



AGE FRIENDLY Manitoba

Communities committed to healthy, active aging

Mission: To facilitate healthy aging by providing leadership and encouraging collaboration in creating age-friendly places (communities) that optimize the ability of all older Manitobans to do the things they feel are important.

SOCIALLY DISTANCED HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

Ninety Manitoba jurisdictions are Age-friendly communities. This initiative supports all citizens to have healthy active lifestyles in a safe environment where they are valued and respected. An age-friendly community supports and encourages social engagement. The COVID crisis impacts our ability to interact so we need other ways to connect socially. Community organizations already have many programs that connect people but these ideas may help create more social interaction.

- **Telephone, email or text "trees":** Many communities have regular communication systems for isolated folks. Broaden the communication tree branches to include more people and links with others who could benefit from the contacts.
- **Share mealtime on video sharing platforms:** Popularity of eating out and congregate meals demonstrates that people like to eat together! Video sharing holiday meals and traditions is especially important this year amid restricted travel and social gathering. Though some areas have limited Internet service, those that have service could engage high school students to support less "tech savvy" residents to access technology. This initiative could continue to include other special occasions or encourage someone living alone to regularly share meal time with friends and family.
- **"Porch Lights":** Designate a week when everyone turns on porch lights to spread holiday cheer throughout the community.

- **Intergenerational Walks:** Walking with others, socially distanced of course, increases motivation and reduces anxiety about falling on icy surfaces. Publicize a regular time and place for group walkers to meet, with "wind chill" cancellation factors in place. High School students could earn volunteer hours accompanying the walkers and ensuring paths are cleared and safe! An evening "holiday light walk" could also work!
- **"School "concerts":** Though music and arts programs are curtailed, schools may still want to showcase and share programs by video recording, live streaming or broadcasting on local cable vision stations.
- **"Parlour Games"** Playing games is often an important family holiday tradition. Adapt games to a video sharing experience. There are online programs for bridge, other card games or Scrabble. Try intergenerational video games.
- **Phone a Friend!** COVID fatigue may make us less conscientious about connecting with others. Even if there is "nothing new", a call to say "How are you?" is important. Close with "Call someone else today!"
- **Use the community electronic bulletin board:** Remind people to connect with one another and publicize initiatives.



International Year of the Older Person

The Manitoba Association of Senior Centres (MASC) has a reach across the City of Winnipeg and throughout our wonderful Province. Interestingly, much of the foundation for MASC's efforts to support healthy aging and developing more age-friendly communities, is grounded in the world-wide efforts of the World Health Organization (WHO). In 2015 the WHO released its first ever World Report on Ageing and

Health. This led to its development of a global strategy and action plan and now, to the establishment of a Decade of Health Aging, 2020-2030.

The Decade is an opportunity to bring together governments,



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business, senior serving organizations, and most importantly, older people and their families for ten years of collaborative action to improve the lives of older people. The decade highlights four areas for action, one of which is to ensure communities foster the abilities

of older people. Creating age-friendly communities is a key strategy in this action area, recognizing that age-friendly environments are better places in which to grow, live, work, play and age. They are created by removing physical and social barriers that stand in

the way of people doing the things they value.

So, as you move through your community, be on the lookout and work with your local leaders, to make those barriers disappear!



COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHT: STONEWALL/ RM OF ROCKWOOD



In Stonewall/RM of Rockwood, Age friendly has been active and functional since 2012.

With a diverse, engaged committee of 14 people, with local municipal representation, Age Friendly initiatives have included plans for a Wellness Expo, a parade through town celebrating the Year of older persons as well as an evaluation audit

of accessibility issues throughout the Townsite. While the pandemic issues have necessitated the postponement of much of these in person events, despite Covid -19 the community is implementing several Accessibility recommendations. Meanwhile, utilizing technology of e mail and zoom, the committee continues to meet to discuss issues,

pass motions and apply for grants.

Recently AF has received a grant from the Emergency Community Foundation, to provide 5 sets of headphones with built in microphones to allow residents of the local PCH to listen to music, communicate via online platforms, watch TV or I-pad programs without disrupting others around them.

Further, with Stepping up trained local exercise leaders, a regular, one hour exercise class is offered every morning Monday-Saturday via zoom, with over 50 registrants, there are 18-20 daily participants. The Committee is encouraging local residents to engage with the local 55+ activity center for virtual chats with friends and neighbours on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month...

AF Chair Joie van Dongen is rightfully proud of the work of AF in Stonewall/RM of Rockwood and as she says, "There will always be an older population; our legacy is to leave a higher quality of life not just for us, but for our grandchildren and great grandchildren"

Team Member HIGHLIGHT



JIM HAMILTON

Jim Hamilton provides consultation and support to MASC and the AF Resource Team, bringing 20 years of experience addressing issues of aging.

He has served in an advisory capacity to the World Health Organization in the creation of the Global Age Friendly Cities Guide and as a Special Advisor to the Public Health Agency of Canada, consulting with provincial and territorial governments on healthy aging and age-friendly communities.

A strong advocate for building supportive environments that encourage healthy, active and inclusive lifestyles, Jim believes an age-friendly community is the best place for people of all ages to live.

Jim has lived in Thompson, travelled to every corner of Manitoba and makes Winnipeg home.



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