafts Museum and Library, nominated Métis beadwork artist Jeannine Krauchi for the

Manitoba Arts Award of Distinction—and she won! Her decades of dedication to preserving and sharing beadwork were recognized in a truly meaningful way.

We're also proud of another initiative involving EAL learners at MOSAIC Newcomer Family Resource Centre exploring Métis culture while crafting beaded brooches with artist Margaret Firlotte. These workshops beautifully blend craft, language learning, and community building, reflecting our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.

Perhaps our biggest challenge today is the economic reality of making a living from craft. In the past five years we experienced a pandemic, postal issues, and the loss of U.S. shipping exemptions—all of which have hit craftspeople hard. Many full-time makers rely on U.S. sales for 40–60% of their income, and the uncertainty is real. Still, the local community's support during the pandemic was heartening. This holiday season, buying local is a powerful way to uplift our makers and keep our dollars close to home.

For more information about the Manitoba Craft Council, visit c2centreforcraft.ca

SNAPSHOTS IN TIME

BY MARY HORODYSKI

My favourite part of being an archivist is discovering the snapshots that vividly bring the past to life. While sorting through the historical records of The Winnipeg Foundation, I have come across several such glimpses, but my favourite is the 1989 photo project titled "A Day in the Life of Winnipeg."

This project was spearheaded by the then-newly formed Urban Idea Centre of Winnipeg and funded by The Winnipeg Foundation. As described in The Foundation's 1989 annual report, the initiative aimed "to capture the diverse multi-cultural aspects of Winnipeg by illustrating the physical setting of the City, its people, its special places and its cultural character."

Mary Horodyski holding a binder of slides from a 1989 photo project titled "A Day in the Life of Winnipeg."



SNAPSHOTS IN TIME

1 & 2 - Photographer: Garry Denker.

3 - Photographer: David McMillan.

4 - Photographer: Gerry Kopelow

5 - Senator Mira Spivak.

Photographer: Sheila Spence.

What remains of the project today are three sheets of colour 35 mm slides—60 slides in total— that I discovered tucked away in a binder in a storage room. Further details came from The Foundation's 1990 annual report, while additional context was pieced together from scouring back issues of the Winnipeg Free Press and conversations with local organizations like the Winnipeg Architecture Foundation and the Winnipeg Arts Council.

Inspired by the popular coffee-table books *A Day in the Life of Canada* and *A Day in the Life of Australia*, the project invited ten local photographers to document Winnipeg from dawn to dusk. Among them were Sheila Spence, Henry Kalen, John Paskievich, Wayne Glowacki, William Eakin, David McMillan, and Gerry Kopelow— each capturing their unique vision of the city on a sunny August day.

1989 was the year the Assiniboine Park Zoo hosted two giant pandas from the Chengdu Zoo in China, and this excitement was captured by Garry Denker. In one photo he shows a crowd of Winnipeggers gathered around the enclosure holding pandas Rong Rong and Cheng Cheng and in the other, he shows a giant inflatable panda in the Zoo parking lot – one of the many panda-themed artifacts that proliferated in the city that year.

Not surprisingly, photographers made good use of Winnipeg's iconic architectural structures as well as highlighting some of the contrasts in the city's landscape. Gerry Kopelow juxtaposed the Neo-Palladian sandstone front of the former Bank of British North American on Main Street (now the Palomino Club) against the modern glass and brick of the BMO building on the corner of Portage and Main.



David McMillan captured the somewhat surreal sight of a Grain Growers building rising behind a residential street in Linden Woods—a reminder of how close Winnipeg's ties to agriculture really are.

Sheila Spence turned her lens toward female politicians and community advocates, including Mary Richards, then director of the Manitoba Association of Native Languages, and a lively portrait of Senator Mira Spivak.

The final 60 images of the project were shared with the public in a display downtown during the 1989 City Week. A year later, during the 1990 City Week, the photos were auctioned during a brunch held at the IMAX Theatre.

City Week marked the first large-scale public event held by the Urban Idea Centre. Originating from informal conversations among University of Manitoba architecture professors, the Urban Idea Centre was formally incorporated in 1988. In its first incarnation, it was comprised of professors from both universities and had a founding board of interested citizens including

Kathleen Richardson, Lloyd Axworthy, and Richard Frost, who was then the newly appointed Chief Commissioner of the City of Winnipeg. Susan Thompson, who would later become mayor of Winnipeg, served as the Centre's first president.

Formed during a time of challenges facing the city, the goal of the Urban Idea Centre was to substantially engage citizens in issues of civic concern. The City Week events were ways to inform, inspire, and involve Winnipeggers in the shaping of their city. In 1994, The Winnipeg Foundation provided funding for a second Urban Idea Centre photo project, "Winnipeg in Winter," though only a few slides from that initiative remain in The Foundation's records.

The Urban Idea Centre continued hosting City Week events until around 1996. In the late 1990's, its focus shifted toward promoting public art, playing a key role in the City's adoption of the Winnipeg Arts Council's public art policy in 2004. As other civic forums for public consultation and engagement emerged, the Centre transitioned its organization to the Winnipeg Arts Council, which has stewarded the Urban Idea Centre since 2010.

The slides from the "A Day in the Life of Winnipeg" photography project have been digitized and will be transferred to the City of Winnipeg Archives for public access in early 2026.



6 - Mary Richards.
Photographer: Sheila Spence.

7 - Photographer: Henry Kalen

8 - Photographer: John Paskievich

9 - Photographer: Paul Martens

10 - Photographer: William Eakin

All photos courtesy of the Urban Idea Centre/Winnipeg Arts Council.

Our Foundation



STACEY SOLDIER

Stacey Soldier, current Foundation board member, and a lawyer from Swan Lake First Nation, made history in 2025 as the first Anishinaabe woman to serve as President of the Manitoba Bar Association. Shortly after graduating in 2007 from the University of Manitoba, she met with a young girl and her guardian for a routine preparation before court, where the young client's disbelief that "Native ladies were allowed to be lawyers" underscored the importance of representation. Soldier's practice includes criminal and child protection law, and she served as co-counsel at the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. A mentor and educator at Robson Hall, she champions Indigenous legal orders and equity. Her presidency marks a transformative moment for Indigenous visibility and leadership in law.



DR. CATHERINE L. COOK

In August, Dr. Catherine L. Cook was inducted into the Winnipeg Real Estate Board's Citizens Hall of Fame for her considerable contributions to advancing Indigenous health across Winnipeg and Manitoba.

She began her career as a family physician in Northern Manitoba, later shifting focus to public health, administration, and management. As Provincial Lead for Shared Health Manitoba, she played a key role in developing the Indigenous Partnership Framework, which guided the transformation of Manitoba's health system to better meet the needs of Indigenous communities through culturally informed, community-based care. Dr. Cook also served as Vice President (Indigenous) at the University of Manitoba, where she led the creation of Ongomiizwin. She is a former board member of The Winnipeg Foundation and has received numerous honours for her work.



HARVEST MANITOBA - 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Harvest Manitoba recently celebrated its 40th anniversary by hosting a community barbeque. When the organization first opened its doors in 1985, it served an average of 600 families per year; today, Harvest supports approximately 1,200 families per month. In 2022 Harvest Manitoba expanded its reach into eight Northern communities, while continuing to distribute over nine million pounds of food annually across the province.

THÉÂTRE CERCLE MOLIÈRE - 100-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Théâtre Cercle Molière (TCM) is marking its centennial during the 2025-26 season with a gala and a special lineup of performances. Among them is *Pauline Boutal*, *Between Canvases* and *Plates*, a tribute to the company's artistic director of 27 years. As the oldest Francophone theatre company in Canada, TCM continues to honour its rich legacy while inspiring future generations through performance.

TAMARACK RECOVERY CENTRE - 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Tamarack Recovery Centre celebrated 50 years of service in 2025. To celebrate, they hosted a series of events marking the achievement, including an announcement of the Tamarack Recovery Centre Fund, an Agency Fund with The Winnipeg Foundation that was generously supported by Manitoba Credit Unions.

After more than three decades at The Winnipeg Foundation, **Cathy Auld** is looking forward to a new chapter in 2026 as she retires from a career defined by community, connection, and a steadfast belief in the quiet generosity that makes Winnipeg shine.

Working towards a better tomorrow has been at the heart of Cathy's 35.5 years with The Foundation. Trained as a city planner, she was drawn to philanthropic work "out of love for community. I knew The Winnipeg Foundation was a place where I could engage directly with community and help nudge things along in good ways."

Cathy's work helped shape countless initiatives, from arts organizations to community revitalization projects. Over the years, she saw "how grassroots, emerging artists-run organizations, like Mentoring Artists for Women's Art (MAWA) and Winnipeg Film Group, that received seed grants from The Foundation thrive 50 years on." As a lifelong appreciator of the arts, "seeing a glimmer of a good idea become a cornerstone of a great community" has been one of her career highlights.

From fires and floods to the creative reinvestment in places like Assiniboine Park, Cathy has witnessed Winnipeggers continue to show up for one another. "People are looking around them and thinking, 'I may be ok,'" she says, "but I want to make sure my neighbours are ok too."

"The sense of connection that people have," Cathy reflects, "and that people are motivated to make things better for others, makes bold dreams feel more possible in Winnipeg than they might in other major cities." She attributes both the ability to dream big and extend care to neighbors as part of "a characteristic underpinning of quiet generosity" borne from Winnipeg's relative isolation from other large urban centers, noting that "the prairie spirit of being resilient and proud means knowing that if we aren't willing to do something for ourselves, no one else will do it for us."



Throughout her storied career, Cathy has witnessed donors becoming more active and engaged, spending time learning and engaging in community, and working together in informal ways like giving circles. Philanthropy, she reflects, has evolved over the decades but remains rooted in relationships. "It's always been relationship-based," says Cathy, "and about thinking about the promises we make to the next generation." Over the years, she has been particularly moved by anonymous donors, noting that "donors who choose to remain anonymous are everywhere, from all walks of life, and they let their actions, not recognition, speak to what they desire in positive change."

Cathy's hope for Winnipeg is that people continue "dreaming about what's possible and what's missing to soar. By staying optimistic about how we live as neighbours in community."

As Cathy prepares to embark on a well-earned retirement, her 35 years of dedication, kindness, and service leave a legacy that will continue to inspire her colleagues at The Foundation, and everyone who has had the privilege to work alongside her.

LED BY NATURE MANITOBA, âniskômohecikan
BRINGS LAND-BASED LEARNING TO OVER
700 YOUTH ANNUALLY, WITH PLANS TO
REACH 1,000 IN THE COMING YEAR.

READ THE FULL STORY ON PAGE 13.

