



AF CONNECTIONS

Working together for stronger, healthier communities.

ISSUE 1 - SEPT 2025

COLLABORATION IS CENTRAL TO A HEALTHY COMMUNITY



EXCITING ANNOUNCEMENT!!

COLLABORATION AT THE CORE

Welcome to the first edition of our **Age-Friendly Connections** Newsletter!!

In the past, MASC (Manitoba Association of Senior Communities) has shared updates through several separate connections. The reality is that our work is interconnected. Age-Friendly communities, member centres, social prescribing, and advocacy are not separate stories; they are part of one larger vision for healthier, more connected communities.

That is why we are bringing everything together under one umbrella newsletter. This new approach reflects how collaboration is central to community wellness. When service providers, municipalities, and organizations connect, everyone benefits. The integrated newsletter was created with that spirit in mind.

We look forward to highlighting shared successes, amplifying local voices, and keeping us all moving forward together.

“
Collaboration is the
foundation for lasting
change and meaningful
impact.
”

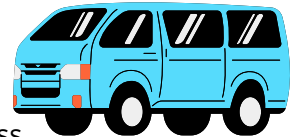
RIPPLES OF GOODNESS



Bridging Communities through

transportation: A grassroots community approach to mobility in Manitoba

In rural and urban corners of Manitoba, three community-powered transportation programs are reshaping access to essential services. The **Virden Toonie**



Transportation; Chalmers Neighbourhood Food Access Bus (FAB) along with Hop, Drop and Shop \$5 Transportation in Teulon; and each demonstrate how local collaboration can drive social participation.

In Virden, the Toonie Transportation program offers affordable rides for just \$2, helping residents. “This initiative is powered by a coalition of local champions including Virden SAIL, New Horizon Centre, Virden Handi-Van Committee, and Mayor Tina Williams, with support from the Community Collaboration Grant. The New Horizons is a senior’s centre in the town of Virden.

“Every Wednesday we pick up people to have lunch in town, then we take those who would like to play cards with the New Horizon members or we take people for errands. This is a regular Toonie Transportation Day! We also have ventured outside the community and went for lunch in surrounding towns and explored different areas too. This has been a very successful program that has given folks something to look forward to every week.

“They love the social opportunity it brings to them and we, as seniors resource coordinators, can see the benefits it brings to their over all quality of life!”- Julie Mason

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Continued - Bridging Communities through transportation

In the Chalmers community in Winnipeg, the Food Access Bus (FAB) tackles urban food insecurity by transporting seniors from housing complexes to major grocery stores like Walmart and Superstore. "The success of the FAB (Food Access Bus) program is a testament to what is possible when community organizations and municipal leadership work hand in hand. Through our strong partnership with the City of Winnipeg, we have been able to provide free, accessible transportation that connects residents to essential services and supports.

"We are especially grateful for the late Councillor Jason Schreyer and City Councillor Jeff Browaty, and their unwavering belief in food access and dignity for all which helped lay the foundation for this initiative." - Leilani Esteban Villarba

Though these programs are unique, they share a powerful collaboration as a means to transportation as a tool for equity. These grassroots efforts show that with modest funding and strong local partnerships, communities can overcome isolation and improve access to food, healthcare, and connection. As Manitoba continues to face rural and urban mobility challenges, these models offer scalable solutions that other regions can learn from each other.

-Serena Bittner, TONS.



Have a story you'd like to share? We'd love to hear it! Click here to submit yours!!

PARTNER HIGHLIGHT...

Active Aging in Manitoba (AAIM) is about inspiring active lifestyles! Staying active isn't just about movement—it's about health, friendship, and community. As a not-for-profit organization, AAIM is dedicated to creating opportunities for older Manitobans to continue to enjoy active living as they age.



**Celebrate Active Aging Week
October 6 – 12, 2025**

By working alongside the Manitoba Association of Senior Communities (MASC) and other community partners, AAIM helps reduce loneliness and isolation while fostering age-friendly communities where everyone can thrive.

Connect with AAIM: <https://activeagingmb.ca/>
Email: info@activeagingmb.ca
Phone: 204-632-3947 or toll-free: 1-866-202-6663

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS



MASC's Intergenerational Grants at Work: Connecting Generations through TechConnect

In Winnipeg, a unique intergenerational program called TechConnect is helping older adults bridge the digital divide with confidence and joy. Supported by one of MASC's intergenerational grants, the pilot project was launched by student Rida Lakhani, with mentorship from Connie Newman. Inspired by her grandparents' experiences with technology, Rida created TechConnect to offer seniors approachable, hands-on learning opportunities.

Over the course of a three-part series hosted at three Winnipeg community sites, nearly 30 seniors learned practical skills like sending texts, using YouTube, exploring Google Maps, and recognizing online scams. A team of high school and university volunteers provided one-on-one support, creating a warm, family-like atmosphere. Fun activities such as "Tech Bingo" and a presentation from the Winnipeg Police Service on fraud prevention added to the experience.

The impact went far beyond skills. Seniors left feeling empowered, confident, and connected. One participant, who had long been hesitant to try, finally downloaded WhatsApp and joined her community groups. Others reported a new comfort with technology, describing the program as "amazing" and "super helpful."

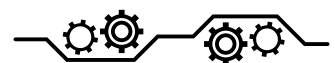


For Rida, the success of TechConnect shows the power of intergenerational collaboration:

"It was so heartwarming to see the magnitude of impact this idea had on the community."

With overwhelmingly positive feedback, the TechConnect team hopes to continue the program in future years—further spreading digital confidence and connection across Winnipeg.

As one senior summed it up:



"We came in nervous, but we're leaving excited."



A SPOT LIGHT ON AGE FRIENDLY MANITOBA



Age Friendly Grant: Collaborate for Change!

Collaborating Together Benefits All! \$10,000 could bring a local initiative to life.

On behalf of MASC and Age Friendly Manitoba we were excited to introduce the 2025 Age-Friendly Community Collaboration Grant. This is an awesome opportunity to apply for up to a \$10,000 for a community project. We know the interest is building, as the Sept. 9th webinar attracted 88 participants from across the province eager to learn successful tips and how to apply. Ninety-eight (98) Age-Friendly municipalities are eligible because they previously joined Age Friendly Manitoba, some have even been awarded the Milestone designation.



This year's grant theme is 'Community Collaboration' and it is an exciting opportunity for municipal leadership to engage with non-profit community organizations to accomplish a special project that will be of benefit to many, including older adults. Ideas might include: community engagement activities, training and capacity building initiatives, ways that foster inclusion and participation, or physical improvements for accessibility and safety. In your application, show how the project meets a real, identified need in your community and how it will impact at least two of the eight Age Friendly domains of: Outdoor Spaces & Buildings, Respect & Social Inclusion, Transportation, Housing, Social Participation, Communication & Information, Civic Participation/Employment Opportunity, Community Support/Health Services. **Creative ideas are encouraged.**

Share this grant opportunity with at least three other community organizations, get together, put your thinking caps on and collaborate to propose an initiative that could benefit your community.



"Collaboration is the heartbeat of community change. Together, we can create spaces and opportunities where everyone thrives."

Download the application from the Age Friendly Manitoba website at: www.agefriendlymanitoba.com

Once downloaded, complete the application with your partners as outlined and email to Connie Newman at: ccnewman@shaw.ca. Look for a confirmation receipt within 3 days.

Application deadline is October 31, 2025. Notification of successful grants is Dec. 15, 2025.



The City of Morden is now a Milestone Community!

Congratulations to Morden on this fantastic achievement!

Want to learn more? Check out the article created by Pembina Valley Online by [clicking here!](#) A great read!

"It's energizing to see the commitment and sincere community investment." - Roberta Bishop, AF Consultant



[Click here to learn about Age Friendly Manitoba's Milestone Recognition Program.](#)

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING IN ACTION



The Manitoba Association of Senior Communities leads Social Prescribing Initiative in MB. Our member centres, senior resource coordinators, age friendly communities, family physicians and health care organizations are among the partners we are working with in establishing this ground-breaking project that will have enormous benefits for older adults.

Social prescribing is a means for healthcare providers to connect patients to a range of non-clinical services in the community to improve health and well-being. It is a holistic approach to health care promoting community based integrated care. It is another tool for family physicians.

At the community level we are engaging the health system representatives with members of our senior centres and the senior resource coordinator for the community. Municipal recreation services are also a vital part of the community connection along with churches, museums, service groups and more!

Our team meets with Family Physicians and clinic staff discussing the implementation of the referral process. As we gain connections in our communities, social prescribing is expanding across Manitoba. We are working closely with the senior resource coordinator or other designated community connectors. We have engaged two consultants, Michael Routledge, MD and Dr. Verena Menec, PhD who have many years of experience working in public health and community development for older adults.

[Click here to take a minute and check out the article from Doctors Manitoba "Rounds" magazine.](#)

"For many years, society has focused on medical solutions like prescription drugs and surgeries as the way to improve people's health. We now know that addressing the social determinants of health is as important, if not more so, in accomplishing this goal. Social prescribing is an innovative solution that advances the work of supporting older adults to live their best lives."

-Michael Routledge, MD



CLICK HERE or scan the QR Code
to check out our made in Manitoba
Social Prescribing video!



OUR VOICE FOR OLDER MANITOBANS

Through ongoing provincial and national collaborations, we engage with a variety of groups and organizations to address the needs and priorities of older adults. These connections ensure that what we hear in Manitoba is reflected in broader conversations, and that national best practices are shared locally.

Nationally, MASC is represented at:

- Age-Friendly Reference Group (Public Health Agency of Canada)
- Canadian Medication Appropriateness and Deprescribing Network
- Community-Based Senior Services (HelpAge Canada)
- Canadian Institute for Social Prescribing (CISP)

Provincially, we meet with:

- Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM)
- Manitoba Municipal Administrators (MMA)
- Managers of Services to Seniors programs in each health region
- Active Aging in Manitoba (AAIM)
- Transportation Options Network for Seniors (TONS)
- Prevent Elder Abuse Manitoba (PEAM)

At the community level, during member meetings and consultations, we hear directly from older adults – stories of great volunteerism, pressing concerns like housing and transportation, and ideas that strengthen age-friendly and social prescribing efforts across Manitoba.

Going forward, this section will share what we hear and learn from our connections.