



ISSUE 2 - OCT 2025



CONNECTIONS

Working together for stronger, healthier communities.

COLLABORATION IS CENTRAL TO A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Welcome back to the Second Edition of AF Connections!

This newsletter unites our shared efforts — connecting Age-Friendly Communities, Senior Centres, Social Prescribing, and our Voice for Older Manitobans.

Each story highlights the ripple effect that occurs when people in communities work together to make Manitoba a great place to grow older.

RIPPLES OF GOODNESS

Connecting Generations — One Letter, One Game, One Pumpkin at a Time

When generations connect, friendships blossom. Senior Support Coordinator Karen Kruk used her Intergenerational Connections Grant to launch two remarkable programs — a lively Game Day and a heart-warming Pen Pal Program.



Each month, 12-15 students from MacGregor Collegiate travelled by handi-van to share lunch and play games with seniors. The laughter, conversation, and growing friendships became the highlight of the month. A teacher later shared:

"Some students weren't sure if they'd enjoy it enough to continue. I had 100 % of them return saying they planned on continuing! They were impressed by how much these seniors had to offer — in conversation and as competitors."

Karen's Pen Pal Program connected over 50 students with 50 seniors across two schools. Monthly letters led to lasting friendships — and it all ended with a joyful Pen Pal Tea, complete with decorations, student entertainment, and flower gifts from students to their senior pen pals.

Pen pals meet for the first time at the Pen Pal Tea:



In Brandon, Resource Coordinator Eleysha Klaassen also used her grant to bring youth and older adults together for a Pumpkin Carving Day filled with creativity and laughter.



Whether through letters, games, or pumpkins, each of these projects shows how small acts of connection create lasting ripples of goodness across Manitoba communities.



Have a story you'd like to share? We'd love to hear it! [Click here to submit yours!!](#)

Ageism: The Last Acceptable Prejudice! A Call to Action...



A new Federal-Provincial-Territorial report — [Policy Options Related to the Topic of Ageism Targeting Older Canadians \(March 2025\)](#) takes a bold look at how ageism continues to shape the lives of older adults across Canada.

The findings are a must-read for those of us working with older Manitobans through senior organizations and community programs.



The report identifies ageism as a barrier across five key domains: health and health care, employment, social inclusion, safety and security, and media.

Participants in national consultations said ageism in health care is felt most sharply, followed by its impact on social inclusion and safety.

These findings echo what many of us already see at the community level — older adults who want to keep contributing but are sometimes limited by systems or attitudes that haven't caught up. Manitoba's senior centres and Age-Friendly municipalities are already leading by example, showing that inclusion, respect, and purpose all strengthen community life. This report reinforces that **what we do locally matters nationally** and that every conversation about aging well helps shift the culture.

Did You Know?

Ageism costs Canada billions each year in lost productivity and health-care impacts yet it's also one of the least-measured forms of discrimination. The report urges governments to track the **economic and social costs** of ageism to show the value of prevention and inclusion programs, like those offered through Manitoba's senior centres.

KEY MESSAGES

- ✓ **Education & intergenerational programs** build empathy
- ✓ **Digital inclusion** reduces isolation
- ✓ **Age-Friendly initiatives** foster belonging
- ✓ **Training on age bias** should be mandatory
- ✓ **Evaluate** every initiative for real impact

YOUR CALL TO ACTION!

Ask your MP, MLA, and/or Councillors...

Are they aware of this national report?
Ageism isn't just social — it's a policy issue.
Share it, discuss it, and keep the conversation going in your community!

PARTNER HIGHLIGHT...

Prevent Elder Abuse Manitoba (PEAM) is a provincial network in Manitoba that partners with organizations to prevent elder abuse by providing training, public education, tools, and resources to community groups and service providers.



To connect with PEAM, visit www.peam.ca, call 204-669-7531, or email coordinator@peam.ca.

EACH YEAR IN CANADA, 4-10% OF OLDER ADULTS EXPERIENCE SOME FORM OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT, AND ONLY ONE IN FIVE INCIDENTS IS REPORTED TO THOSE WHO CAN HELP.

SENIORS ABUSE SUPPORT LINE:

1-888-896-7183



A SPOT LIGHT ON AGE FRIENDLY MANITOBA



Achieving the Age Friendly Milestones – Why It Matters

Communities grow stronger when people work together. The Age Friendly Milestones are a great way to spark ideas, bring neighbours together, and celebrate progress toward creating a community where everyone belongs. The Age Friendly Milestones offer a simple, rewarding way to bring people together and celebrate progress along the way.

Becoming an Age Friendly Designated Milestone Community is all about the journey – sharing ideas and creating a community where everyone feels welcome and supported. Of course, reaching the goal feels great too!

When your community completes Milestone 4, you can apply for a \$2,500 grant to celebrate your success.

The real reward, though, is the pride and connection that grow along the way. Working together builds awareness, strengthens partnerships, and helps ensure your community continues to thrive for people of all ages and abilities. It's about creating a place where everyone can stay active, healthy, and engaged in community life.

Across Manitoba, Age Friendly champions are making this happen – residents, mayors, councillors, and community organizations who care deeply about where they live. They reach out, listen, and work side by side to make their communities even better.

The Five Milestones

1. **Community Engagement** – Form a local leadership group.
2. **Council Resolution** – Officially commit to becoming Age Friendly (all 98 municipalities have done this!).
3. **Action Plan** – Create a plan based on community input.
4. **Public Awareness** – Share your progress and celebrate involvement.
5. **Celebration** – Recognize achievements and keep the momentum going.

Each step helps raise awareness, encourage collaboration, and strengthen community pride.

A great example is the City of Morden, where Mayor Nancy Penner, council, and local champions surveyed residents about housing, health, transportation, and inclusion. Their feedback shaped a plan to strengthen Age Friendly benefits for everyone.

For details or support in reaching your milestones, visit agefriendlymanitoba.com/milestone-application.

The Age Friendly Milestones were developed by the Province of Manitoba, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the World Health Organization.

Scan the QR code to view our AF Municipality map!



REMINDER

THE DEADLINE TO APPLY FOR THE COMMUNITY COLLABORATION GRANT IS FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31ST!

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING IN ACTION



Social Prescribing is helping Manitobans like Anne reconnect with their communities and rediscover joy in daily life. By linking healthcare with social supports, programs like Friendly Hello are reducing isolation and showing that sometimes, the best medicine is connection.

Anne's Story

Anne [not her real name] loved her job, but had to retire because she had problems with her eyes and, at the time, could not drive anymore. Because of the retirement and not being able to drive, she was stuck in her house for four years, she says. Plus the COVID pandemic started and made things even worse. Although Anne lives with her daughter, she didn't have anybody else to talk to.

"I was stuck in my house for four years."

Anne's healthcare provider recognized that Anne would benefit from more social contact and referred her to the Senior Resource Coordinator in the community. In discussing her situation with Anne, the Senior Resource Coordinator suggested the Friendly Hello program and Anne agreed to try it.

The Friendly Hello program is offered in some communities as a way to help older adults be more socially connected. The Senior Resource Coordinator matches a volunteer with an older adult and the volunteer calls the older person over the phone once a week for a chat. Sometimes the volunteer and older person also start to meet in person.

The volunteer who was matched with Anne was a perfect fit. Anne and the volunteer went from phone calls to meeting in person. They get along well and became friends, Anne says.

"We were supposed to talk maybe 15 minutes, but then it got longer and longer and then we were friends."

Anne feels that having made a friend has helped with her mental health. And she is even considering becoming a volunteer for the Friendly Hello program herself. Anne feels she could help somebody else who is lonely because "I know what I went through" she says.

Visit <https://manitobaseniorkommunities.ca/> for information and stories about Social Prescribing.

OUR VOICE FOR OLDER MANITOBANS



Strengthening the Voice of Community-Based Senior Services

MASC's Executive Director, Connie Newman, recently joined colleagues from across Canada at Alberta's Healthy Aging Summit, where the Community-Based Seniors Serving (CBSS) Service Delivery Model was explored – a new tool that highlights the value and impact of community-based organizations supporting older adults.

The model recognizes that the CBSS sector (senior centres, volunteers, and community groups) plays a vital yet often under-recognized role in helping people age in place. It offers a shared language linking community, health, and housing systems, showing how collaboration drives better outcomes for older adults.

Leaders emphasized the importance of co-creation, flexibility, and equity, with services shaped by community, for community. Connie shared how Manitoba's Age-Friendly and Senior Centre networks already embody these principles, focusing on grassroots, local solutions and aging in community.

As the CBSS model evolves nationally, MASC will continue to champion integration, recognition, and sustainable funding for community-based work to ensure the Manitoba voice stays strong.

"This is about strengthening the bridge between community supports and health care," Connie noted. "When communities are supported to do what they do best, older adults thrive."