

Showcasing Services and Programs for Seniors in Manitoba



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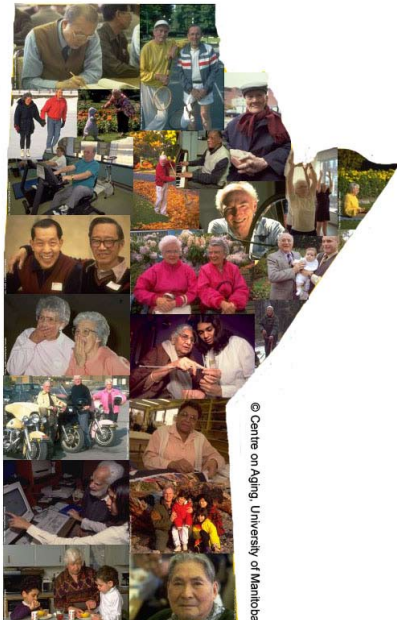
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Executive summary

Why This report?

This project was part of a larger program of research on “age-friendly” communities, the *Age-Friendly Community-University Research Alliance*. The purpose was to gather examples of unique and potentially successful services, programs, policies, or organizational structures (for example, boards) that benefit older adults. By featuring these examples, we hope to highlight the many ways that communities in Manitoba are being made more age-friendly.

Participants

Participants were primarily Senior Resource Coordinators, who are responsible for providing services and programs for seniors in a particular community or region. Seventy-six Senior Resource Coordinators participated in the project. Three Tenant Resource Coordinators, whose role it is to meet the needs of seniors living in a given apartment complex and three Executive Directors of senior organizations were also interviewed. In total, 82 individuals were interviewed between June 2 and August 24, 2009 (80.4% response rate).

Findings

Examples of services and programs are organized into the domains that contribute to an age-friendly community, according to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2007), namely: Transportation; Housing; Respect and Social Inclusion; Social Participation, Communication and Information; Civic Participation and Employment; and Community Support and Health Services. An eighth area was added, focusing on Organizational Structures (mostly boards).

Participants were also asked about what would help them to provide other services or programs. The following were the top five issues identified (with the number of individuals who identified the issue in brackets):

1. More funding (52)
2. More time (21)
3. More volunteers (20)
4. More staff (11)
5. More transportation (11)

Conclusions

This report showcases the numerous services and programs that are being provided in Manitoba for the benefit of seniors. It also highlights the dedication of the numerous individuals (staff and volunteers) who are working towards enhancing the quality of life of older adults.

Community-based services and programs such as the ones featured in this report are critical in allowing seniors to live independently, and to promote their health and quality of life. Adequate funding must be available to Senior Resource Councils to support their important work.

Project Overview

This project was part of a larger program of research on “age-friendly” communities, the *Age-Friendly Community-University Research Alliance*. The purpose was to gather examples of unique and potentially successful services, programs, policies, or organizational structures (for example, advisory boards) that benefit older adults. By featuring these examples, we hope to highlight the many ways that communities in Manitoba are being made more age-friendly.

This report includes communities of all sizes. The intent is not to make comparisons across communities, but rather to show the diversity of services or programs that are being offered. This report is also not intended as a comprehensive directory of all services or programs that are available in communities; rather, we feature select services, programs or boards that our project participants told us about. It also important to keep in mind that we only present one service or program per community even though many others may be available in a given community. Our description of one service or program in a given community, therefore, does not imply that no other services or programs are available.

Participants

Possible participants were identified using information publicly available through the Seniors Resource Councils in Manitoba. Participants were primarily Senior Resource Coordinators, who are responsible for providing services and programs for seniors in a particular community or region. Seventy-six Senior Resource Coordinators participated in the project. Three Tenant Resource Coordinators, whose role it is to meet the needs of seniors living in a given apartment complex and three Executive Directors of senior organizations were also interviewed. In total, 82 individuals were interviewed between June 2 and August 24, 2009 (80.4% response rate).

Information collected

Participants were asked to describe a service, program, policy or organizational structure (for example, a board) in their community that benefits seniors which, in their opinion, was particularly unique and successful. Individuals were free to describe anything they wanted. It is important to note that we asked participants to identify only **one** service, program, policy, or organizational structure. This means that even though there may be many other unique aspects, we are only able to describe one feature per community in this report.

Interviews were conducted over the telephone and tape recorded to make sure that the information was accurately recorded. Participants were also asked if they were willing to have the name of their community published in this report. For those who agreed, we have provided the community's name.

Organization of This Report

This report is organized into the domains that contribute to an age-friendly community, according to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2007), namely:

- Transportation;
- Housing;
- Respect and Social Inclusion;
- Social Participation;
- Communication and Information;
- Civic Participation and Employment; and
- Community Support and Health Services

Additionally, as we also asked about Organizational Structures, an eighth category focuses on unique features within organizations towards becoming an age-friendly community. We conclude the report by discussing some of the challenges that participants identified in terms of providing services and programs for seniors.

Transportation

Affordable and well-organized transportation options are important for residents in age-friendly communities. Transportation options identified include handi-van service, fee-for-service volunteer drivers, CancerCare partnership, and escorted rides.

Handi-Van Service

In the community of *Glenboro*, the Senior Resource Coordinator operates the handi-van and organizes social outings for the seniors such as bingo, organized outings, grocery shopping, and local



appointments. Seniors can access the handi-van eight hours a day, five days a week; the Senior Resource Coordinator is willing to drive seniors on weekends and for special occasions or events.

On the second Monday of every month, the coordinator provides round trips to Brandon for \$15. The fixed date allows seniors plenty of time to organize medical appointments,

shopping adventures, and visit friends and family while in Brandon. Individuals are dropped off at their destination at the start of the day and picked up from their destination at the end of the day. This service provides seniors with a much appreciated freedom and independence on their day trip. Seniors who require more assistance are encouraged to bring a volunteer along on their appointments or leisurely outings.

“We do everything; I take them to bingo, I take them on outings, I take them for doctors’ appointments and hair appointments and grocery shopping. Our seniors are very, very independent.”

“It’s [the trips to Brandon] every second Monday of the month so they know in advance when we’re going, so they can make doctor’s appointments and stuff. So that really makes a difference and kind of takes the pressure off the family.”

In *Oak Lake*, a strong volunteer board is ready and willing to cater to the seniors' transportation needs. A group of people run the handi-van service, organize and coordinate pickups and drop-offs in Oak Lake. Recently, the Senior Resource Council purchased a new handi-van through community and organizational donations. It is important to the council to offer this service at an affordable price; seniors are only charged \$2 for a one-way trip anywhere in town and travelling out-of-town costs \$2 and \$0.40/kilometer for every kilometer there after. Transportation for city appointments are available at set rates of \$10 to Virden, \$15 to Souris, and \$20 to Brandon.

Residents are well aware of the handi-van drivers' contact information and a future goal is to create awareness for newcomers.

“One of the primary objectives of the board and objective of the handi-van is to keep it so that the seniors are able to access it, you don't want to overprice it.”

Established approximately 22 years ago, the handi-van in the *Town of Roblin* originated from the Adult Daycare Program. The Town owns the handi-van and is represented by a committee who oversees the handi-van, and meets annually to review budgets and finances. The committee represents the town, the local rural municipality, the drop-in centre, and community help centre. The handi-van service is run strictly by volunteers who are recognized annually at Christmas time. Ten individuals are available to drive at any time. The service is extremely affordable for the residents of Roblin and is widely used for travel within and outside of the community. The community support is a huge asset in sustaining the handi-van service.



“We have about half a dozen people who take on the responsibility for the operation and all of the bits and pieces that go into providing this service.”

Fee-for-Service Volunteer Drivers

The community of *St. Pierre-Jolys* does not have access to a local handi-van or taxi service; transportation is available through a group of fee-for-service drivers. The community recognized that a transportation service would benefit local seniors through a needs survey conducted a few years ago. The Senior Resource Coordinator identifies suitable local volunteer drivers using a thorough screening process that includes a criminal check, proof of a valid driver's license, informs drivers of their duties, and teaches them how to respect the confidentiality of each client.

Currently the program has 20 suitable volunteers, who use their own vehicles and charge their clients set fees for local and out-of-town transportation. The Senior Resource Council provides seniors with mobility issues or who require walking aids temporary mobility equipment at no cost. Three volunteers drive vans that can easily transport large walkers and folded wheelchairs.

“The volunteers—it’s a small community coming together to help the senior populace of this community—the participation has been very, very good!”

Transportation for seniors in *Ashern* and the surrounding communities travel is provided through a fee-for-service program, organized by the Seniors Resource Council. Approximately 35–40 volunteers make up the working base. Transportation to larger centres, such as Winnipeg, is available at a fixed rate paid directly to the driver. Volunteers usually drive their own vehicles, and upon request, will drive clients in their own vehicle. Volunteer escorts are also available; they may be family members, friends, or neighbors who escort seniors with mobility issues or who request an escort. Escorts are commonly invited on long city trips or appointments. The Senior Resource Council prefers 48 hours notice, but if the transportation service is needed immediately, the Senior Resource Coordinator is often able to find a driver.

"I would say 95 percent of our transportation are for medical appointments ... Certainly not everyone has their family members living right in their community, so we really take the burden off a lot of people to get them to their medical appointments."



The Senior Resource Coordinator in *Fisher Branch* has organized a fee-for-service transportation service. Many of the volunteer drivers are retired seniors. Set rates are established for travelling in town, to the surrounding communities, and to Winnipeg for appointments, such as dentist and doctor appointments, and for attending social events (outings or visiting friends). The affordable and accessible transportation service is made possible due to the dedicated group of volunteers.

"It's never happened yet since I've been at this job that I haven't been able to find a ride for someone."

CancerCare Partnerships

The Senior Resource Council in *Stonewall* has set up a transportation service providing seniors with rides around the community and to Winnipeg. Additionally the council has established a partnership with CancerCare Manitoba. Drivers are fee-for-service volunteers. CancerCare clients pay a monthly fee of \$5 to CancerCare, who in turn pays the community volunteer drivers. The community members who use this service are greatly appreciative of the minimal costs to travel to Winnipeg for treatment. Cancer Care and Stonewall have organized an affordable and easily accessible service to those in need, making this program extremely successful in the community.

"We have fabulous volunteers who are signed up with our program who are almost at our beck and call, you know we can call them last minute and they are there to look after these people."

Escorted Rides Program

The Broadway Seniors Resource Council in *Winnipeg* provides an Escorted Rides Program for seniors in and around the community.



To access the program, seniors must phone two days in advance to request this service provided by volunteer drivers who use their own vehicles. The Senior Resource Coordinator then contacts volunteer drivers and finds a ride for the client. Clients pay a nominal fee directly to the volunteer to cover driving expenses in exchange for a door-to-door escorted service. For instance, if the client is going to a medical appointment, the driver would take the client to the appointment and wait if needed. This escorted ride service accommodates the needs of seniors by providing an escort and door-to-door service, which is not offered through public transportation.

“They can be assured that they have an arm to hang on to over an icy sidewalk and have their groceries brought in, which is a courtesy that our drivers do.”

Housing

Several communities offer senior housing options that are available to promote independent living and personal safety.

Supports to Seniors in Group Living

Based on survey results and a significant gap in housing supports, *Gladstone* implemented the Supports to Seniors in Group Living (SSGL) Program in a seniors’ home. Seniors are provided with enhanced supports in areas outside of home care.

Funded by the Regional Health Authority, the SSGL program allows seniors to maintain their independence and stay in their homes longer with the help of a tenant companion. The tenant companion is in high demand; the companion helps seniors with putting away groceries, setting up appointments, and getting their mail.

The program is overseen at a community level and it is important to hire the right tenant companion from within the community to facilitate trust and to create a good working relationship within the

apartment block. The funds for the SSGL program further assists to offset the cost of a congregate meal offered twice a week, and enhances nutrition and social contact between residents of the apartment block.

“The girl I have employed down there can do the things home care cannot do that make it so people can stay in the building, such as pick up their mail, phone in their orders, make doctor appointments for them, all the things that home care is not allowed to do and they find difficult to do for themselves, she can do for them.”

Seniors Housing Corporation

The *Arborg* Seniors Housing Corporation is a community-based organization established as a part of Age-Friendly Manitoba. It caters to the specific needs from within the community of *Arborg*. The *Arborg* Seniors Housing Corporation facilitates the growing demands for seniors housing in the community and is made up of town representatives from the rural municipality, council members, and the community at large. The Corporation’s accomplishment is showcased through the building of three seniors’ apartments and a 32-unit assisted living facility. The corporation is constructing another 16-unit enhanced senior housing building. *Arborg* is tackling its housing issues by offering seniors’ housing options, allowing more homes to be available in the community.

Daily Safety Checker Program

Over the past couple of years, *Fernwood Place in Steinbach* has implemented a Daily Safety Checker Program to ensure the safety of all residents living in the building. When tenants wake up in the morning, they place a happy face under their door or on their door knob to indicate that they are awake and doing well. A volunteer tenant is responsible for two wings on a particular floor. If the happy face is not visible by a certain time, the volunteer will phone the tenant first and then approach the tenant resource coordinator, who will then check on the room. Checks are completed daily to ensure all the tenants are safe and accounted for.

“Just to know that somebody cares enough to check in on you in the morning makes the world of difference to these people.”

Community Lock Box Program

The Community Lock Box Program in *Carberry* provides fire fighters and paramedics with exclusive and complete access to enter residents’ homes in case of emergencies. Access is provided through outdoor, weather proof lock boxes and only one key is available to fire fighters and paramedics for all the community lock boxes. The lock boxes are subsidized through the community foundation and sold by the Senior Resource Council at a reduced cost to seniors in the community; they are installed by the Senior Resource Coordinator upon purchase.



The Senior Resource Coordinator and home care refers clients to the program; sometimes seniors are referred when Lifeline is established. The lock boxes are very popular within the community, as they are a cheaper alternative to having the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) break down doors to gain entry into the home.

“It’s basically less than your insurance payments would be if the RCMP had to break down the door to get in. It’s been very popular.”

Respect and Social Inclusion

The following communities incorporate intergenerational programs to bring students together with seniors.

SMILE Program

The intergenerational SMILE program in *Traverse Bay* is maintained through funding from New Horizons to purchase supplies for activities and keep the program cost at zero for participants. Twenty-four students, ranging from Grades 6 to 9, are selected by the principal to participate. Students who never had the opportunity to bond with a grandparent are chosen first. Approximately nine



or ten isolated seniors within the community are also approached to participate. On a weekly basis, the school division brings the students and a teacher's aide to the senior centre, where they spend three hours together doing different activities, such as knitting, cooking, sewing, or playing board games. Through monthly meetings, the students and seniors identify the activities they would like to do, contributing to the overall success of this program. Communication between school officials and the Senior Resource Coordinator is also

important in facilitating this program.

"I think what makes it successful is that everybody has input into what's going on in the program, including the kids. That makes the difference because they are doing the kinds of things that they want to do."

Intergenerational Program

As a part of the Language Arts program at the elementary school in *Vita*, a Grade 5 student is paired with a senior in a nearby senior's apartment building. Students and seniors meet monthly and spend the morning together doing activities such as games and crafts. The school provides the supplies for the arts and crafts; the crafts are often tailored to specific holidays or events.



Before meeting the seniors, the students are introduced to some of the different issues and problems that seniors may have developed as they age, by attending hands-on workshops and thus, learn to understand and respect the seniors. As part of the school curriculum, students complete an interview with their respective seniors four times a year to discover what it was like for them as a child.

"It's the one thing here that all the seniors are waiting for. They are waiting there an hour ahead."

Dancing Program and Junior Services to Seniors Program

The community of *Holland* has a couple of successful intergenerational programs.

The Junior Services to Seniors Program recruits high school students in the fall and pairs them with seniors in the community. Students participate in friendly visiting programs and complete minimal tasks for the seniors. They earn volunteer hours towards a community service credit for their help.



Another intergenerational program is the Dancing Program, where community seniors lead several physical education classes at three different elementary schools. Seniors teach different dances including fox trot, polka, and waltz to Grade 5 and 6 students. The final lesson is usually followed by a family dance event with a live band, where children, parents, and grandparents are encouraged to dance together. To keep interest high, some programs are modified and new ideas are brought in.

“Our whole idea was not only to do an intergenerational activity it was to get the older adults into the school, get them to know the kids a little bit so when they are in the community and the kids greet them on the street they will know one another. That has worked well because the kids meet one of their instructors in the store and all a sudden there’s some conversation there that wouldn’t have been there otherwise.”

Hot Lunch Program and Buddy Programs



Strong intergenerational connections are created through various programs in *Hamiota*. The Hot Lunch Program is intended for seven or eight senior volunteers 55–65 years of age. Once a month, volunteers are allowed access to the school kitchen to cook and share a nutritious, homemade meal with up to 100 students. The program is so popular that senior volunteers are on a waiting list to participate. The student’s families support the program by contributing small items such as salad dressing to the lunches.

In the Buddy Program, 19 pairs of Grade 3 students and seniors from a local seniors home meet once a month for one-on-one time to do

different activities. The children’s families often adopt the seniors, taking them on various family outings. Related buddy programs include the Computer Buddy Program and the E-mail Buddy Program. The seniors build a strong relationship with the children that contribute to the program sustainability. The partnership with the high school and elementary school facilitates the success of these intergenerational programs.

“It’s that connection with the kids and seeing what happens. Putting the seniors and the kids together is a win-win. It takes lots of organization at all ends and it is a lot of extra work, but it is certainly well worth it.”

Social Participation

In a number of communities, social programs and activities offer seniors a means of interacting with one another and providing isolated seniors with a means of participating in the community.

Friendly Visiting Program

In *Thompson*, the Senior Resource Coordinator visits isolated seniors and aims to bring them to participate in activities and events within the community. Upon first meeting these individuals at congregate meals or afternoon bingos, the Senior Resource Coordinator attempts to set up a visiting time with the seniors and discovers some of their needs through a basic three-page survey. At first, only the Senior Resource Coordinator is involved with the individuals to build trust, as too many people may be overwhelming for the seniors. On a monthly basis, the Senior Resource Coordinator visits the seniors in their homes, has coffee or tea with them, and tries to bring them out to participate in community activities and to meet other seniors.



It is not possible to reach all the isolated seniors in the community since some seniors just want to be left alone. In this case, after some persistence, their decision to not participate must be respected.

“You can tell if they’re lonesome. If I’ve got a few minutes, sometimes I’ll even take them out for tea or coffee in the afternoon.”

Wellness Program

Adult day-care programs offer caregivers respite and an opportunity for seniors to participate socially in different activities. In *South Junction* and the surrounding communities, seniors participate in an affordable weekly Wellness Program. For seniors to be eligible, they must first be enrolled in home care before they can attend the Wellness Program. In this full day government funded program, seniors attend a 30-minute low impact exercise class and one hour of crafts in the morning, followed by lunch. In the afternoon, seniors participate in mentally challenging games to stimulate their minds. Snacks are provided twice a day. Transportation to and from the program is available, if necessary. Volunteers sustain the success of this program by helping with the crafts and the exercises. The Wellness Program is both needed and well supported in the community to provide respite to caregivers. In addition, it benefits the seniors by providing them with activities and congregate meals.

Kafe Klatsch

At *Woodhaven Manor*, situated in Steinbach, the Tenant Resource Coordinator provides a socialization opportunity called Kafe Klatsch for seniors twice a week for one hour. The free program was initiated as an additional socialization opportunity, as some of the tenants were quite lonely. The activity is advertised in the residents’ monthly newsletters. The seniors gather together in a common area and have tea or coffee. During this time, both the seniors and the Tenant Resource Coordinator have the opportunity to socialize with new people and their neighbors. It also allows the Tenant Resource Coordinator to tend to concerns the residents may have.

“It’s no cost to them and it’s also something that if they need to get out and socialize, they can do that. It just breaks up their day for a little bit.”

Socialization



The community of *Eriksdale* makes socialization their number one priority in breaking down the isolation barrier for seniors living in particular buildings. Initially, the Senior Resource Coordinator called each residence to find out what services the seniors needed and to establish their trust. Trust is extremely important to establish a basic interaction. Through persistence, the Senior Resource Coordinator has successfully gotten the residents out for basic socialization activities, including dinner at a local restaurant.

“The people are comfortable with me coming into their building. They are comfortable with me coming and knocking on their door. They’re starting to interact amongst each other, which they weren’t doing before. It doesn’t sound like hope to some other communities, but in our area, it is. There has been improvement.”

Fundraising Barbeque

The *Teulon* & District Seniors Resource Council offers a monthly barbeque from May to September to fundraise. However, these barbeques have turned into a social gathering that all members of the community can look forward to. The consistent schedule of the barbeque contributes to the event’s success, resulting in a great community turnout. The monthly barbeques encourage seniors to get out of their homes and meet new people, preventing isolation. Unpredictable weather has been a stumbling block for these outdoor barbeques; however, the local Public Works department opens up their shed for the picnic tables, which is located right behind the Seniors Resource Office if it were to rain. Community support from schools and local businesses are also important in sustaining the monthly events.

“These barbeques have turned more into monthly social gatherings as opposed to fundraising events. We are finding that our seniors are asking in April when our barbeques will start.”

All Day Activity Program

The Gwen Sector Creative Living Centre in *Seven Oaks*, located in Winnipeg, offers an all day program filled with crafts, activities, lunch, and entertainment every Wednesday. Volunteers call ahead of time to invite seniors and a chartered Winnipeg Transit bus picks them up door to door, bringing them to the Centre at a low subsidized cost.



Volunteers are available on the bus to assist people with mobility problems. At the Centre, the seniors eat a healthy lunch and are later split into groups to either play penny bingo or join a current event discussion group.

The program concludes with seniors coming together in the multi-purpose room for some entertainment, dancing, or to hear a guest speaker. The turnout has almost doubled since the chartered bus service was added. The program is at capacity and the high attendance rate is attributed to providing individual attention and care to bring seniors into the Centre to enjoy a day of activities.

“You hear it from people that come here—they were stuck in their homes, they had nothing to do and they were bored and lonely. And after they come here, they make new friends and they feel so good about themselves.”

Monthly Dance Social

The Senior Resource Coordinator of *Transcona* Council for Seniors in Winnipeg organizes a monthly seniors dance, which is usually themed. For example, the council held an island party for people who couldn't go to a warmer place in January. Seniors came dressed in Hawaiian shirts and muumuus to celebrate the event. A healthy lunch is provided during the dances, usually coordinated with the party's theme. A grant provides funds to kick off the program and to hire a live band. Tickets for the monthly dance are sold in advance at a very affordable cost. A core group of seniors regularly attend the dances. Due to physical restrictions, not everyone can dance; therefore, the Senior Resource Coordinator provides themed games and activities allowing everyone to participate.

The relaxed atmosphere aids in breaking down the isolation and allows seniors to mingle. Volunteers set up, decorate, and make the

lunch, which helps bring together these monthly socials. In addition, community partnerships have helped in reducing the costs of these events.

“For those people who are well enough to be able to dance, they dance their feet off. I couldn’t even keep up with them. I also play games with them. They have an opportunity to mix and mingle.”

Southern Manitoba Concert Series Tour

The seniors in one community have a strong cultural appreciation and often approach the Senior Resource Coordinator with various events they would like to attend. Over the last seven years, the seniors are transported by handi-van to the Southern Manitoba Concert Series, put on by the region’s local arts council. The event is a series of four affordable concerts held from November to March, drawing big names such as John McDermott and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. The Senior Resource Coordinator advertises the event in the local newspaper; to sign up, interested seniors contact the Senior Resource Coordinator. The handi-van seats 14 people and is always at capacity. Other outings include Folklorama, Rainbow Stage, and MTS Centre in Winnipeg.



Leisure Centre Events

In yet another community, local seniors participate in pre-planned weekly activities and events. All activities take place in the leisure centre and are all well attended. Daily activities are free and include pool and cards in the morning, bridge on Mondays, and bingo on Wednesdays.

The leisure centre provides a comfortable atmosphere for seniors to socialize and mingle. A recent addition to the calendar of events is a farmer’s market, which has been a popular weekly event in the community. Residents sell their crafts, candles, baking, and garden items. Despite the high turnouts to these activities, a push for new membership in the leisure centre has been the central focus of the Senior Resource Coordinator. If needed, transportation is provided by volunteers to and from the leisure centre or from the community handi-van for those with mobility issues.

Weekly Socials

Seniors living in another community attend weekly socials at a seniors' home that engages all the tenants of the residence. One or two volunteers bring activities to the home. The program was initiated by a demand for this type of socialization. Most housing residents partake in activities such as carpet bowling, bean bag toss, darts, mini-golf, and bingo. One afternoon each week, seniors can participate in various activities with their neighbors in the comfort of their homes for a minimal cost. Sometimes, healthy snacks are provided. These weekly activities help to break down isolation and allow seniors to socialize in a comfortable setting.

"They know the people in the building. They do not have to pay for transportation anywhere. Those are two big, big, big ticket things right there. They're moving, they're chatting, they're socializing with other people and it's in their home."

Partnerships Enhancing Recreational Opportunities

Springfield Recreation Commission has built a working partnership with Springfield Services to Seniors in recognition of seniors' need for exercise options and social opportunities. Springfield Recreation financially sponsors activities such as three senior social events a year, bowling trips, bocce ball, charity yoga, and monthly shopping trips to Winnipeg. The sponsorship allows social activities to be more affordable and accessible for seniors living in the community.



Additionally, Springfield Recreation publishes a quarterly newspaper *The Times*, allotting the Senior Resource Coordinator as much space as she needs to advertise senior programs and services. Services to

Seniors' partnership with Springfield Recreation has been positive in making services and programs more known and affordable for seniors in the community.

"The municipality acknowledges the fact that providing programs for seniors as well as other age groups was beneficial to healthy aging."

Community Meal Programs

A number of communities have created meal programs that serve several purposes; providing a meal, socialization, and getting information. The group meal setting allows seniors, particularly those who may be isolated, social opportunities to spend time with their community members, and learn about health programs and services available to them. Community meal programs vary in offering from monthly to annually.

Monthly Meal Program

The Senior Resource Council of *Binscarth* organizes a home cooked supper for approximately 100 people on the first Wednesday of the month at the local drop-in centre. The evening is filled with educational speakers on various topics and entertainment. To ensure the event is successful, it is well advertised around town and the Senior Resource Coordinator personally contacts seniors two days prior to the meal to encourage them to come and bring friends or family. The phone call determines who needs transportation, provides an exact attendance total for the cooks, and allows the council to stay in touch with seniors in the community. Volunteers help organize and deliver free meals to those unable to attend.

This non-funded program is an effective way to distribute health-related information and inform seniors of the available services and programs provided by the Senior Services of Banner County. The monthly supper provides an opportunity for seniors to socialize and leave their homes, thus preventing isolation, while enjoying an affordable, home cooked meal.

“If you have a really good home cooked meal for them, they come and then you can have your educational speaker.”

Annual Meal

In *Kenton*, the Senior Resource Council implemented an annual noon meal for seniors in the Rural Municipality of Woodworth. The meal takes place in the fall at the community hall in Kenton. Awareness and advertising is done through personal phone calls to seniors and invitations handed out at flu clinics.

Board members and the Senior Resource Coordinator supply the food for the meal, which is offered strictly on a donation basis. Along with the homemade meal, health information and entertainment is

often offered. Health information for older adults includes promoting Lifeline and Emergency Response Information Kit (ERIK), creating awareness regarding issues such as diabetes, wills and estates, and financial planning. Entertainment entails jam sessions and bands performing country music, which is crowd appropriate. The meals and the event have drawn approximately 90 seniors from the community.

“It makes our senior services more visible and it lets people know that we are out there and what we do because we are a resource source.”

Supper Club

The Senior Resource Council of *East and West St. Paul* have a Supper Club with over 100 senior memberships. Annual memberships for the Supper Club, which covers the cost for a bimonthly newsletter, is \$5 per person and \$8 per couple. The Senior Resource Coordinator issues the newsletter to keep seniors informed on upcoming programs and activities, with one activity being the monthly suppers. Seniors can call and confirm their attendance for monthly suppers, that are provided at an additional cost.



For the Supper Club, approximately 90 members meet at Middlechurch Home of Winnipeg once a month for a homemade, nutritious dinner cooked under the consultation of a dietician. Volunteers, consisting of family and friends, help serve the food and decorate the facility prior to the supper. Each month is themed, for example, a hoedown was held in October 2009, where instructors taught seniors line dancing. To provide variety, the Supper Club occasionally offers the dinner at local restaurants, allowing seniors to play games and win door prizes. These monthly events are also filled with entertainment and health related topics to promote better health and keep the seniors better informed.

“They just enjoy being out and it’s a very good homemade meal here. We have the full turkey dinners and roast beef. It’s a very nice evening.”

Meal Program in Partnership With Legion

One community has established a very successful partnership with the local Legion. Working together, the two organizations offer seniors in the immediate and surrounding communities a congregate meal program including entertainment several times a month. The meals are offered three days a week and are prepared and served in the Legion. To maintain the program's success, the Senior Resource Council purchased several kitchen appliances including extra sinks, an upright freezer, stove, and refrigerator. The reciprocal partnership is strengthened by the Legion providing the facility to the Resource Council at no cost, and the Resource Council allotting a percentage of their meal sales to the Legion. Several times a month, the Senior Resource Coordinator invites performers or health specialists to present during the meal. Presentations include arthritis awareness speakers and mature driving workshops; entertainment was provided by musicians, the school choir, and pattern dancing. The success of the meal program is attributed to a large number of dedicated and willing volunteers who help the program and meal coordinator.

"We usually have entertainment when we know we are expecting a large crowd. As well, during the meal program we sometimes run different presentations to help with healthy living."

Restaurant Partnerships

Meal programs in *Rivers* are advertised through pamphlets provided to seniors leaving the Riverdale Health Centre hospital to build awareness of the meal options available within and outside the community for seniors living at home. The Senior Resource Council makes it their goal to complete follow-up checks by letting seniors know that healthy, nutritional meals are just a phone call away. Word-of-mouth is another popular form of advertising. The Senior Resource Council has partnered with three local restaurants, rotating locations on a weekly basis to the benefit of seniors. Sometimes the meals are pre-determined; other times, the seniors choose get to choose their meal from the restaurant's menu.

"We have a pamphlet that we advertise [the meals] in and if anyone is leaving the hospital or anything, we try to follow up and make sure that they are aware."

Partnership with Senior Apartment Blocks

One community's congregate meal program is open to every senior in the community, including those not living in senior apartment blocks. Seniors are encouraged to invite friends or family to the meal. A meal coordinator, whose wage is provided through an Regional Health Authority grant, is present. The Senior Resource Council has partnered with each senior apartment block, sharing kitchen costs and appliances equally.

“The intention is to try and reconnect them to an interest in regular meals, then to build trust between the people who move into the apartment. So what we do is create a weekly opportunity for them to build trust and get to know each other in a safe place where they can enter on the same base, the table, and then go whenever they're ready. This has been very successful in terms of creating a climate of a village neighborhood in these apartment blocks.”

Congregate Meal Programs

Across the Province of Manitoba, congregate meal programs are very popular and a beneficial option for seniors. Meal programs are available in major cities to rural communities, operating out of community centres, legions, senior complexes, apartments, and lodges. Meal programs provide seniors with full, nutritional meals, and encourage them to become more active and attend the meals together. Attending the meals is important in increasing the level of social participation and interaction in a senior's life while decreasing social isolation. Meal programs play an important role in promoting successful aging among Manitoba's senior population.



The following shows some of the variation in congregate meal programs across communities:

- Meal schedule—it can be offered several times a week or monthly, either at noon or dinner
- Cost—varies from \$4–\$10
- Meal coordinator—can be a paid position, group of volunteers, or organized by the Senior Resource Coordinator
- Volunteers—varies from a large supply of volunteers (can be community volunteers or senior participants themselves) to no volunteers

- Transportation—volunteer drivers from the community may be available or supplied by the Senior Resource Coordinator
- Delivery—some programs offer meal delivery at no cost or an additional cost if an individual cannot attend the meal due to illness or mobility issues, or prefers to eat at home

Congregate meals and Meals on Wheels programs, for those who cannot leave their home or prefer to stay at home, are offered simultaneously in several communities. The opportunity to socialize is an important aspect of congregate meal programs, as the following quotes show.

“They just want to get together and see their old friends and their new friends and visit, and it gets them out of their home.”
(Headingley)

“We advertise in our local paper and on access TV and I think the seniors are a good network amongst themselves. They come and they have a good time and they tell other people.” (Killarney)

“We just find without it [full noon meals Monday to Friday] that lots of our lodge people would be moved to a nursing home because they are not capable of cooking for themselves.”
(Miniota)

“We have meals that can be delivered to their home, but in some cases, it’s a benefit for the social aspect for people to come out and have fellowship with other people to enjoy their meal.”
(Virden)

“The meal coordinators put out good meals and I think that’s why it’s successful; they get very good meals for \$6.” (Pine Falls)

“It started out as a two day program and then it bloomed to five days a week.” (Ste. Anne)

“It’s a good time for socializing for one thing and it’s affordable.”
(Ste. Rose du Lac)

“At the meal program you often see seniors sitting down and they’re having a meal together. And they’re laughing and enjoying each other’s company and its just, to me, it’s just amazing.” (Lundar)

“It’s a good service in that it’s good meals for a reasonable price. People enjoy getting to see others. It’s a social event as well so they do get to meet other people.” (River East, Winnipeg)

“[It provides] them an outlet and an affordable price to come down and partake with friends and have that socialization, giving of themselves and volunteer. And actually having it all in their own place where they live is ideal because they don’t have to leave their home to volunteer. They can just go downstairs and do that.” (South Winnipeg)

“[The meal coordinator] has to be someone that cares about the seniors and is interested in them because quite often, that’s the first person that knows when there’s something wrong with them because they haven’t come out for a meal, or they’ve come for a meal but haven’t eaten anything.” (Pierson)

“Health wise, they have a good substantial meal and they do interact and it’s the sociability of it too. So I think it’s good both for the physical and mental well being.”

“We had a lot of seniors that lived alone that needed somewhere to come and have a good meal. As a resource coordinator, it’s a good place to contact these people and see if there’s anything that they need, if they need mail that day or a ride somewhere.”

“[The meal coordinator] includes [the seniors] in asking what they would like and she tries to prepare meals that everybody kind of likes.”

Exercise Programs

The following communities have developed physical exercise programs offering seniors with everyday workout equipment (treadmills, exercise bikes, and stretching) to tai chi workouts.

Tai Chi Classes

For a half hour each week, the seniors in the community of *La Broquerie* participate in a tai chi class taught by a qualified paid instructor. The classes are held at the local community centre and are affordable. The instructor makes the program very enjoyable for the seniors. Tai Chi, with its slow movement forms similar to yoga and meditation, makes it suitable for seniors. The program is advertised by word-of-mouth and through a mail campaign to reach isolated seniors and encourage them to participate in the tai chi program and other programs.



Exercise Program and Tai Chi Program

The community of *St. Malo* received help from a special fitness organization to start their exercise program approximately 13 years ago. The organization donated some weights to the program and provided some training to the Senior Resource Coordinator on exercises for seniors. The program has thrived with the addition of a tai chi program. Both programs take place in the senior complex and are free. The exercise program is now run by three volunteers, rotating three times a week for a half hour. The 30 minute tai chi program is taught by the Senior Resource Coordinator twice weekly.

“It’s also socializing for them because after and before the exercise, they all meet and they sit down and have coffee, so it’s a great place for all the seniors to meet and talk about what’s happening during the day.”

Exercise Program

In *Hartney*, the Senior Resource Coordinator runs a weekly half hour exercise program. This program is free to seniors residing in the seniors housing complex. The exercises involve simple stretching and marching in chairs; seniors notice the difference if they miss a weekly session. Word-of-mouth keeps the weekly attendance high and is an extremely important form of advertising and program promotion.

One senior volunteer helps with setting up and leading the program in the Senior Resource Coordinator's absence. Following the half hour program, the group usually socializes, taking the opportunity to become more socially active, prevent isolation, and feel better physically.

"It makes a difference to how they're feeling on a day-to-day basis. We'll get more people coming on recommendation of somebody else."

Exercise Equipment



The community of *St. Adolphe* acquired exercise equipment including a treadmill, elliptical trainer, upright bike, recumbent bikes (2), weights, stretch bands, exercise balls, and a Wii game system. The exercise equipment is stored in the seniors' club basement, where seniors have free access to it. Volunteers are present to teach the seniors how to use the equipment. The hope is for someone to teach the seniors how to use all the equipment properly and develop a structured exercise program.

"It's a place that they can get together and exercise, whereas they probably wouldn't do it at home because they're by themselves. So it's a socialization thing also."

Pole Walking

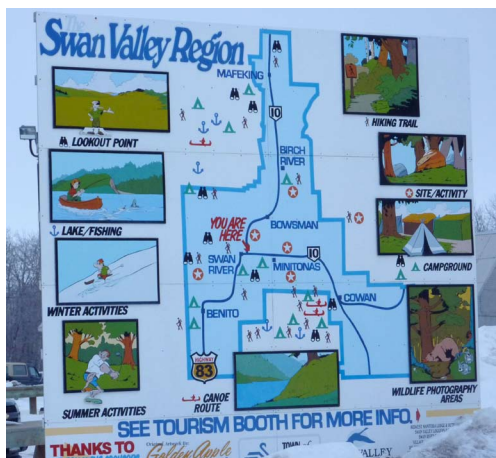
The community and surrounding area of *Whitemouth* has recently introduced pole walking to its community members. This is an exercise activity open to seniors and other individuals; however, as a new program no weekly programs have been created. Pole walking was introduced to three communities: the Rural Municipality of Whitemouth and Reynolds, Seven Sister Falls, and Hadashville. The demonstrations were well received and resulted in many seniors purchasing the poles to immediately start pole walking. A few pole sets are available to rent through the local library and have been well used. The Senior Resource Council purchased these sets with grant money and decided to make them widely available to members of the communities.

"I think pole walking is still a fairly new idea in Manitoba. With the pole walking, you actually have an even better workout; it gets your upper body working more, not just your legs."

Senior Walking Program

Swan River's senior walking program is a long time success program. As an indoor walking program, a program assistant leads the group; the assistant takes the names of participants, as well as to meet

and greet the seniors. Approximately 8 to 12 seniors gather at the local school for one hour every week to walk. The program is open to all seniors 55 and over, regardless of their mobility status. This program is worthwhile in providing an opportunity for a group of individuals to gather, socialize, and be physically fit. The Senior walking program takes place between 4:30 and 5:30, allowing the seniors to return home before dark. Transportation is offered free of charge to seniors who need it. The program is advertised through the local access channel, radio, and posters. The program's success is made possible through publicizing this activity and the program assistant's dedication.



"We told people if they needed a ride that we would provide it and that's the year that it [walking program] really grew."

Communication and Information

In a number of communities, information is brought directly to the seniors to improve accessibility to information. This allows seniors to stay informed on what is happening in their communities at a very minimal cost.

The Local Gazette on Cassette

For the visually impaired and the physically disabled, the communities of *Baldur and Belmont* produce a weekly audio version of the local newspaper, "*The Gazette on Cassette*." Offered since 1995, this service is free of charge and extends to a number of seniors in the

area, allowing them to stay informed on local issues, be included as part of the community, and stay mentally stimulated.

After receiving the newspaper, *The Gazette*, the Senior Resource Coordinator records approximately 60 minutes of community news on a master copy, dubs it, and mails it out to specific residents within 10 hours. The Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) assists by providing mailing envelopes, as *The Gazette* is considered literature for the blind, and Canada Post sponsors weekly shipping of these cassettes directly to and from the residents' homes.

"It has made such a difference in a lot of these people's lives. They want to still be a part of their small community. They want to know what's going on and what's happening with their friends. It's a really big deal."

Mobile Library Service



A community survey in *Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes* determined that seniors really enjoyed reading. As it may be difficult for them to walk to the library, especially in the winter time, a Mobile Library Service was implemented in a seniors housing complex. The local librarian packs about 20 books suitable for seniors in a suitcase, including large print books, and takes the suitcase to the local manor for three months. During this period, seniors can conveniently borrow these books from the library. After three months, the books are exchanged for new ones. The librarian can accommodate special requests by seniors for a specific book or author.

"Some of them really like to read, so we tried to figure out how we can improve that so they wouldn't have to walk over to the library."

Mobile Drop-In Centre

In Winnipeg's *Point Douglas* area, the Senior Resource Council has obtained permission from seven local seniors' apartment blocks to provide a monthly Mobile Drop-In Centre for seniors who cannot get out of their apartment blocks. This service is offered for two hours a month, allowing time for social interaction and staying up-to-date on health issues. The Senior Resource Coordinator and Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) community facilitator bring healthy snacks, provide activities such as Wii games, and offer educational workshops on topics such as H1N1, diabetes, and healthy eating. For the resource council, it is a wonderful opportunity to network with seniors in the community and find out some of their needs. This free service reaches out to isolated seniors in apartment blocks and keeps them socially active.

"They want to know 'when are you coming next time?' and they want to know what I'm bringing."

Monthly Health Presentations

In 2008, the Senior Resource Coordinator in *St. Laurent* began offering free monthly health presentations to the community-at-large, partially due to the strong identification with particular health issues within the local population. These monthly presentations raise awareness of specific diseases and issues affecting the community. Volunteer guest speakers specializing in topics, such as diabetes and colorectal cancer, are invited to deliver presentations. Presentations are well advertised in advance through the recreation centre. The success of this program is attributed to the dedication of the Senior Resource Coordinator and the working board, who often provides light refreshments at the presentations.

"The presenters that I have had have been phenomenal, not just in their presentations."

Educational Sessions

Neepawa offers seniors a larger annual educational session on topics of interests, in addition to smaller presentations given during congregate meals throughout the year at minimal or no cost. The sessions are made possible through partnerships with organizations. Past topics have included fall prevention, safety, mature driving, and healthy eating. The local community is especially strong in promoting and bolstering this program. Advertising is provided



by the local newspaper, access station, posters, and church bulletins. The handi-van offers transportation for seniors to and from the sessions, while the churches and the Legion have offered space for these sessions. Local businesses have sponsored the speaker's mileage, the speakers, and assist with promotion.

Speakers have included the local fire chief, a physiotherapist, and representatives from CNIB and the RCMP. Community support is offered through local organizations, who provide food and door prizes to boost the turnout. The educational sessions offers seniors the opportunity to increase their knowledge in health and safety issues, as well as stay better informed of their surroundings.

"It's [education sessions] for anybody. They come for their flu shots, they come for goodies because we're celebrating seniors, and they come for education."

Civic Participation and Employment

Fresh Foods for Seniors

A group of volunteers, mostly seniors and the Senior Resource Coordinator have recently organized a fresh produce garden in *Portage la Prairie*. The seniors gather together to plant, maintain, and harvest the garden. This pilot program is made possible by numerous donations and partnerships with Manitoba Crop Diversification who donated the plot of land and a local citizen who donated the seeds.

The goal of this program is to share the produce grown with local senior residences that have congregate meal programs in Portage la Prairie. Along with receiving the free produce, the meal program can

proudly boast that the fresh produce is homegrown. Not only does this Fresh Foods Program benefit seniors in the area nutritionally, it is also a physical and social activity that volunteers of any age can participate in. Future goals include developing an intergenerational activity with seniors and children and creating a community garden.

“I think it’s successful because of the enthusiasm of the idea, people, and the donations.”

A Blooming Good Time

In the *St. James and Assiniboia* area of Winnipeg, senior citizens who share a passion for gardening and volunteering have a unique opportunity available to them. The area’s Senior Resource Council has organized a partnership with Canadian Tire allowing seniors to work part-time (three mornings a week) for two months at the garden centre.



Seniors offer customers gardening advice and care for the flowers and plants at the centre. The seniors who sign up volunteer their time and agree to donate their earnings towards their senior centre. At the end of the term, the council receives the check and puts the money towards improving and offering other programs and activities for community seniors.

The Senior Resource Coordinator tailors the two-month schedule based on each individual’s availability. To maintain the excitement and enthusiasm from year to year, the Senior Resource

Coordinator photographs the volunteers in front of the flower or in the garden centre. The photos are posted year round in the senior centre; volunteers are acknowledged at the coffee party held at the end of the term to recognize all their hard work.

“The seniors are very, very reliable and they have a wealth of experience. Most of them who do it have some interest in planting or gardening. It makes them feel worthwhile, and they derive great satisfaction from it and the centre benefits.”

Fundraising— Volunteer Recognition Fundraiser

An annual volunteer recognition award banquet held in the community of *Grandview*, also functions as an annual fundraiser for the Seniors Resource Council. Community members are responsible for nominating worthy volunteers—based on the volunteer’s efforts for the whole community, not just one organization—by filling out a confidential application form. The Senior Resource Coordinator reviews the nominations along with the individual’s volunteer history, and chooses one volunteer to be honoured. A range of volunteers are recognized for their work. The entire community works together to host this volunteer banquet; the Seniors Resource Council purchases a gift for the volunteer honored, businesses sponsor different prizes, and community members in attendance, support the cause and the fundraiser. The fundraiser lasts all evening with entertainment provided alongside the dinner. The event itself is also a great opportunity for seniors to volunteer in helping set up and run the community fundraiser.

“In a small community, everybody knows everybody and everybody knows what they’ve done and so basically, they’re honoring the people in the community that have done so much for the community.”

Community Support and Health Services

In the following communities, successful programs provide seniors with a variety of services such as blood pressure clinics, Lifeline support, equipment loan, and fee-for-services programs.

Blood Pressure Clinic

Once a month, the Senior Resource Council in *Erickson* offers blood pressure clinics to seniors living in Erickson and the surrounding communities. The council sets up two clinics within apartment complexes in Erickson and other clinics in Sandy Lake and Onanole. The clinics are run by volunteer paramedics, who make this service free for all participants. Seniors are provided with copies of their records, while the volunteer paramedics and Senior Resource Coordinator also keep records of each individual’s blood pressure. In addition to the blood pressure clinic at Sandy Lake, a volunteer primary care nurse is on-site to provide a B12 shot to patients who bring in their own serum.



“In some ways, for seniors, that’s a social outing almost; they get out and they’re mingling at the same time as they are in the line-up. It’s a presence for me as the Resource Coordinator to be in their midst because I do other services for them as well and so when we get to talk, I get to hear what maybe some of their needs are.”

At the request of the seniors living in *St. Lazare*, monthly blood pressure clinics are provided in the senior centre at no charge to local residents. Residents purchased the equipment for the clinic. The clinic is administrated by a retired registered nurse who volunteers her time. As there is no local hospital, this service is appreciated in the community.

Blood pressure records are kept on file and are made easily accessible for residents when it is needed. Seniors who need transportation to the clinic contact the Senior Resource Coordinator who coordinates rides for free; this gives all the seniors the opportunity to attend and participate.

“We have no doctor in town here, no hospital, so we thought it would be easier for our seniors to have access to their blood pressure, rather than making the appointments to travel, and just get it done.”

Lifeline

Lifeline is available for seniors in *Shoal Lake* who wish to remain living independently in their own home for as long as possible. The Shoal Lake Senior Resource Council is responsible for providing this health security service in two different communities. Strong partnerships within the community of Shoal Lake are working together to promote Lifeline, which is hooked up to the Victoria Hospital in Winnipeg.



When the local home care staff recognizes that staying at home may provide a threat to the health of their senior clients, they inform the Senior Resource Council immediately. The nurses in the nearby hospital help promote Lifeline by letting their senior patients know

that Lifeline is a necessary tool in creating a safer and more secure environment within their own home.

“People really like it [Lifeline]. It gives them a sense of independence; that they can still be at home but there’s help there at the push of a button.”

In another community, Lifeline is also supported by the Victoria Hospital in Winnipeg. One senior volunteer continuously travels between the two communities to answer requests to set up the Lifeline in homes. Advertising is spread through word of mouth and the local newspaper. Lifeline can be set up by calling the volunteer at the Senior Resource Council.

“I think the people working together make it pretty successful. And we do what we can to help the seniors stay in their own home for as long as possible.”

The Lifeline system in *Gilbert Plains* operates slightly differently, as the emergency signal is sent to a station in Montreal. The Senior Resource Council in Gilbert Plains organizes Lifeline for their own community and Dauphin. Although Montreal is across the country, this service



has a very personal aspect. When a senior signs up for Lifeline, they are asked to record the names and contact information of three people closest to them, both personally and geographically. Whether it is a family member or a neighbor, these contacts have accepted the responsibility to be the first response when a senior’s Lifeline signal goes off.

As a backup safety procedure, the local ambulance will be contacted if all three responders are unavailable. This service is well accepted in Gilbert Plains because the seniors know that if they were to fall and needed to use lifeline, the first person contacted would be someone who truly cared about them.

“They wear a little button around their neck, and if they need help at all they press this button and a signal is sent into Montreal, and Lifeline will come on and talk to the person and see what help they need.”

Equipment Loan

For a simple \$10 refundable deposit, anyone in the community of *Morris* and surrounding areas can rent health equipment from the Morris Area Senior Services, Inc. Smaller equipment can be rented for up to six-months, while larger equipment is returned sooner. The program offers seniors’ with mobility problems assistive equipment such as canes, walkers and wheelchairs, along with other equipment such as bath stools, raised toilet seats, and bed railings. If an individual cannot arrange to pick-up the needed equipment, the senior resource coordinator will deliver the equipment at no cost. In the R.M. of *Morris*, this program is highly valued as it provides the seniors with a means to remain in their home longer and be more comfortable by having the proper equipment to maneuver safely through the house.

“It’s a service that is for everybody, no matter what your economic background is.”



Carman residents recognized the need for an equipment loan program, which developed and grew quickly. The program has approximately 250 pieces of equipment, all available with a refundable deposit, based on the value of the equipment. The equipment, which can be borrowed for three to six months, is both purchased and donated by organizations and families from *Carman* and the surrounding communities. Equipment is widely available to residents, especially seniors in the community, that is sustained by a high level of community support. It is not uncommon for residents to donate their deposit to the program upon returning the equipment; this allows the program to develop and prosper, ultimately providing the Senior Resource Council with opportunities to offer more services and programs to their seniors.

“We’ve had a lot of community support. People are willing to donate good quality equipment to us and then it is loaned out on a refundable deposit basis, so that anyone could afford it, although many people do donate to us.”

Parking Permit Program

For individuals with mobility issues living in one community, finding accessible parking is not a problem. The Senior Resource Council has established a partnership with the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities, allowing individuals who are disabled or with mobility issues to rent a handicap parking permit for one day. Four permits are available for a \$1 donation to the Council. The permits are especially useful for seniors who need to travel to Winnipeg for doctor or medical appointments, where parking can be rather limited and costly. Permits are also allotted to volunteer escorts, often family members, friends and neighbors, who drive or accompany an individual with mobility issues. By making these permits available locally, seniors are able to obtain the permits in a simple, safe, and affordable fashion.



“Some people will say, ‘I need parking permit because I’m taking my grandmother or friend, who is going in for surgery, or had surgery, or have some ailment’. Quite often, when you take someone to an appointment or to the hospital, they’re not capable of getting there on their own. So you need someone to go with them while you park the car.”

Emergency Response Information Kit (ERIK)

The Emergency Response Information Kit (ERIK) is not only very prominent in *Winnipeg*, but the Senior Resource Coordinator at the Boni-Vital Council for Seniors is also responsible for developing and supplying ERIK throughout Manitoba. Many communities want to provide their seniors with the security and reassurance of feeling safe in their own home in case of emergency. ERIK kits include forms for personal information such as medications, allergies, and family and friends’ emergency contact information. Boni-Vital’s policy is that ERIK is not sold to an individual, but is donated. A volunteer group helps the Senior Resource Coordinator package and distribute

the kits either by mail or personally to individuals, seniors' blocks, communities, and different organizations within Manitoba.

“By giving [ERIK] out, we know that if an emergency service has to be called that everything is there, all of their health information is there. So not only does it ease the person who has it but also the caregiver and also if they are living in a seniors block they don't have to worry, the caretaker isn't worrying about what's happening.”

Housekeeping Supports



Fee-for-service housekeeper and yard worker volunteers are available to seniors in *Lac du Bonnet*. Because home care does not provide domestic work for clients, these services have grown in popularity in the community. After each scheduled service, the Senior Resource Coordinator completes a telephone check to find out if the client is happy with the service provided and the service provider. This simple follow-up gives the senior an opportunity to discuss any immediate concerns, allows the senior to feel safe using the services offered, and evaluates the fee-for-service workers.

“There's no housecleaning that is done by home care anymore, and that's certainly forced clients to look some other place for that provider. That's where services to seniors have been able to step up to the plate and say 'well okay, we can arrange workers for you'.”

The Seniors Resource Council in this community established a housecleaning service designed for seniors in the community. The Senior Resource Coordinator is responsible for interviewing, conducting reference checks, completing criminal record checks, and hiring fee-for-service volunteers who appear to be good candidates. Although this process is lengthy, it provides seniors with a sense of security knowing that not just anybody is entering their home.

Before the service begins, the Senior Resource Coordinator accompanies and explains to the volunteer what is involved; the fee for service and cleaning schedule is set between the volunteer and

the senior. A signed contract between all parties signifies that all conditions are agreed upon. After each month, the service is assessed to ensure that each senior is receiving the quality of service that they signed up for.

“I think what makes it successful is exactly the idea that we have already screened somebody for them [the seniors], especially if they are new to the community and they don’t have a lot of connections here. It’s kind of a little intimidating to let somebody into your home and touch your things and be in your space and not know if you can trust them.”

Organizational Structures

A number of organizational structures were identified included boards and co-ops.

Boards

Ten community members sit on the board responsible for seniors’ services and programs in *Reston*, most of whom are volunteers and Rural Municipality councillors. Board members are active community members and representatives who are elected at annual meetings. Because the organization is funded both locally and provincially, board members represent all government levels.

Monthly board meetings are held from September to May, where they review financial budgets, day-to-day organizational functions, various programs, and approve any new service and program initiatives. The board, Senior Resource Coordinator, and meal coordinator attempt to recognize any short falls in the community and implement services and programs valuable to seniors.

The Regional Health Authority issues government grants to the community board in *Elie*, who is responsible for dispersing the grant. Board members represent communities the Senior Resource Coordinator oversees, such as St. Eustache and the Rural Municipality (R.M.) of Cartier. Approximately ten active volunteer board members, including the chairperson, secretary, treasurer, and appointed member from the R.M. of Cartier meet on a monthly basis to discuss funding allocation and other matters, such as the success of the

Senior Resource Coordinator in connecting with the community, and the annual Christmas party and annual barbeque. A fully involved board contributes to the success of many of the programs running in Elie.

“My chairman on my board teaches the exercise classes, so board involvement is huge. They are out there in the community and thank heavens they are.”



The community of *Gimli* boasts an active board that has been operating for 22 years. The volunteer-based board consists of representatives of different organizations who are invited to join the board on an annual basis. Thus, board members come from a variety of backgrounds. Some organizations internally choose a member to join the board.

Board members attend monthly meetings, volunteer in some of the services, financially contribute to the programs, and take on a dynamic role in fundraising for the organization. The board’s success is largely attributed to the commitment and dedication of the board members, as well as the remarkable support from the organizations represented.

“All the service clubs that are on board are committed to the program. They want it to be successful, so not only do they send representatives to us who sit on the board, but they also in the end either make a financial contribution to us to they end up volunteering.”

The *Keewatin and Inkster* Neighbourhood Resource Council board in Winnipeg consists of seven community volunteers, who do not necessarily represent specific organizations. The Board of Directors oversees the Senior Resource Council and the board is elected annually by the general membership who is knowledgeable on how the organization operates. Depending on their position, board or executive members serve a pre-determined term (minimum two years, maximum four to six years). The board meets quarterly.

To become a member, individuals must purchase an annual \$10 membership to support the organization. Membership allows individuals to attend annual meetings, vote on the budget, and provide feedback on the services and programs provided. Educational sessions are held throughout the year and are open to anyone. The annual general meeting also serves to encourage membership renewals. This process allows for a dedicated community board and more people to express opinions on the functions of the senior resource council.

“We are very committed board members and a community that is interested in seniors.”

The board of *Plumas* is made up of approximately six members including community volunteers, and town and R.M. representatives. *Plumas* board members are free to serve as long as they are interested; no term limits are placed on board members. The board meets quarterly to receive updates from the senior resource coordinator on finances and programs. The board is supportive of the Senior Resource Coordinator, providing her the opportunity to offer a variety of services and programs to *Plumas* seniors. In the community, the Senior Resource Coordinator organizes a meal program, foot care, transportation, fills out forms, provides advocacy, and deals with other requests that need to be accommodated through the senior support coordinating program.

“My board is really helpful and they’re very easy going. The services that are provided help them [seniors] with their independence; they know that they can have help if they need help.”

In *Wawanesa* and the communities of Glenboro, Baldur, and Belmont, two boards determine how to distribute funding to the communities from the RHA. A larger volunteer board consists of eight community seniors representing each of those districts; while the smaller board has four members and decides how to allocate funds within *Wawanesa* and the immediate area.

Active community seniors, serving as board members, are responsible for overseeing the Senior Resource Coordinator's job, bringing any specific needs to the forefront, and assisting in various tasks such as fundraising, transportation, and helping out at meetings. Having seniors serve on the board puts them in the position to serve other seniors, as the board members are more dedicated and better informed of seniors' needs.

"It's seniors for themselves. They tend to serve other seniors and know exactly what their needs are and they're very good at being donators and workers for fundraisers. If one of our coordinators need some help, they're always there."

Co-op Structure

Brandon Seniors for Seniors Co-op is a charitable non-profit cooperative for the development and delivery of programs by seniors to seniors. To join the organization, individuals must be 55 years old and over, and purchase an annual membership for \$25 or \$45 for a couple. The membership fees also provide liability coverage for potential incidents.

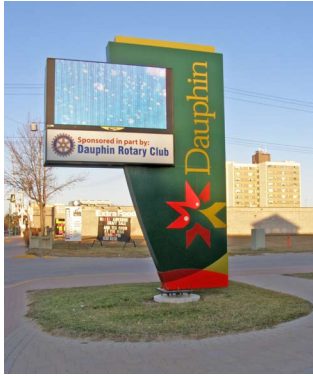
Currently, 280 members provide services to someone in need through the jobs program as an active "doer." Doers receive an honorarium or per diem for their services, such as light housekeeping, repairs, yard work, or snow removal. As seniors are providing services to seniors, charges and fees are kept very minimal to meet the clientele's needs.

Partnerships and Collaborations

The *Dauphin Multi-Purpose Senior Centre* houses on-site programs, community resource programs, tenant resource programs, and congregate meal programs all under one roof. The organizational structure and the collaboration between these programs and coordinators allow for the delivery of services and programs for seniors in Dauphin.



The coordinators work in one location collaboratively to fulfill the needs of seniors in the community, such as making client referrals based on individual needs and coming together to organize large community events. Each coordinator is assigned specific duties, allowing each person to better tend to seniors needs more specifically:



- Community Resource Coordinator: provide resources for seniors in the community such as fee for service, transportation, find volunteers
- Tenant Resource Coordinator: provides the same duties as the community resource coordinator except within the elderly persons housing
- Meal Coordinator: coordinates meal delivery to seniors
- Program Coordinator: organizes on-site programs and activities

The single location conveniently provides “one-stop shopping” for all seniors’ needs.

“It’s one stop shopping. When you are dealing with seniors, the less running around that they have to do, the better it is for them.”

Moving forward – What is needed?

The majority of Senior Resource Coordinators interviewed indicated that they worked part-time; only a few were employed full-time. When asked “What would help you as a senior resource coordinator to offer other unique services or programs for seniors?” a variety of responses were given.

The top five responses were

1. More funding (52)
2. More time (21)
3. More volunteers (20)
4. More staff (11)
5. More transportation (11)

Whether based in cities or rural areas, Senior Resource Coordinators expressed similar needs. Clearly, more funding was the most commonly identified issue. More funding would allow them to provide more programming and services to seniors by freeing them from administrative duties. Additionally, a number of Senior Resource Coordinators indicated that they would be interested in either working full time or having full time hours split between two people to do their job more effectively.

The growing need for more volunteers is not unique. Many Senior Resource Coordinators identified the shift in how younger seniors approach volunteering. While many are interested, the perception of these younger seniors is to provide short-term assistance or contribute financially. This is different from older seniors, who are more willing to contribute on a long term basis. If Senior Resource Coordinators are unable to recruit a steady stream of volunteers to replace the older ones, this will make running programs more challenging for Senior Resource Coordinators due to the limited funding they receive and part-time work schedule.

In a number of communities, the Senior Resource Coordinators identified the need for transportation as a hindrance to carrying out program effectively. Many communities either lack public transportation (handi-van, taxi) or volunteer drivers, or residents find it costly to use public transportation for a single person. Without a means of transportation, some Senior Resource Coordinators are unable to get more seniors involved in activities or congregate meals.

Conclusion

Across the province, many successful services and programs have been implemented to provide seniors with opportunities to stay independent, socialize with their peers, keep mobile, and stay healthy and active. We have featured here the examples that the 82 Resource Coordinators, Tenant Resource Coordinators, and Executive Directors told us about when we interviewed them; they are not the sole success story, but only some of the many examples of what is happening in communities across Manitoba.

Programs related to social participation was identified the most, followed by community support and health services, organizational structures, transportation, and communication and information. As shown in the report, many communities identified similar services or programs; for example, many of the Senior Resource Coordinators interviewed talked about their congregate meal program, highlighting its importance not only for providing a meal, but also the opportunity to socialize. The community lock box program in Carberry, pole walking demonstration in Whitemouth, The Local Gazette on Cassette, and the daily safety checker program in Fernwood Manor located in Steinbach showcase how community members and Senior Resource Coordinators are offering unique services to seniors to enhance their quality of life.

Many of the services and programs implemented are carried out by the Senior Resource Coordinators, many of whom are working in part time positions. More funding, time, volunteers, or staff were all identified as important to providing more services or programs for seniors.

Community-based services and programs such as the ones featured in this report are critical in allowing seniors to live independently, and to promote their health and quality of life. Adequate funding must be available to Senior Resource Councils to support their important work.

