



2026



CONNECTIONS

Working together for stronger, healthier communities.

ISSUE 5 - JAN 2026

COLLABORATION IS CENTRAL TO A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Happy New Year!

As we step into 2026, we're feeling grateful and energized by the ways Age-Friendly communities across Manitoba continue to show up! New seasons bring new ideas, fresh partnerships, and more chances to build communities where people of every age can belong, participate, and thrive.

Thank you for being part of this work and for everything you do to strengthen connection and well-being close to home.

RIPPLES OF GOODNESS

Community Collaboration Grants

Huge congratulations to the 14 recipients of our 2025 Community Collaboration Grants! It's exciting to learn about all the collaboration happening across Manitoba. We are excited to see municipalities, senior centres, community groups, volunteers, and local partners coming together to make good things happen. We look forward to learning more about each project as the year unfolds, and we'll be sharing updates and highlights in upcoming issues.

Congratulations to the following Cities/Towns/Municipalities:

- Bifrost Riverton
- Flin Flon
- Hamiota
- Lorne
- Morden
- Neepawa
- Norfolk-Treherne
- Pinawa
- St. Laurent
- St. Pierre Jolys
- Stonewall
- Virden
- Winnipeg – Seven Oaks
- Winnipeg – St. James 55+

We also want to thank everyone who applied. We recognize the time, care, and collaboration that goes into developing a strong application. The conversations started, partnerships formed, and ideas shared through this process all matter.

We encourage you to keep those relationships moving forward, because when communities and organizations work together, the ripples of good extend far beyond any one project or grant.

Keep the conversations going! Collaboration is where the real magic happens.

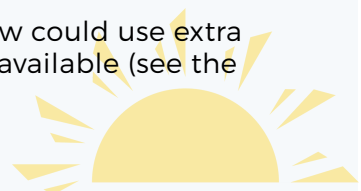
Blue Monday: a gentle check-in

You may hear people mention Blue Monday. It's often described as the "saddest day of the year."

It's not an official or evidence-based day, but we do like the reminder it offers: January can feel heavy for many of us, and this is a good time to slow down and check in. A warm greeting, a little patience, and a simple "How are you doing?" can go a long way. Or maybe just greet someone and say "It's so good to see you!"

If you or someone you know could use extra support right now, help is available (see the resources below).

Need support (Canada):



- Call or text 988 Crisis line (24/7 support)
- Wellness Together Canada: wellnesstogether.ca
- Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA): cmha.ca
- Call 211 (local/prov. community supports)
- Kids Help Phone (youth): kidshelpphone.ca | 1-800-668-6868 | text CONNECT to 686868
- Hope for Wellness (Indigenous peoples): hopeforwellness.ca | 1-855-242-3310
- In immediate danger: call 911

Small Steps to an Age-Friendlier Community

Age-Friendly isn't a title, it's a practice. No matter where you're starting, these quick checks can spark connection and reduce barriers this winter.

- Build a small team – meet monthly (municipality + senior centre + one community partner).
- Listen often – ask residents what would make participation easier.
- Tackle one barrier – rides, cost, confidence, or timing; test a simple fix.
- Celebrate wins publicly – even tiny ones, to build momentum.
- Share & learn together – swap ideas with a neighbouring town or partner.

Keep Learning, Keep Connecting Free Virtual Conference

Those small steps above add up. If you're ready for fresh ideas and practical tools, here's a no-cost way to level up your age-friendly work.

Consider participating in this free, virtual education session entitled - **Building a Future for All: Connecting Age-Friendly Strategies to Emerging Priorities** on March 10-12, 2026.

Why join..

- See how age-friendly fits the big picture so you can speak to it confidently.
- Leave with a culture shift—link local projects to broader policy/structural priorities.
- Gain hands-on skills grounded in lived experience, research, and practice-based evidence.

Who it's for...

Municipal staff, community leaders, people who work with older adults, policy makers, older adults, and anyone curious about the age-friendly movement.

Three themed days

- Day 1: Embracing the Opportunities of an Aging Society – shifting perspectives, strengthening economies, supporting care.
- Day 2: Building Age-Friendly Futures – inclusive communities, technology, climate resilience for all ages.
- Day 3: Supporting Age-Friendly Community Initiatives – funding and communications.

Click the image to learn more...



Building a Future for All:

Connecting Age-Friendly Strategies to Emerging Priorities



PARTNER HIGHLIGHT...

MASC is proud to partner with CJNU Nostalgic Radio, a warm, familiar station that blends nostalgic music with community-minded programming for Manitobans.



93.7
CJNU

You can catch MASC on two CJNU features:

- **Insights on Aging** airs daily at 10:37 a.m. and 3:37 p.m., sharing quick, helpful information on aging well and community supports.
- **Insights on Social Connections** is a monthly program highlighting how connection supports health and how social prescribing links people to local resources.

Tune in and share with someone who'd enjoy it!



93.7 FM - LISTEN ONLINE AT WWW.CJNU.CA - BELL MTS TV CHANNEL 725



A SPOT LIGHT ON AGE FRIENDLY MANITOBA



A New Year of Age Friendly Celebration and Collaboration to Continue In Neepawa

Neepawa is an exciting place to live - thanks in large part to community collaboration. Collaborative efforts came together once again in 2025 to secure another successful Age Friendly Community Collaboration grant, making it a Happy New Year indeed. This support gives the green light to continue the much-loved H.A.N.D. monthly socials. Adding to the excitement, the Neepawa Library will upgrade technology and offer iPad and Kobo training to help older adults stay connected. The Kobo Lending Program makes reading easier, and an escorted January trip to The Leaf in Winnipeg will dazzle visitors with the stunning Fleurs de Villes floral artistry.

At the heart of these efforts is Michelle Kasprick, Resource Coordinator at Home Assistance Neepawa & District (H.A.N.D.). Michelle has become the chief planner and organizer of social gatherings designed especially for older adults that began with receiving the Age Friendly Community Collaboration 2024 grant.

This grant sparked a year of various Silver Club initiatives through a joint effort by the Town of Neepawa, H.A.N.D., ArtsForward and the Neepawa Handi-Van. Together, the partners set out to create a stronger, more inclusive community where seniors can stay active, engaged, and connected. Michelle's energy is contagious, and her passion for bringing people together, whether to socialize, welcome newcomers, or reconnect with old friends, shines through.

Thanks to this Age Friendly grant, Michelle was able to introduce themed social get-togethers, each one filling up quickly. The Handi-Van provided needed transportation and delicious food, familiar music, and friendly conversation made every event a hit. The buzz in the room was inspiring; conversations flowed easily, and the excitement was unmistakable. Michelle said it was **"the best year of her work life,"** inspired by the enjoyment shared with those who attended.

Monthly socials became a highlight, offering a hearty meal and top-notch local entertainment. The old-time dances brought people to their feet, including guests in their 90s who proudly showed off dance steps they've known for decades. Live music was a staple, whether a renowned band, a 93-year-old accordion player or a skilled fiddler and guitarist who had the whole room tapping their toes.

Michelle has creativity elevated every theme like "Under the Sea," where blue, white, and aqua streamers waved like ocean tides, beach balls drifted overhead, and life-size sea creatures transformed the room into a beachfront escape. Her goal remains simple but heartfelt: to make each social special. From imaginative décor to lively music to mouth-watering meals, Michelle curates an atmosphere that invites conversation, encourages friendship, and makes every guest feel welcome - and it all continues into 2026!



SOCIAL PRESCRIBING IN ACTION



“I have safe place to go to”: Elaine’s story

Social prescribing helps older adults find the programs and resources they need to make social connections and stay active and healthy.

When a healthcare provider meets an older client/patient they think could benefit from community resources, they can refer the person to a Senior Resource Coordinator (SRC) who then connects the person with programs and services, such as social and physical activities, meal programs, and transportation options.

Elaine [not her real name] is one older person who benefitted from social prescribing.

After a divorce, Elaine lost contact with a lot of people in her life and she became socially isolated. **“I just sort of sunk into being alone’, she says.**

Her healthcare provider recognized that she could benefit from more social connections and referred her to a SRC. The SRC made her aware of resources in her neighbourhood, including the Golden Rule Seniors Resource Centre.

The Golden Rule Seniors Resource Centre, located in the Fort Rouge area of Winnipeg, is a hub of activities and resources. Older adults can participate in exercise classes, games, a book club, education sessions and much more.



Even though Elaine lives in the Fort Rouge area, she had never gone to the Seniors Resource Centre. Encouraged by the SRC, Elaine got up the courage to check it out. **“It took a lot to push myself to go there, and I was so thankful that I did”, she says.**

Elaine started to go to the book club and has also attended some presentations. **“It’s just a wonderful place and I have learned a lot about resources.”**

When she feels cooped up, she knows she can go there. **“I have a safe place to go to before it gets overwhelming”, she says.**

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

Whether you’re providing care or looking for support, Social Prescribing helps people find their way back to connection.

OUR VOICE FOR OLDER MANITOBANS



MASC is a member of the Manitoba Chamber and as such we are connecting to the business community across Manitoba.



MASC connects to the team at the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) on a quarterly basis.

Recently AMM staff joined us when we met with the MB Government - Municipal Affairs - topic: Handi Vans.

MASC connects with Manitoba Municipal Administrators (MMA) which represents Chief Administrative Officers (CAO) in municipalities usually on a quarterly basis.

Both AMM and MMA receive this monthly newsletter.

