



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.

CELEBRATING COMMUNITY COLLABORATION: A SERIES OF SHORT STORIES

As communities continue on the path of becoming more age-friendly, there is a recognition that success is a shared responsibility. By working together, collaboration, partnerships and intergenerational solidarity are key ingredients in developing new resources and breaking down existing barriers.

Research & experience show that collaborative initiatives are very beneficial to communities becoming more age-friendly. We also know communities value opportunities to connect with each other and share ideas & successes. Therefore, the **Age-Friendly Manitoba Initiative (AFMI)**, along with our partners, is launching:

“Celebrating Community Collaboration: a series of short stories” to promote the value, benefits and positive outcomes of **collaborative effort**, as a community endeavors to become more age-friendly. **For more information on the AFMI go to www.agefriendlymanitoba.com**

WHAT DO WE NEED?

Your story! Short, sweet and about 500 words. Photos* are also welcomed! Send your writings to the email below *and remember* to include the name of your community, who you are, and how we can best connect with you! *(*If you are submitting photos it is understood that subject(s) in the photo have given you consent to use of the picture.)*

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOUR STORY?

The AFMI has a number of resources that are just



perfect for sharing and showcasing your story. It may show up...

- On our website: <https://agefriendlymanitoba.com>
- In a monthly eblast AF Newsletter
- As a story told by one of our Age-Friendly Resource Team members in a workshop or a community consultation
- Showcased in select publications

And remember, we will credit your community when and wherever we use your story.

HOW DO YOU GET STARTED?

Your story can focus on one of three themes:

1. Our vision for the future looks like
2. Our experience might help others to
3. We are so proud of this...

Within the Age-Friendly Manitoba Initiative a number of key principles have been identified, one or more of which may help you in telling your story:

- Shared responsibility
- Partnerships Leadership
- Municipal government engagement
- Voluntarism
- Innovation
- Intergenerational solidarity
- Inclusivity

...and you can start your story with the **opening line:**

We are more age-friendly because we...

WHO ARE YOU?

Stories can be submitted by the municipal government (elected officials or staff), a community organization, a citizen or a neighbour proud of what you have accomplished. Remember our purpose: Celebrating Community Collaboration! Perhaps you want to get together with a few other folks, to craft your story!

To submit your story or for more information please email hello@agefriendlymanitoba.com

or contact Connie Newman at 204-792-5838.

Social isolation and loneliness: The other pandemic

Decades' worth of research shows that social isolation and loneliness increase the risk of physical and mental health problems among older adults. They are also related to unhealthy behaviors, like reduced physical activity, and worse sleep. With the mandated physical distancing, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to social isolation, and more older people than ever are feeling lonely. While coping with the pandemic restrictions has been difficult for everybody, it has been especially difficult for certain groups, including those without internet access, people living on low income, and those living alone, among others. Older adults living in congregate settings, especially personal care homes, and their families have been particularly hard hit by visiting restrictions.

Organizations have responded in many ways to keep people socially connected and active. The following are some promising practices:

- Regular phone check-ins to make sure older individuals stay connected, and find out if they need assistance, such as grocery delivery or information about handivan services.
- Intergenerational activities; for example, students making regular phone calls to older adults, or writing letters to them.
- Provision of programs over the phone. A & O Support Services for Older Adults Inc.'s Senior Centre Without Walls program is free-of-charge and provides educational and recreational programming over the phone to anybody in the province (<https://www.aosupportservices.ca/our-three-pillars/social-engagement/senior-centre-without-walls/>).
- Online healthy aging programming. Many programs that used to be offered in person have shifted online for either live or recorded viewing. They can be viewed individually or in (socially distanced) group settings. Two examples are: healthy aging webinars and exercise for seniors videos available through Active Aging in Manitoba (<https://activeagingmb.ca/our-programs/>); and Winnipeg Symphony concerts (<https://wso.ca/>).
- Organizing transportation; for example, handivan or ride sharing to a super site to get vaccinated.

Verena Menec, PhD is a Professor and Acting Graduate Program Director with Dept. of Community Health Sciences, University of Manitoba



LET NO ONE BE ALONE – MAY 2 - 8, 2021



Through compelling research, I have learned that loneliness is a leading cause of death. First hand experience has showed me just how significantly being unwantedly isolated can affect your health – mentally and physically. Our “social connectedness” is a determinate of our health. This campaign started back in 2012 as a result of a restless night of sleep. Let No One Be Alone has always been promoted the first full week in May. It’s about connecting with people, especially those that are alone. Not only during the awareness week, this time is meant to serve as reminder to all, the importance of real connections and to nurture them all year long. We may not have medical degrees to find cures for diseases, but all of us have the capacity to care which is a key element

in prevention. The current pandemic has really heightened the negative affects of unwelcomed isolation – we all must do our part and put human connections on our list of priorities.

By networking with fellow Resource Coordinators, Age Friendly Communities, and the Manitoba Association of Senior Centres and more, this week of awareness is aimed at reaching all four corners of our province and beyond! Thanks to many caring people, this grass-roots initiative has been celebrated in 50+ communities. Any and all people are encouraged to act. I believe that being connected is the most powerful, least costly, and most highly underrated ways to make positive changes in a life – your own and others!

At a time where morale may be low, uncertainty is something we are living with daily, it’s always good to put energy into something positive. Remember, when so many things are being taken away, we are our keepers of optimism & kindness, and our ability to share it.

Join the Let No One Be Alone face book page to share and learn more! Have you found an effective or unique way to stay connected? Please let me know!

*Brenda Tonn, Consultant
Manitoba Association of Senior Centres*

Team Member HIGHLIGHT



BRENDA TONN

Born, raised, left then returned to Plumias, MB. I have a great love of rural living. Having been a resource coordinator for many years, I have a great understanding of small town community needs and am dedicated to help find ways of fulfilling them. No matter where you live, the importance of being able to live out all of your years being socially connected, cared for and confident in what lies ahead is a big reason I believe in the Age Friendly ideals....believing wholeheartedly that if we all sought change by looking through an Age Friendly lens, our world would be a better place.



CONTACT OUR CONSULTANTS

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Through MASC - Connie Newman at (204) 792-5838 or info@manitobaseniorcentres.com
and hello@agefriendlymanitoba.com or visit our website: www.agefriendlymanitoba.com



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