



CONNECTIONS

Working together for stronger, healthier communities.

ISSUE 7 - MAR 2026

COLLABORATION IS CENTRAL TO A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Welcome Readers!



Momentum is building across Manitoba with the province's formal recognition of Social Prescribing. Read on to explore what this means and how local leadership can help strengthen the impact.

RIPPLES OF GOODNESS



The Manitoba Government recognizes Social Prescribing provincewide...

We are excited to share important news for healthy aging in Manitoba. The Manitoba government has formally recognized Social Prescribing as a province wide approach to connecting seniors and other Manitobans to community-based supports that reduce isolation and strengthen well-being.

That recognition is what makes this moment significant. Social Prescribing reinforces a powerful truth: connection is not optional in healthy aging, it is essential. Research continues to show that loneliness and isolation affect health outcomes as significantly as many medical conditions.

Across Manitoba, Senior Resource Coordinators, senior centres, and many community leaders have long understood this reality firsthand. Their daily work reflects the belief that belonging, participating, and accessing supportive programs matter.

At the same time, this announcement is also a reminder, and an invitation! As awareness grows, all municipalities/Age-Friendly communities, have an opportunity to further prioritize and invest in connection as a core component of community well-being.

Social Prescribing is now active across all five regional health authorities. Clinicians may refer individuals that would benefit from community connections to more than 120 senior resource coordinators working across Manitoba. Referrals have increased by approximately 44 percent over the past year as awareness grows.

When referrals are made, it is community that receives people through such things as walking groups, lunch programs, creative classes, transportation supports, volunteer opportunities, and a welcoming gathering spaces. These programs form the network that strengthens well-being across the province.

"Loneliness is a major health concern for older Manitobans, with research showing it can increase the risk of stroke, heart disease, depression and dementia. Social prescribing allows doctors to help patients at risk of social isolation by referring them to personalized supports and resources."

-Dr. Nichelle Desilets, President, Doctors Manitoba

This provincial recognition affirms the importance of partnership between health systems and community organizations. It highlights the interconnected nature of our work from policy to practice, from clinics to community halls.

Let's Build on This Momentum

The recognition of Social Prescribing at the provincial level creates an important opportunity for leadership at the local level.

Now is the time to:

- Share this announcement within municipal and community networks.
- Strengthen relationships with local health-care providers.
- Ensure community programs are visible, accessible, and well-promoted.
- Embed connection and belonging more intentionally within Age-Friendly planning and municipal priorities.
- Champion the message that loneliness is a health issue – and community is part of the solution.

The future of Social Prescribing depends on strong community partnerships. By leaning into this moment, communities across Manitoba can help ensure that connection becomes more than an initiative; it becomes a shared standard for healthy aging.

 [To read the full release click here!](#) 

GENERATIONS CONNECT AT WCSA'S 2026 LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

The Winnipeg Chinese Seniors Association (WCSA) welcomed hundreds of families and community members on February 28, 2026, for its annual Lunar New Year Celebration, an event that blended cultural tradition with vibrant intergenerational participation.

This year's celebration featured a lively cultural fair, stage performances, and community activities spanning the afternoon and evening. More than 60 children and youth took part as dancers, martial artists, lion dancers, musicians, or volunteers. Their strong presence highlighted the growing involvement of younger generations in preserving and celebrating Chinese cultural heritage.



Families enjoyed hands-on activities throughout the cultural fair, including calligraphy, paper-cutting, and traditional games. Adding to the festive atmosphere were the popular giant panda and polar bear mascots—portrayed by youth volunteers—which quickly became crowd favorites and a playful symbol of cultural and local identity coming together.

Winnipeg Deputy Mayor Markus Chambers attended the celebration and later shared his impressions in a Facebook post. In a concise reflection on the event, he wrote:

“What a fantastic afternoon celebrating the Lunar New Year with the Winnipeg Chinese Senior Association. It was truly special to see generations come together—from the youngest children to the esteemed seniors—all delivering spectacular performances. The energy, colours, and the joyful mascots made the entire celebration unforgettable.”

His remarks echoed the broader sentiment expressed by many attendees: that the celebration not only showcased cultural tradition but also strengthened community connections across age groups.

Youth volunteers also played essential roles behind the scenes, supporting activity stations and assisting with event coordination throughout the fair. Their involvement was recognized onstage, where one young participant received an Outstanding Youth Volunteer Award for exceptional service and leadership.

As the final performances concluded and families gathered for photos and farewells, the event stood as a testament to WCSA's continued commitment to honoring cultural heritage while fostering connections between generations. The 2026 celebration reinforced the role community organizations play in building belonging, continuity, and shared celebration within Winnipeg's diverse cultural landscape.

-By Winnipeg Chinese Echoes Staff Reporter

PARTNER HIGHLIGHT...



The Long Term & Continuing Care Association of Manitoba (LTCAM) is a non-profit organization representing over 10,000 elderly individuals and staff across Manitoba's care continuum. Established in 1959, LTCAM has grown to include non-profit and private Assisted Living, Supportive Housing, and Personal Care Home residences in all regional health authorities. Our website serves as a valuable tool to find the right care or home for your loved one.

With over 60 years of experience, LTCAM is committed to enhancing the quality of care for long term and continuing care residents and clients. We collaborate with provincial care providers nationwide through the Canadian Association for Long Term Care, sharing evidence-based information and education to improve care throughout the province and Canada.

Phone: 1-204-477-9888, Website: www.ltcam.mb.ca



A SPOT LIGHT ON AGE FRIENDLY MANITOBA

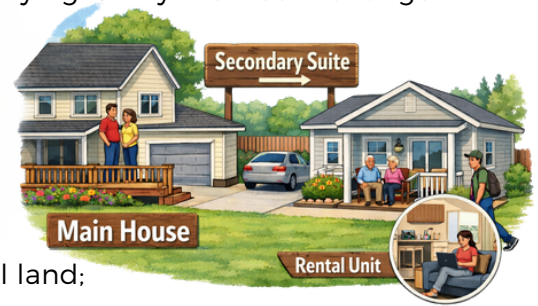


New Zoning Changes Open the Door to More Flexible, Affordable Housing Options in the RM of Ste. Anne...

Housing is often one of the most challenging Age-Friendly pillars to address, especially as costs rise. If housing is a pressure point in your municipality, take a look at what the RM of Ste. Anne has done to open up more flexible, affordable options through Secondary Suites...

Great news for the residents of the RM of Ste. Anne. Recent updates to the RM's Zoning By-law have introduced more flexible and affordable housing options through the expanded use of Secondary Suites. Previously, only Garden Suites were permitted, and these were limited to family members with special needs. They were also temporary and had to be removed once the qualifying family member no longer lived on the property.

With rising land and housing costs, Council recognized the need for more adaptable solutions. As a result, the new by-law now allows Secondary Suites for a wider range of uses, giving property owners greater flexibility and choice.



Secondary Suites can help residents:

- Keep family members close without needing to purchase additional land;
- Support older adults who wish to age in place;
- Provide housing options for young adults; and
- Create a modest rental or short-term accommodation opportunity.

All Secondary Suites must meet zoning and building regulations related to size, placement, servicing, and occupancy, and each application is carefully reviewed to ensure safety and compliance.

Since the change was introduced about two years ago, there has been strong interest and a steady flow of applications, reflecting positive community support and enthusiasm for these new housing options.

Bifrost-Riverton: Powered by Age Friendly Spirit, Guided by Community Pride

In the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton, volunteers, municipal leaders, and heritage advocates have come together with a shared vision, and thanks to the \$10,000 Manitoba Association of Senior Communities Age-Friendly Grant will cover half the cost and become a vibrant reality.

As plans build toward the July 4, 2026 opening of the Reggie Leach Museum Room & the 125th anniversary of the Djorfung Ladies Aid (DLA), these milestones provide a meaningful opportunity to celebrate the past while building an age-friendly future.

The Heritage in Action project focuses on accessibility, safety, and intergenerational engagement at the Riverton Transportation & Heritage Centre (RTHC). The centre will serve as a welcoming hub where volunteers host programs, events, and heritage displays that bring Riverton's stories to life. Dedicated volunteers have carefully archived artifacts and memories, while new security systems will help protect these treasured collections.

Another exciting highlight is the expansion of the outdoor Djorfung Information Kiosk, that will include an interactive feature and shaded patio seating, where visitors can scan a QR code to explore stories, photographs, and memories that connect generations.

Community partners, including the Riverton Elks and Riverton Parks & Recreation, continue to strengthen the project through donations, storyboards, a student concert, and mentorship opportunities. Heritage in Action celebrates Riverton's spirit of connection, belonging, and community pride.



Community volunteers inside the Riverton Transportation & Heritage Centre celebrate the progress of the Heritage in Action project, preserving Riverton's past while creating a welcoming space for future generations.

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING IN ACTION



Spreading the word, one medical clinic at a time...

As mentioned, the Government of Manitoba recently announced that social prescribing is now available in all five regional health authorities.

MASC has been working hard to spread the word among healthcare providers.

We visit medical clinics, notes Linda Brown (MASC consultant). **"It's a way to get the word out about social prescribing at the grassroots level, face to face with the physician or any allied healthcare professionals in the clinic"**, she says.

The response has been very positive, Brown adds. Having the Senior Resource Coordinator in the area come along for clinic visits is also helpful. That way the healthcare providers can hear first-hand what services the SRC can provide, says Brown, and the SRC can answer any questions the healthcare providers may have.

Through social prescribing, physicians and other healthcare providers can refer a patient to the Senior Resource Coordinator in the community, who can then connect the person with community services or programs, like social groups, exercise classes, or meal programs.

Older patients who are a bit isolated or lonely, maybe because they lost a spouse, they are no longer driving, they have moved from a house into an apartment, and now they are in a different area, and they don't really know what's available around them, could benefit from social prescribing, explains Brown. "And 9 times out of 10, the physician or the allied healthcare professional will say, oh yeah, I can think of somebody, I just saw somebody yesterday or I know of somebody that I would love to get connected with some different type of programs," she says.

Being able to connect these patients with community resources is a win-win; healthcare providers are able to help patients with non-medical problems that may affect their health, and older adults receive needed services that improve their health and quality of life.



OUR VOICE FOR OLDER MANITOBANS



Our Commitment to Social Prescribing in Manitoba: Learning From Leaders, Building at Home.

In our ongoing effort to learn and bring the most effective approaches to social prescribing to Manitoba, we were pleased to have Brenda Tonn and Lisa Tinley from our implementation team attend an international seminar that brought together the National Institute of Social Prescribing and the Canadian Institute of Social Prescribing, alongside participants from the United Kingdom and other provinces involved in this work. They returned with real enthusiasm and energy along with practical insights.

At MASC, we are committed to social prescribing in its truest sense: strengthening connection, supporting wellbeing, and helping people access what they need to live well in community. While it's invaluable to learn from leaders around the world, we remain focused on shaping a model that best fits Manitoba and the people who call it home.

We were reminded again that one of the best teachers is a good story. Real experiences from communities across Manitoba help bring the issues - and the solutions - to life, and they inspire others to take action. If you've seen something that's making a difference for older Manitobans, we invite you to share it with us.

**SHARE
YOUR
STORY**

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