

# healthy as can be

Regional Health Authority  
Central Manitoba Inc.



Office régional de la santé  
du Centre du Manitoba inc.

...health news for  
people in Manitoba's RHA Central  
Featuring volunteers  
and partners in Central Region

MAY, 2011

## A tribute to our volunteers...

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE of our many volunteers and the support they each provide to the residents and clients within Central Region, and in addition to presenting an award to a representative volunteer group or individual at its Annual Public Meeting, the Board formally acknowledges all volunteers under the formal banner of 'National Volunteer Week':

WHEREAS a sense of caring and desire to share has motivated hundreds of men and women in Central Region to volunteer their time and services to the needs of others in health care;

WHEREAS Central Region's volunteers possess many skills and talents which they generously apply to a variety of health care programs and services; and

WHEREAS the people of Central Region benefit from the deeds of these selfless and dedicated individuals.

*The Regional Health Authority – Central Manitoba Inc. Board of Directors does hereby honour and appreciate Central Region's health care volunteers who give so freely of their valuable time, energy and abilities all year.*



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du Centre du Manitoba inc.

*Excerpt from RHA Central Board of Directors' minutes – March 2011*

### Volunteers are...

#### Angels on Earth.

— Jenn Sager, Morden



*Dorothy Pasowitsy (centre holding puppy, Mr. Wilson) with her family, Madison, Barry and Jordan.*

## Bachelor of Nursing Program made possible through Partnerships

*"If you train them in rural: they will stay in rural."*

THAT IS THE PREMISE which led to the development of rural-based training opportunities for Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN's) and Registered Nurses over the past few years. At that time, the RHA Central Manitoba Inc. was struggling with a shortage of nurses, as were many other areas in Manitoba. "One of our human resource initiatives at the time was a recommendation that we deliver training in the rural areas, which would hopefully help us to retain the people that were trained here," says Jim Hunter, Vice-President of Human Resources for RHA Central.

The Rural Rotating LPN Training Program which resulted has been offered

in a number of communities across the Central Region over the past ten years. Now, a new rural-based training program will be delivered by Red River College for LPN's to obtain their Bachelor of Nursing (BN) degree, which is replacing the former Diploma of Registered Nurse program that is no longer offered in the province.

The first intake in the full-time, two-year BN course will be in September, 2011 in Portage la Prairie, Gimli, Dauphin and Winkler. The course will be offered every other year until 2021 in Portage and on a rotating basis to other Red River College campuses in rural Manitoba.

Offering training close to home for

rural people is more cost-effective and less disruptive to their lives than having to re-locate or commute to Winnipeg or Brandon.

Dorothy Pasowitsy, who graduated in December, 2010 from the rural LPN program at Southport, says she wouldn't have been able to do so if the training hadn't been offered locally, because of both the cost and time involved in commuting. "The course was quite heavy and I needed time to study," she says. "If I'd had to add another two hours to the day just to drive back and forth from Winnipeg, I wouldn't have had the time I needed to study."

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

[www.rha-central.mb.ca](http://www.rha-central.mb.ca)



What's  
Inside...



Planning for the health of the  
Central Region, page 2



A tapestry of memories,  
page 5



The importance of giving  
blood, page 10



Kathy McPhail CEO of RHA Central.

# Planning for the Health of the Central Region



WHAT DOES PERIPHERAL vision have to do with being the CEO of a regional health authority?

The answer is: Everything. Because everything and everyone is exactly what CEO of RHA Central, Kathy McPhail must see when she helps to guide and develop a planning process that will help to make all of its people as healthy as they can be.

Community in this case means every man, woman and child in the RHA Central Region, and planning for the delivery of health programs and services to meet their needs, at a reasonable cost, begins with the Community Health Assessments (CHA), which are conducted every five years.

"If you were looking at a canvas, the CHA is the background," says McPhail. "It's where we begin and it gives us the basic information about the health status of people in our region. It gives us an idea of what we need to look at and where we need to focus our efforts over the next five years."

From there, the RHA Board of Directors consulted with staff, public focus groups and physicians to draw up a five-year strategic health plan, which sets out direction for the organization. Strategies are focused on achieving the Board's four ENDS or overall goals.

The latest strategic health plan, *Vision 2016: Together Making A Difference*, was released in February, and based on the Board ENDS or overall goals, incorporates the following themes from the Community Health Assessment:

1. Notable Population Trends
  - A Growing Population
  - An Ageing Population
2. High-risk Families
  - Maternal Health
  - Sexual Health
3. Chronic Disease
  - Diabetes

*Healthy People and a Healthy Environment, A Healthy, Responsive and Innovative Organization, Access to the Most Appropriate Care in the Most Appropriate Settings and A Sustainable, Safe & Integrated Client-Centred Health Care System.*

4. Mental Health
5. Aboriginal Health Status
6. Access
  - Understanding Cultural Needs
  - Jurisdictional Issues

The overall planning process is crucial to the effective operation and viability of the RHA and helps it allocate its resources and energy in the right places, as well as providing an ongoing tool to monitor the progress being made. But the community it represents has a lot of influence over how truly effective that plan will be in determining the health and well-being of its people.

"The health status of our region is related not only to what the RHA can provide as far as services or intervention or programs, but it is also about an individual's commitment to his or her own health," says McPhail. "It's a partnership, so that together we can help each resident within Central Region take ownership of their own health and the health of their families."

## Planning Trivia

### What is a Community Health Assessment?

A Community Health Assessment (CHA) is an ongoing planning tool which produces information about the health of people in our region, how people use the health care system and how the region's health system is performing – it is a valuable tool in building healthy communities. The most recent CHA was conducted in Central Region in 2009.

### About our Strategic Health Plan ...

Outlining key areas of focus for the next five years, *Vision 2016: Together Making a Difference* presents a blueprint for engaging the Region and its partners in translating strategies into reality. In addition to serving as a planning document, the Region's Strategic Health Plan is also an important accountability tool which will help monitor progress. It will guide the Region in its daily decision-making, in supporting community engagement and partnership initiatives and in promoting innovation and collaborative teamwork.

The RHA Central 2011-2016 Strategic Health Plan, *Vision 2016: Together, Making a Difference* and the Community Health Assessment documents/ summaries are available online [www.rha-central.mb.ca](http://www.rha-central.mb.ca)

## 3 easy ways to find health services in Central Region

1 Visit [www.rha-central.mb.ca](http://www.rha-central.mb.ca)

2 MTS Directory

For a listing of services available in your community, look under "Regional Health Authority – Central Manitoba Inc.," your community acute/long term care facility name or the RHA Listing page located just prior to white pages.

3 Call Health Links-Info Santé toll free at 1 888 315-9257

And speak to a Registered Nurse, 24-hours a day, 7 days a week.



# Marjorie Anne Heinrichs 1956–2010

*After the death of her first-born, she found solace and healing with her native neighbours. She especially loved the sweat lodge.*

MAJORIE ANNE HEINRICHS was born in Morris, Man., on March 2, 1956, the second of six children born to Helen and Sydney Reimer, a financial adviser. Marj, a redhead with a fiery personality and a yen for storytelling, grew up in the prosperous, conservative Mennonite community of Rosenort. She was an opinionated and curious tomboy-not your average Mennonite girl. TV and radio, the church believed, were a sin. Hard work brought you closer to God.

At 14, she met Jim Heinrichs, “the cutest boy in school,” as she described him. Gentle Jim, shy and soft-spoken, was her polar opposite. They married in 1974, after graduating from *Rosenort Collegiate*, and moved onto a hog farm west of town. At 19, Marj gave birth to Tom. Jen, Katie, Sara and Billy soon followed. Life was merry, but not without bumps. No one worked harder than Jim, who also managed the local lumberyard, but in the ‘80s hog prices hit rock bottom. Interest rates and feed prices were sky-high. In 1986 they had to sell the farm and move into town, where Jim took over G.K. Braun Insurance from father-in-law Sydney. Marj was devastated – she loved that old farm.

Marj was a news junkie who never shut off her beloved CBC, and landed a job with a community paper, the *Scratching River Post*, to help pay with the bills. That caused quite the stir in Rosenort, where women still don’t work outside the home. Marj shrugged off the whispers, dragging Sara and Billy-then still in diapers-across southern Manitoba on assignment. Soon, she herself became a familiar radio voice on the CBC. Once, says Jen, she skydived live on the air, “hootin’ and hollerin’ all the way.”

In 1990, a story brought her to Roseau River First Nation, the neighbouring reserve. Reporters had drawn straws for the assignment. Marj got the short one. She begged to be reassigned, she later told then-chief Lawrence Henry. She was terrified, sure she’d never make it off reserve in one piece. “Next thing you know,” says Lawrence with a chuckle, “we couldn’t get rid of her.” Marj never looked back. She reported from across northern Manitoba and Ontario, wrote histories of the Mishkeegogamang and *Big Trout Lake* First Nations, and launched a consultancy, *Rosetta Projects*, organizing community health assessments, fire and flood evacuations, and research projects for reserves. Jim made it possible by learning to cook, clean, and keep the home fires burning, no matter what anyone thought. Marj was happiest working up in Mish

and Red Sucker Lake, Jim loved Marj, and that was that.

Tragedy struck in 1994. Tom, their music-loving 17-year-old, and his two young cousins were killed one night when their car collided with a combine. Marj grieved deeply; Jim turned inward. Those were dark days. Marj found comfort and acceptance at Roseau. She loved sweat lodges, especially: the hiss of water hitting scorching rocks, the darkness, drumming, and mournful songs. It was Tom’s time, the elders gently explained, nothing more. She went to Lawrence in tears. The prejudicial stories she’d heard about his people, she said, “were all lies. All I’ve ever got from you was compassion.” In her deep loneliness for her boy, she began fostering

Aboriginal children: Cody, Martha, and a dozen more. Callie, whom Marj helped raised from infancy, still calls her “mom.”

After Tom’s death she left the church. She no longer saw the world as black and white. She’d come to understand the double stigma of being born both poor and Aboriginal. Hard work, sometimes, just isn’t enough.

With Marj, a bridge, finally, had gone up between the two communities. Physically, only the Red River separated them, but for 150 years they’d existed as parallel universes. “Never mind racism-Mennonites moved to North America to escape from society,” explains Marj’s brother, Peter. “We didn’t even talk to French people.” Marj, who had one

foot planted in each side, pushed her community to understand what made their native neighbours tick-and vice-versa. “She tried so hard to clean up that negative stereotype of us,” says Roseau’s Lucy Ducharme, a close friend. As for Ducharme’s white neighbours? She has come to realize that, “They have problems too.”

On Nov. 9, Marj was heading home from the reserve to change for an evening sweat with Lawrence. As she crossed Highway 23, the halfway point between Roseau and Rosenort, her Chevy Impala was broadsided, instantly killing Marj. She was 54.

MacLeans (December, 2010)



## Memories of Marj ...

**... this issue of *Healthy as can be!* is dedicated to freelance author/writer Marj Heinrichs who was inspirational in helping us in RHA Central share our stories through her writings and her community involvement. Marj is remembered with deepest respect for her many contributions, gifts and creativity ... but mostly for “being Marj” and for the long lasting footprints that she leaves on our hearts. God bless her spirit that will serve to inspire and motivate us ... — With love from your friends from RHA Central.**



# A day in the life of an RHA Central Board Member

IT'S NOT EVEN LIGHT out on a wintry December day and the coffee pot's already drained as the computer screen displays the media scans that arrive daily with all sorts of regional, provincial and national health care news. It's important to keep up to date with these things.

Then it's off to the post office to pick up the package of information that needs to be thoroughly digested before next week's monthly board meeting. I'd better pencil in some reading time for later this evening.

And it's off for the two-hour drive, in blowing snow, to the Policy Review Committee meeting. Now, where did I put the notes I jotted down for it? Isn't it funny how your best ideas seem to always come at 3 a.m. in the morning?

Okay, so maybe this isn't a typical day in the life of an RHA Central Board Member, but volunteering to sit on a regional governing board requires a big commitment of both time and energy. Besides the monthly board and committee meetings, there are workshops, conferences and public events to attend, and yes, there's also some homework.

So why would anyone volunteer?

Elin Czeranko, who has served on the RHA Central Board for four years, joined because of her own family's personal experiences with the health care system. "My parents had each been in the personal care home for around ten years in the 1980's and 90's and they were looked after very well, and I want things like that to continue, so I decided to get involved," she says.

The decision to join the RHA Central



Armande LeClair and Elin Czeranko, Board Members for RHA Central

Board three years ago was more of a logical progression for Armande LeClair. She had already been a volunteer with the Santé Montcalm Healthy Community Committee and regional *Table de Concertation régionale du Centre* and had seen for herself the professionalism and dedication of the RHA Board and staff. "We have committed board members and a committed CEO, senior management and staff," says LeClair. "The collaboration between these people is excellent."

Neither of these first-time RHA Board Members will deny that it's a lot of work, but they both see it as an opportunity to make a difference in the health and wellness of everyone in the Central Region community.

"It's a great working environment, it's very satisfying to see how advances are being made, and it's a very caring RHA," says Czeranko. "Good things are happening, and people have to be part of the solution."

## Volunteers are...

**Priceless commodities who augment our community program.**

— Rosemary Pitt, Barb McGillivray & Jodi McLean, Manitou

## Reaching out to Central Region

As part of RHA Central's new five-year strategic health plan, its Board of Directors has taken the unusual step of developing its own strategies, one of which centres around improving community engagement and partnership as well as a culture of safety, quality and risk management.

"The Board works as one for the betterment of the whole region and I think it's important we let people know this," says Armande LeClair, Board Member for the past three years. "In order to offer the best services we can, we need to feel the pulse of what's going on in every community."

As part of the strategy, the Board revolves its monthly meetings around different communities in the region. This gives Board Members a chance to discuss and learn about specific issues relevant to that community, such as enhancing connections with new immigrant populations, addressing the needs of seniors or working more closely with aboriginal youth.

Elin Czeranko, also sits on the Community Engagement and Partnership Committee. "We have a huge RHA and if we can interact more meaningfully with communities and build strong partnerships, we can strive to become "AS HEALTHY AS CAN BE," she says.

## RHA Central Volunteer Recognition Award

CENTRAL REGION volunteers are known for their sense of caring and desire to share and volunteer their time and services for the needs of others in health care. We appreciate their many skills and talents which they donate so generously to various health care programs and services.

It is for that reason that, in 2009, the RHA Central Board of Directors created a Volunteer Representative Recognition Award to honor Central Region volunteers and/or volunteer agencies that is representative of the volunteer spirit and whose commitment and efforts have contributed significantly to helping people become "healthy as they can be". Under this umbrella includes such initiatives as: assisting people to become aware of what makes them healthy, encouraging a healthy active lifestyle, mobilizing other volunteers

efforts in health care endeavors and outstanding volunteer efforts in relation to the determinants of health.

Each year, the RHA Central Annual Public Meeting is held in a community within Central Region. Once this location is determined by the Board of Directors, an invitation is extended to the host community to take part on the organizing committee to discuss and put in motion the selection process. The volunteer representative/group is selected by the host community with the presentation taking place at the RHA Central October Annual Public Meeting.

**The 2009 and 2010 recipients were Gladstone Seniors Inc. and Central Plains Cancer Care Services respectively. The RHA Central 2011 Annual Public Meeting will be held on October 5, 2011 in Notre Dame de Lourdes.**

## Vision 2016: Together, Making a Difference



*Making a Difference* presents a blueprint for engaging the Region and its partners in translating strategies into reality. How far we go depends on us all.

"Reflections of the priorities raised in our dialogue with the community, staff, physicians and other stakeholders, this dynamic and evolving strategic plan will help guide us in our planning efforts," shares Chairperson Denise Harder. "We invite partners to join us in achieving this vision as a collective approach will certainly afford us all more meaningful opportunities in the future."

"In addition to serving as a planning document, the Region's Strategic Plan is also an important accountability tool which will help monitor progress," adds CEO Kathy McPhail. "It will guide us all in our daily decision-making, in supporting community engagement."

RHA CENTRAL HAS recently unveiled its 2011-2016 Strategic Plan, *Vision 2016: Together, Making a Difference*.

With an expected population growth of 54% in the next quarter century, Central Region acknowledges the importance of working together to attend to the changing health needs of a growing and diverse community in a sustainable and timely fashion. Outlining key areas of focus for the next five years, *Vision 2016: Together*

**To access the RHA Central 2011-2016 Strategic Plan (complete document and/or summary), visit [www.rha-central.mb.ca](http://www.rha-central.mb.ca)**



# A tapestry of memories

A GROUP OF GRADE NINE students at Morris School had some very special Valentine's Day gifts for residents at the Red River Valley Lodge in Morris.

The students had made twenty Touch (or Memory) Quilts as a project in their Home Economics class and personally presented them to the residents on February 14th.

"It was a really heart warming day," says their teacher, Janine Rivard. "It really touched the kids' hearts, because they could see, one on one, that they were making a difference in a person's life."

All the materials to make the patchwork quilts were supplied by the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba. The quilts are part of an initiative called the Touch Quilts Project, the purpose of which is to create a caring community throughout Manitoba that is responsive to the needs of people living with Dementia.

Touch Quilts are designed to be therapeutic for the people that receive them. The quilts are made from assorted bits of fabric, some of which may contain buttons or zippers, and provide mental stimulation to the person touching it and reminds him or her of things in their past.

"The students were very proud of their work and the residents were just so thankful, they had wonderful big smiles on their faces," says Cora Olson, a Recreation Worker at the Red River Valley Lodge. "Getting a gift from someone always makes them feel so special. It was a wonderful thing to see."

The students, says Rivard, got wholeheartedly behind the project from the moment she mentioned it to them, even working harder to make more quilts than there were students in the class.



A group of grade nine students at Morris School had some very special gifts for residents at the Red River Valley Lodge in Morris.

"Two of our students made a little speech at the presentation," says Rivard. "And one young man said that he hoped the residents really liked our quilts even though, he said, there were lots of mistakes in them, but they had made them the best they could and with love in their hearts."

But the quality of the workmanship wasn't an issue for the residents who received the quilts. "For the residents to receive the quilts from the individuals who made them, that was what made it truly meaningful to them," says Tammy Klassen, Client Services Manager at Red River Valley Lodge.



## Touch Quilts Project

Tammy Klassen, Client Services Manager at Red River Valley Lodge in Morris shares this excellent quote about Alzheimer's disease and Touch Quilts from the Mayo Clinic:

***"Your life is like a tapestry woven from your memories of people and events; some threads are dark while others are bright. Your individual tapestry shines vividly in your mind reminding you of who you are, where you have been and what you have done. Alzheimer's disease gradually robs people of the memories that make up their tapestries. You can help mend these holes by creating a tangible repository of memories."***

For more information about the Touch Quilts project contact the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba at 1-800-378-6699 Email: [touchquilts@alzheimer.mb.ca](mailto:touchquilts@alzheimer.mb.ca) or visit them online at <http://www.alzheimer.mb.ca/touchquilt.html>



Ireland Moore brings home the gold in the running segment.

## PILOT MOUND

### Boot Camp towards wellness

IN PARTNERSHIP with Recreation and Youth and locals, the RHA Central and the communities of Pilot Mound and area worked on an event to engage teens and families to participate in the community triathlon event held in Summer 2010. The RHA Central grant provided seed money to help organize a fun "triathlon boot camp" over a six week period, not only to help build skills for the triathlon, but more importantly for learning lifelong everyday habits. Sessions promoted safety, fun, and involvement of all abilities while

learning skills on strength training, how to properly ride a bike, running/walking, etc!

The Pilot Mound Triathlon was enjoyed by youth and the "not so young" alike. Ireland Moore participated, brought home the gold in the running segment! The popular boot camp was able to continue for an additional four weeks beyond the triathlon thanks to the partnership with Millennium Centre in Pilot Mound with hopes of continued programming to come!



# Health care renewal continues in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes

NOTRE-DAME-DE-LOURDES is finally going to get a new hospital to replace the aging facility that is one of the oldest in the RHA Central Region.

Approval for construction of the new 10-bed, acute care facility, announced by the Province in December 2010, is the second part of a long-term vision for the community for a health and wellness campus.

The first part of the plan was the Centre Albert-Galliot, a primary health care facility which was built, and is owned and operated by the community and houses a medical clinic, pharmacy and many other services. It sits beside the Foyer, a 60-bed personal care home, and the new hospital is to be located in the same area to complete the 'campus concept'.

The tireless efforts of the community of Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes have played a huge role in seeing the long-anticipated dream of a new hospital come to fruition.

"The community has continued to make a lot of efforts, both politically and financially, to promote this vision of health care that Notre Dame has always had," says Paul Cenerini, a community representative involved in the project.

That included an investment by the community of greater than \$2 million to build the Centre Albert-Galliot, and a

commitment to raise 10% of the cost of the new facility, for which fundraising efforts have already begun. The community has already paved the way for the new hospital, re-locating an existing building from its original site to another location at a cost of \$650,000.

The new facility will also provide upgraded services, such as diagnostics, an area where the current hospital is challenged in the face of modern day requirements. "This capital project will be a welcome renewal of the time-expired infrastructure, and will give us the ability to meet current codes and standards," says Kathy McPhail, CEO of RHA Central.

Apart from the much needed upgrades, the new hospital will also help offer stability and security to the community, which Cenerini says is already being felt.

"Young people in the community, that work directly or indirectly in health care, can now know they have job security and can plan their lives long term in Notre Dame," says Cenerini. "We've already seen an economic boom, for example there are eight new houses being built in the community this summer, which shows the optimism for the future."

But the benefits of the new facility will reach far beyond the community itself.

"Notre Dame is a very vibrant



Paul Cenerini, a community representative involved in the project.

francophone community," says McPhail. "It provides education and training for francophone healthcare students from across Canada, as well as other students

in family medicine. So it will also continue to serve and grow as an important hub in that regard as well."

## Volunteers are...

**Very crucial for a lot of communities with a lot of elderly patients.**

— Sameh Fikry, St. Claude

## As the flood waters rose, we were reminded to be kind to ourselves!

AS MANITOBA BRACED for some potentially serious flooding, it would have been easy to get caught up in the stress and anxiety that such adversity can bring and overlook the things that keep us healthy. But it's at such times that we need to try and maintain our perspective and look after ourselves advises Brad Street, Director of Health Services with the Regional Health Authority – Central Manitoba Inc. in Morris. "This isn't a normal day to day thing, so although there will be some anxiety, if people can understand that and be prepared it will help them cope with it and stay healthy," he says.

Street is fortunate that he does not have to plan alone and his counterpart Joanne Egilson of Gladstone echoes this statement as she recently coordinated the evacuation and reentry of the Seven Regions Health Centre in Gladstone. Whether from the Rising Red in the south-eastern portion of our region or from the Whitemud River in the Gladstone area, the flood threat and outcomes require a lot of planning hours and coordination of health care services. Street and Egilson agree that the evacuation of one community or area has an impact that reaches far beyond its own boundaries. As a result, the RHA collaborated with regional facilities, as well as municipalities and communities to

develop an emergency plan that ensured quality health care services would continue to be delivered across the region.

"Our primary goal is to ensure we have an appropriate, safe place where client care needs can be met within other facilities in our region," says Egilson.

Making sure that vulnerable populations living outside of health care facilities also receive the help they need is another facet of the emergency planning

effort. The RM of Montcalm and Town of Morris have a pre-registration system which provides information about the care needs of vulnerable community members, such as medications and mobility status. "If we would have had to evacuate, we had all this information organized and ready," says RM of Montcalm Reeve, Roger Vermette.

Past flood experiences have helped shape future responses. The RHA, through its programs such as community

mental health, and other partners across the region provides updated information, support and resources to help people cope through this stressful time. "One of the biggest things to deal with, apart from the flood itself, is the anxiety and fear that people have," says Mayor of Morris, Gavin van der Linde. "So the support of the RHA really helps the community with that part of it." For ongoing/updated information, please visit [www.rha-central.mb.ca](http://www.rha-central.mb.ca).

## Responding to an Emergency Incident

The RHA Central has established an *Emergency Incident Management System* that reinforces its commitment to protect, preserve and promote the health of clients and stakeholders, including emergency situations. Recognizing that each situation is unique, this system is basically a collection of "checks and balances" for consideration in potential emergency situations, i.e. flood, train derailment, pandemic, etc. It is based on an "all-hazards approach" that understands the potential threats to our communities and the common consequences on the health sector.

Adopted internationally to manage disaster, the Regional Operation Centre (ROC) coordinates response to an emergency incident. By adopting the ROC structure which is familiar to key organizations such as RMs and the

Province, we have common ground with other organizations and this makes us more effective in our response and provides the required expertise and logistics to manage response and action.

Typically, a disaster is declared when the situation surpasses the local agency/community's capacity to manage the event. A response will be activated to the extent required by the nature of the disaster, i.e. emergency incident may affect only one site, one community, the region as a whole, or beyond. Depending on the situation at hand, triggers are established to determine appropriate time to activate the ROC to oversee the Emergency Incident Management System and guide decision-making and efforts.



# When a community heals itself... the children start to dance again

*Any effective health promotion program begins with the youth; they are the future.*

TRADITIONAL NATIVE dancing is just one of the community activities that has seen a resurgence at Swan Lake First Nation as part of an ongoing initiative, involving both community and non-community partners, that is seeking to promote health and well-being.

Any effective health promotion program begins with the youth; they are the future and, if they can be steered in the direction of healthy lifestyle choices, that future gets just a little bit brighter for everybody in the community.

In 2008, Swan Lake First Nation was invited to be the only First Nations community in Manitoba to participate in a pilot project, funded through First Nation and Inuit Health, designed to increase knowledge and understanding of the issues and trends related to prescription drug use. The community saw it as an opportunity to further its focus on educating its young people, as well as the rest of the community, about the importance of living well and making life-enriching choices.

"Swan Lake is one of the smaller First Nation communities, but they have people who feel very passionate about the health of their community," says Kristal McKittrick-Bazin, RHA Central's Director of Health Services for the Swan Lake area. "They saw it as an opportunity to develop some valuable partnerships."

A working group was established that brought together representatives from 15 different stakeholder groups including community members, the Chief and Council, the Swan Lake First Nation

Health Director and School, RHA Central, RCMP, Building Healthier Communities, the National Native Alcohol and Drug Addictions Program and the Brighter Futures Community Health Program. "The job of the group was to identify the health promotion and prevention issues related to drug utilization and try to figure out ways to help educate people about them," says Craig Soldier, Health Director of Swan Lake First Nation Health Centre.

Education was a major component of the process, and workshops and presentations were held at the First Nation School and within the community, which provided knowledge about the personal health and community consequences of incorrect prescription drug use. They also brought in Aboriginal speakers who discussed their own experiences with prescription drug abuse and their path to recovery.

Equally important was the incredible participation by the community itself, the elders and other caring and committed individuals who got involved and helped give true meaning and purpose to the work of the group within the community. "There was a lot of information provided and absorbed by community members who took it and tried to inform other people in the community," says Soldier. "They made sure that people were aware of what was going on."

Being involved in the program was a terrific experience in partnership building, says McKittrick-Bazin. "To see the partnerships and the willingness to collaborate to make positive outcomes



was marvellous," she says. "Everyone should be very proud of what they have achieved."

Funding for the program ended in 2009, but the community and the stakeholder groups are now coming together again to build on what they have

started. They know that achieving small changes in attitude and behaviour at the local, community level are the drivers of change in the broader health care system that eventually leads to healthier communities for everyone.



## Cooking up a storm in Manitou

THROUGH THE HEALTHY Living Together program in Central, youth in Manitou participated on a planning table to implement healthy cooking classes to help build skills to prepare meals when leaving home ... a type of "how to manage without 'mom' plan of action". The initiative was introduced within the context of the Grades 11 and 12 phys-ed/health class and beautifully demonstrated partnerships with Manitou local grocery store, Central Region Healthy Living, and the Nellie-McClung Collegiate in Manitou.

The partnership initiative included actual cooking experiences of breakfast and healthy snack preparation, as well as

grocery store tours where students were invited to identify salt or fat percentages in products as well as portion/serving size. A final celebration to demonstrate the skills learned is planned with a community lunch showcasing recipes learned! A CD-ROM of all classes and recipes will be provided to the school to sustain classes and to be shared on the school computer system for other schools to access.

*For further information, contact Cheryl Pearson (435-2773) or Karen Lewarne, Phys-ed/Health Teacher, Nellie-McClung Collegiate (242-2750).*



Ina Parker quit smoking seven years ago at the age of 86.

# It's never too late

INA PARKER IS LIVING proof that it's never too late to make healthy choices. Ina quit smoking seven years ago at the age of 86. After seeing a friend that was struggling with lung cancer eventually end up with a voice box surgery and an oxygen tank, Ina decided enough was enough and she went home, threw away her cigarettes and put away all her ashtrays.

"I just decided that I wasn't going to end up like my friend," says Ina. "It was hard at first but I made up my mind and I did it."

"We see lots of information about what smoking can do to your health," says Public Health Nurse, Charlotte Hince. "But I think when we put a face to some of that, as Ina did with her friend, it has more impact."

Ina grew up in a non-smoking household, but says she began smoking at sixteen, when she started working in the Eaton's store in Winnipeg, where all her co-workers smoked. "Cigarettes were cheap back then," she says. "You could get five cigarettes for five cents, and it was what everyone did. Back then it was glamorous, but now I know all the damage that can be done by smoking."

When she first told Hince about her decision to quit, she was a little sceptical that, after all those years of smoking, Ina

would be able to do it. "But I am amazed at how well she did," says Hince. "I am very proud of Ina. She is a true inspiration for others."

Ina had help from her doctor, who prescribed a nicotine patch to help wean her off the cigarettes, and despite some cravings for about a year, Ina stuck to the program and has never smoked since. "After I quit, my appetite was a little better, and I could smell and taste my food better," she says.

A Tobacco Working Group has recently been formed within RHA Central to try and bring together different smoking cessation resources and find creative ways to both persuade smokers to try and quit and support them in that goal. "We have to approach smoking in a non-judgemental way and plant the seed with smokers that they can plan to quit and there are plenty of options out there to help them," says Hince, who is a part of the group.

So what advice would Ina give others who want to kick the nicotine habit? "Well you have to want to quit," she says. "That's the biggest thing."

And it may just help you reach 93 years, like Ina.

Ina Parker quit smoking seven years ago at the age of 86.

# Bridging the Gap...

## Enriching the volunteer experience to build a better future for our communities

HOW CAN WE BRIDGE the gap between what Canadians are looking for in volunteering today and how organizations are engaging volunteers? Conducted in the summer of 2010, a new pan-Canadian research study provides the most current national data about the changing culture of Canada's voluntary sector. Unlike earlier surveys that emphasized overall participation rates, this new research captured what Canadians want in their

volunteer experiences, their issues in finding satisfying volunteer roles, and what organizations can do to enhance their volunteer base, achieve their missions and ultimately build stronger communities. For more details, please refer to the full document 'Bridging the Gap: Enriching the volunteer experience to build a better future for our communities - Highlights of a pan-Canadian research study' at [www.volunteer.ca](http://www.volunteer.ca)

## With Thanks to Volunteers

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER Week was marked and celebrated in Central Region from April 10-16, 2011. RHA Central knows that volunteering strengthens not only health care but also society as a whole by offering opportunities for volunteers to share their skills and to learn new ones. The helping spirit, warmth and personal

touch of volunteers complements staff efforts in caring for clients. In turn, this ensures that health programs, services and communities continue to grow and thrive. Once again, we would like to extend our appreciation to all our volunteers for their TLC and for bringing smiles to the lives of Central's clients.

## The Smokers' HELPLINE



Canadian Cancer Society / Société canadienne du cancer  
MANITOBA DIVISION

Quitting smoking can be a challenging process even at the best of times. But we know that it's worth it - You'll be healthier, you'll have more money to spend, and your friends and family will breathe easier, too. We all know the reasons to quit - but we also know that it isn't easy.

The **Smokers' Helpline** is a free, bilingual, one-to-one and confidential service that **doubles** your chances of successfully quitting smoking.

**Research shows that six months after calling the Smokers' Helpline, 90% of smokers have made some progress towards quitting, such as setting a quit date or cutting down on tobacco use. Additionally, 90% of those who called the line would recommend it to others.**

To speak directly to a trained quit Specialist call **1-877-513-5333**.

**The Hours of Operation for this Service are:**

**Monday to Thursday 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.**

**Friday to Sunday 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

**There is a 24-hour messaging service available.**

*The Smokers' Helpline is a program of the Canadian Cancer Society, with financial contributions from Health Canada and the Government of Manitoba.*

*For more information on the Smokers' Helpline Fax Referral Program please contact Will Cooke, Canadian Cancer Society at (204) 774-7500 (toll free 1 888 532-6982 ext. 236) or visit [www.smokershelpline.ca](http://www.smokershelpline.ca)*

## About Tobacco

Nicotine is one of the most addictive substances on the planet, which means it doesn't relinquish its hold easily. Tobacco use can lead to all kinds of other health complications in the life of a smoker. Tobacco users who have surgery, for example, are eight times more likely to have complications after a surgical procedure than non-smokers.

So one of the first steps is to talk with people about their tobacco use and educate them about the harm that it can do to their health in a way that is meaningful to them. RHA Central Tobacco Working Group hope to find ways to encourage and support people to try and cut down on their tobacco use and eventually to kick the habit.

## Volunteers are...

**One of our most valuable assets. They are the backbone of our organization.** — Anonymous



# “A faithful friend is the medicine of life”

NOBODY KNOWS the truth of this quote from the bible (Ecclesiasticus 6.16) more than Ken Crawford of Manitou. Weekly visits from three old friends are helping Ken heal and recover from some serious medical problems, and prove that nothing can come between true friendships.

Every Monday morning you will usually find local community members, Steve Yach, Jake Letkeman and Doug Gunn, playing cards with Ken at the Pembina Manitou Health Centre (PMHC), where he has been a resident since June, 2010.

The four have been friends for many years and had enjoyed their daily rivalries over the crib board at the local Friendship Centre until Ken was hospitalized a couple of years ago. Following a protracted stay in Boundary Trails Health Centre and a couple of months in Winnipeg at St. Boniface General Hospital, Ken was finally able to return to his community, but not his home.

“When Ken couldn’t come to the Friendship Centre anymore, we decided we would take the game to him,” says Jake, continuing the tradition and helping Ken maintain his connection to his friends and the community he has been a part of all his life.

That’s a connection that isn’t always easy to keep going from a long term care facility. “Visitation is very important for our residents,” says Linda Pearce, Director of Health Services at PMHC. “So for Ken to carry on with something that he is used to doing, and to be able to look forward to a conversation with the guys and hear what’s going on in the community, it makes him feel at home.”



*Ken Crawford (left) looks forward to the weekly visits from his three good friends who come to play cards and keep him abreast of all the community news. Also pictured are (L to R) Margaret Crawford (Ken’s wife), Steve Yach, Doug Gunn and Jake Letkeman.*

The facility’s resident lounge becomes almost a living room as the four friends take it over to talk and laugh and lift the spirits of everyone in the room. “I really enjoy it,” says Ken. “I appreciate them coming.”

There is virtually nothing that can stop

the weekly visits, apart from an illness or the odd snowstorm, but the guys like to downplay their volunteer commitment. “To me it’s just a continuation of a friendship,” says Steve, as he shuffles the deck to start another game.

It’s a reminder that whatever life deals us, we will always have a couple of aces in our hand as long as we have good friends like these.

## Let’s Get Better Together

DEVELOPING A CHRONIC illness is a traumatic and deeply personal experience, but being able to talk with someone else who knows what you are dealing with can be both reassuring and beneficial. No one knows that better than two-times cancer survivor, Janet Teichrib. It’s the reason she decided to volunteer for a program called Get Better Together, which she recently helped deliver in the community of Plumas.

“I was happy to participate in the program,” says Teichrib. “It’s a very positive and helpful program, because I can talk to the participants about things that I do. For example I can say that when I do deep breathing exercises, my breathing does improve and then my heart rate improves. I can speak from my own experience.”

Get Better Together is a chronic disease self-management support program, with a strong focus on lay leadership. Volunteers, who have or had chronic illness, work with groups of people who are also experiencing

chronic conditions to help them deal with the challenges.

“It resonates much more with clients,” says Jennifer Baker, Regional Director of Healthy Living with RHA Central, who coordinates the program and arranges training for the volunteers. “It’s about creative problem-solving with the help of others who have been through the same thing, rather than struggling by yourself.”

The premise is that, although health professionals can provide lots of care and information about a particular disease, the messages that come from a peer who is dealing with the same issue are stronger and inspire the kind of behavioural changes that can have a positive effect on the health of a chronic disease sufferer.

“We want people to live healthy lives with chronic conditions, and supporting them to do the things that keep them healthy when they have a chronic condition,” says Baker.

Teichrib feels it’s a program that offers



*Janet Teichrib and her co-leader Karen Cavat led the Plumas Get Better Together program.*

them something that they might not have expected when they signed up, even for people who are managing their condition well. “Often there was something they got from the program that they hadn’t thought of,” says Teichrib. “For example, things like diet. Some of the participants were people

living alone and so we discussed ideas for making nutritious meals for just one person.”

The program has so far been offered in just a few communities, but the RHA is planning to offer it to more locations across Central Region in the future.



# The importance of giving blood



JOANNA GINTER RESIDES in Gretna, Manitoba. She was diagnosed with a life-threatening obstetric complication. Her daughter Esme Lyla was born 14 weeks premature by emergency C-section on December 23, 2009.

Esme weighed less than 2 pounds and was 12 ¼ inches long. She was stable at first, but then her little body started to tire out. One of the most common struggles a premature baby faces is not being able to make enough blood for what their body needs. During Esme's 15-week hospital stay she received 8 life-saving blood transfusions. She was pale and struggling to breath before a transfusion, and then to see her afterwards, pink and restful, was like watching a miracle. Joanna found herself thinking how different her story could have been if she hadn't received the best Christmas gift of all.

Donors are encouraged to give the gift of blood ... it only takes an hour and you could give a family, just like the Ginter's, the gift of life. To make an appointment to donate blood, please call 1 888 2 DONATE (1 888 236 6283).



*Joanna Ginter and her daughter Esme Lyla who was born 14 weeks premature in December, 2009. Today, Esme is a happy and healthy toddler thanks to Canadian Blood donors.*

**Together we save lives!**

# Finding new friends at the Foyer

ROBERT CLARK LIKES movies and playing Dance Revolution on his Nintendo Wii just like many other seventeen year-old teenagers.

But he also likes helping people, and that's why Robert can be found every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at the Foyer in Notre Dame de Lourdes, playing cards with residents, setting up the weekly bingo games or doing laundry.

It all began a couple of years ago as a special work experience program through the *Collège régional Notre-Dame*, but has grown into a personal interest for Robert, who now also volunteers on his own time at special events and evening programs at the 60-bed personal care home.

I caught up with him at the Foyer one bitterly cold January day, which Robert said was very much like the day he was born, where he was playing cribbage with resident, Louis Touchette. As Louis watched Robert deal the cards, he admitted that he wasn't expecting to win the game, but that he is happy when Robert comes and helps him pass the time this way.

"The residents really look forward to Robert coming," says Rose-Anne

Monchamp, the Recreation Director at the Foyer Notre Dame. "Some of the card games can get quite lively, and one resident even keeps a score-card in his room of who wins the games, which is a lot of fun for them both."

Robert, who has autism, is very good with numbers, says Monchamp. She recalls the afternoon that Robert was playing cards as usual with a resident, when a nurse stopped by to remind the resident that he had an appointment the following day for some tests. Robert was immediately able to tell him how many hours, minutes and seconds were left before the appointment time.

He also helps out some of the more absent-minded staff members. When Monchamp admitted to Robert that she was having trouble remembering the numerical access code for the door that leads downstairs, his response was to translate the code as a "month and day" that corresponded to the numbers, which was the method he had devised to remember them. She never forgot the code again.

And Robert's kindness and dedication are not likely to be soon forgotten either.



*Volunteer, Robert Clark (left) and resident, Louis Touchette (right) play cribbage at the Foyer in Notre Dame de Lourdes.*

## Volunteers are...

**The backbone and unsung heroes of every community.**

— Anonymous



# New Tabor Home keeps seniors in the community

MORDEN IS IN THE QUEUE for a brand new Tabor Home to replace the existing facility, which will increase the number of living units from 60 to 100.

The community of Morden has experienced rapid growth over the past ten years, partly due to immigration in the area and also due to the building of Boundary Trails Health Centre, which has attracted many retirees to the community. That has meant that the demand for personal care beds has exceeded availability, and has led some people to be re-located to facilities in other communities.

The new Tabor Home facility will provide the opportunity to continue the quality care that Tabor is known for -- but in a new and enhanced physical environment", says RHA Central CEO Kathy McPhail. It will benefit people waiting for personal care home placement and the community as a whole."

The new Tabor Home has been a long time in the planning, but the community has remained committed to seeing the project become a reality.

"It's something that the community has been wanting for a long time and has been working very diligently to bring about," says Irvin Wiebe, Vice-Chair of the Tabor Home Board of Directors. "Tabor Home has always been seen as a community facility and we have had a lot of community support. It took a tremendous number of volunteer hours to put together petitions, lobby government and meet with the various organizations and groups to get the ball moving on this plan."

A private developer will build an 83-unit assisted living complex adjacent to the new Tabor Home, forming the basis of a 'campus concept', with the intention of meeting the short, medium and long-term needs of the area's senior population. "It will mean that services will remain close to home and meet the needs of the increasing population in this area," says Sherry Hildebrand, CEO of Tabor Home.

The spacious new facility will offer many badly needed updates, like private, wheelchair accessible bathrooms and larger rooms. Our staff has provided wonderful care but they have done so under some very time-expired facilities," says Wiebe.

The much-anticipated new building will be modern, but with a warm, home-like atmosphere, and will positively enhance the quality of life for the residents, says Hildebrand.

"It's a big community project and everybody is really excited that it is now going to come to fruition," says Wiebe.



## An Introduction to Active Transportation

### Who participates?

Everybody. In fact, almost every trip starts (and ends) with active transportation.

### What is Active Transportation?

Active transportation is defined as any self-propelled mode of transportation that relies on the use of human-generated energy.\*

### Where is it done?

Active transportation is a big part of how all Manitobans move.

Active Transportation users make use of on-road infrastructure (like bike lanes and highways) or off-road infrastructure (like sidewalks, bike paths and ski trails), or any combination of these.

### When do we do it?

Every day.

Active transportation is something people do year round, no matter the weather or the climate.

### Why do we do it?

#### We each have our own reasons.

Whether it's for personal health, fitness, quality of life, the environment, saving money on gas, or pure enjoyment, there are lots of good reasons to get involved.

Active transportation is a big part of being alive. How far we each take it depends on how we decide to live.

#### Why do we need more active transportation?

Everything from increased tourism to healthier kids, from money savings due to worker productivity and lower health care costs, from cleaner air to thriving communities ... the benefits to Manitoba are well-known.

**Why is change needed?** Active transportation has unlimited potential, but we require support, planning and action. The key is making it the easiest choice whenever possible.

- We need connected bicycle paths, in towns and between them.
- We need to encourage kids to walk to school.
- We need safer street crossings and safe speeds.
- We need better access to bicycles in remote communities.

... and so much more.

#### How can I make a difference?

The simplest thing you can do is to get out there:

- Walk to work.
- Bike to school.
- Just try it.
- It's not as far as you might think.
- Make small changes around you. Even it's installing a bike rack, the little things add up.
- Join a local trail committee.
- Tell people that you would like to see bike lanes on the road and safer routes to school for your children.

**To share your ideas or ask questions, contact us:**



**Physical Activity Coalition of Manitoba**

Active Transportation Project Coordinator (204) 294-7027 or [activetransportation@pacm.ca](mailto:activetransportation@pacm.ca)

\* The definition is extended to include those individuals where medically-prescribed assisted mobility is required.



# Aboriginal Partnership Agreement ...Work in Progress

IN JUNE 2010, RHA CENTRAL and 23 other partners signed a formal Aboriginal Workforce Partnership Agreement, which states that all of the parties will work together to increase the representation of Aboriginal people in all healthcare occupations throughout Central Region.

The historic agreement is modeled on similar agreements signed by two other RHA's in Manitoba but is distinctly different in the number of stakeholders it brings together, which include First Nation and Métis communities, local, provincial and federal governments, health sector employee unions and other stakeholders including Manitoba's education and training institutions.

"We are a huge region and we felt that in order for people to feel a part of this agreement, and to be able to work with our First Nations and Métis communities at the grassroots level with recruitment strategies, we needed to be as inclusive as possible," says Holly Leost, Regional Director for Aboriginal Employment with RHA Central.

The Agreement is part of an overall Aboriginal Recruitment and Retention Strategy which has been developed by RHA Central to try and increase Aboriginal representation in its workforce from the current 4% to at least 11.5% by 2016.

To achieve this, the stakeholders are looking at many different strategies and programs to encourage recruitment and retention, from outreach efforts to make aboriginal communities more aware of the various health care jobs that are available, to workplace cultural awareness promotion.

RHA Central also recognizes the importance of education in preparing aboriginal youth for a career in the health care field. In response, it offers a bursary program to aboriginal students enrolled



Above are members of the Aboriginal Workforce Partnership Agreement Stakeholders' Group at their first meeting held in August after the signing of the Partnership Agreement.

in health care studies and an Aboriginal Health High School Internship Program, which allows high school students to volunteer and job shadow in various health care roles for school credits and introduces them to the profession as a possible career choice. The RHA also partners with seven other RHAs to provide two annual Manitoba Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards.

The Aboriginal Partnership Agreement has been several years in the making but, as something that was of great importance and significance to the Central Region, it was important to get it right, says RHA Central's CEO, Kathy

McPhail. "We took the time that we needed to build the trust so our partners know that we are sincere," she says. "The Agreement means that all the partner organizations are saying we will work

towards trying to remove any barriers that exist for Aboriginal people being able to gain the necessary education, access positions and achieve gainful employment in a health care profession."



## Gladstone's own Elaine Scott brings joy to her community

**Elaine Scott** is an active volunteer who has touched the lives of many seniors who receive Meals on Wheels in the Gladstone community by recruiting and coordinating the volunteer drivers for the past four years. Elaine says that the reason she volunteers is to stay busy. She does a tremendous job, and her organizational skills and her commitment to the program and the community is deeply appreciated. Elaine is very creative in finding new volunteers - if they don't answer their phone, she will even find them in the local coffee shop! Thanks Elaine for a valuable job, well done!

## Walk a mile in my moccasins

As part of an ongoing initiative to foster better awareness of Aboriginal people in the workplace, RHA Central recently held a two-day workshop for staff members called "Walk a Mile in My Moccasins."

"It was a pilot program designed to learn about Canada's Aboriginal people - their culture, traditions, and struggles both past and present and how these affect the way they live today," says Holly Leost, Regional Director for Aboriginal Employment with RHA Central.

The workshop facilitators, Louise Chippaway and Dan Highway shared personal experiences and stories of Aboriginal people and gave some historical context to the impact of residential schools, early immigrant settlement policies and the significance of the Treaties signed with First Nations people.

In an evaluation completed last year by RHA staff members, Aboriginal history, traditions and culture were identified as key areas where they wanted to improve their understanding and knowledge.



# Cooking up some fun in Portage la Prairie

TAKE A GROUP OF KIDS, give them a mixing bowl and some veggies, sprinkle with lots of fun and you have a recipe for success.

That pretty much describes the Kids Cooking Club, a successful after-school program that was piloted at Portage Collegiate Institute in Portage la Prairie last fall, and gave seven kids in Grades 4 to 6 a chance to gain some cooking skills and learn a whole lot about food safety and nutrition.

The four-week program was coordinated through the RHA Central (RHA) in conjunction with the Portage la Prairie School Division, which provided the use of the school, food, lab and equipment.

The kids enjoyed cooking a meal from scratch each week, using some new ingredients like wild rice and cilantro, which many had never been exposed to before. Then there were the fun recipes: During one of the cooking sessions the kids cooked "chocolate cake in a mug" in just five minutes. "We put all the ingredients into a mug and then put it in the microwave and it expanded, but it doesn't droop over the edge, it stays in the cup," says 13-year old Jacoby Rumancik, one of the kids attending the club. "It was fun."

Recipes for the first week's meal were selected ahead of time, but the kids got to choose what they wanted to cook for the next three weeks of the program.

As much fun as preparing and cooking the food, was tasting it, says volunteer coordinator, Jo-Anne Metcalfe,



Pictured are "graduates" of the Kids Cooking Club, a successful after-school program piloted in Portage la Prairie.

recently retired RHA Central Dietitian, who was impressed at how keen the kids were to try new things and take some home for their parents to taste too. "We all had a blast," she says.

At the same time, the kids learned about food safety procedures like hand-washing and proper food storage and preparation, and received stickers when they tried a new food, all of which were chosen to meet the daily nutritional recommendations of Canada's Food

Guide. "We learned how to clean everything and separate the meat from the veggies," says Jacoby.

"Our youth health survey results showed that only 4% of grade 9 to 12 students ate the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables," says Dianna Meseyton-Neufeld, who helps administer the program on behalf of the RHA. "So we're trying to find a fun way to help kids get used to eating these things at an early age."

At the end of the program, the children each received a booklet with all the information they had learned as well as the recipes, which the aspiring young chefs were anxious to make for their families at home.

Thanks to the popularity of the program, two more sessions were held in March and April, this time at different schools to try and give as many kids as possible the opportunity to develop their culinary skills.

# Re-cycling that makes a real difference

THREE OR FOUR years ago, Jeff Hunter began collecting pieces of used furniture to try and help out some of his clients.

"When people are coming out of a safe house or the hospital, they are starting over and many of them literally don't have anything to furnish their new home," says Hunter, who is a Community Mental Health worker with RHA Central in Portage la Prairie. "So we started trying to collect a few things to help people out."

It was the beginning of a successful program that now also involves a number of community partners, including the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Family Abuse Prevention Centre, the Learning Centre and the Immigrant Resource Centre.

"It was at an inter-agency meeting that we realised all of us were trying to do a similar thing for our clients, so we got together and broadened our service and were able to provide more resources to people that needed them," says Bev Gradidge, Client Services Manager for Mental Health Programs in the north area with the RHA. "It's a nice way to meet those needs, with the community at large helping out others in the community."

The Portage community is certainly keen to help, and Hunter gets almost daily calls from individuals, and sometimes local businesses, wanting to donate

couches, chairs, dressers, beds and other items. A local hotel recently donated bed linens, towels and shower curtains, and sometimes even the clients themselves give something back. "It's always nice when we get people, who we have donated to, come back after they have gotten on their feet and back to work and donate some stuff back, so that someone else can benefit as they did," says Hunter.

Hunter and his team often pick up the furniture items, which also helps out the donors, and stores them in a garage, which fills and empties three to four times a year. Dressers are always a hot item, says Hunter, and beds are also in high demand.

Hunter says most people who donate items are genuinely happy that something they no longer need can make a difference to someone else's life and the people that receive them are always grateful for the generosity of others.

"It's helping people on a limited income to create a pleasant living environment for themselves and they are genuinely grateful that other people's generosity is helping them to get ahead once again," says Hunter.

*For more information on the used Furniture Depot in Portage la Prairie, call Jeff Hunter, Community Mental Health Worker at (204) 239-2308.*



Left to right, Jessica Klyne- Portage Abuse Prevention Center, Jeff Hunter Community Mental Health, Jason Turcotte Canadian Mental Health Association

## Volunteers are...

**Worth their weight in gold!**

— Helen Kinsmen, Boundary Trails



# Singing is good for the soul

WHICH IS WHY, UNFAILINGLY, one evening a month, Jake and Anna Froese and assorted members of their family and friends, will be found singing and playing music for the residents at Eden Mental Health Centre in Winkler.

“When they come it helps demonstrate to the staff and to the patients that there is a caring community out there,” says Irma Klassen, Coordinator of Volunteers for Eden Mental Health Centre. “The joy that they bring with them is truly wonderful.”

When the Froeses’ saw a note in their church bulletin ten years ago that was asking for people to help out with some evening entertainment for the patients at Eden, this musically-talented family didn’t hesitate to step up.

“We thought, well, God has given us the gift and love of singing, and this way we can share that gift with everyone,” says Anna, who adds that they feel blessed to feel the warmth and joy of the residents as they sing along with the family.

Anna and Jake have been entertaining at Eden since 2001, and have always, when possible, brought along their three children, Roman, Lucas and Abigail, who have grown up in the singing and volunteering tradition of their parents. In the last few years, some of Jake’s and Anna’s siblings, with their families and children have also joined them, as well as Jake’s parents.

Staff who have seen the Froeses’ in action say they are well-liked and interact easily and warmly with the residents and they have seen them bring smiles to the faces of people who may need a little “sunshine” in their lives.

Sometimes, it’s the residents who set the song list. “We had a lady one time, who wanted us to sing a song called ‘How Far is Heaven?’ It’s a very pretty song about a little girl who wants to go to heaven because her Daddy went there. But we didn’t know the words at the time. So she sang it and taught us the words,” says Anna.



*Pictured (l-r): Henry Froese, Irene Froese, Roman Froese (guitar), Darlene Froese, Trenton Froese, Rev. Jake Froese, Anna Froese and Abigail Froese.*

The family tradition of sharing and caring continues with the addition of Jake and Anna’s two-year old grandson, Trenton, to the group and when his great-grandparents are also there, that makes four generations of the Froese family all singing together at the same time.

“They have really made it a family ministry and instilling that sense of volunteerism in their kids is, I think, very special,” says Klassen.

It looks likely that the Froese family will be entertaining Eden’s residents for many years to come. “To God be the Glory,” says Anna.

## It's Safe to Ask

Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist...



- 1** What is my health problem?
- 2** What do I need to do?
- 3** Why do I need to do this?

**MANITOBA INSTITUTE FOR PATIENT SAFETY**  
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### Safe Kids Week 2011: Child Passenger Safety (May 30 – June 5, 2011)

The Safe Kids Week campaign raises awareness about a specific type of injury, and educates the public about prevention strategies. A different safety issue is chosen as the focus each year. The theme of Safe Kids Week 2011 is **Child Passenger Safety**. Car crashes kill more children than any other injury, but when car seats are used appropriately, they protect and decrease the likelihood of severe injury in children. Parents and caregivers can choose the right car seat or booster seat for their child and make sure it is used for every single ride. Here are some easy tips for Parents:

**TIP #1** Knowing a child’s height and weight before purchasing a new car seat is important.

**TIP #2** Before installing a new car seat, it’s very helpful to sit down with the car seat manual and the vehicle manual and read through both carefully. This can help to avoid frustrations.

If you are interested in becoming a car seat inspector for your community or you would like more information on how to find a certified car seat inspector in your region please call Healthy Living **1-800-RHA-6509** or visit [www.rha-central.mb.ca](http://www.rha-central.mb.ca)



# The meals keep rolling at Tabor Home

## Bachelor of Nursing Program

THERE HAS BEEN A MEALS on Wheels program at Tabor Home in Morden since the 1970's, delivering daily meals to around ten to twelve clients, and providing some hot, tasty food and sometimes, a very welcome visit.

"They are usually happy to see us," says volunteer, Sharon Olafson, who has been delivering Meals on Wheels with her friend, Sandra Geake, once a week for about ten years. "We know that they often don't see a lot of people and they often like to have a little visit with us."

And sometimes that also means helping them with their Word Search. Sandra recalls one lady who, when she found out Sandra also liked Word Search, started to seek her advice on some of the words she couldn't find. "You always feel good when you have done something for somebody," says Sandra, who began volunteering at the request of her sister-in-law, who was the Activities Coordinator at the time. "Sharon and I decided it would be fun to do it together and we have been doing it ever since."

It's a service that wouldn't be possible without the many volunteers, who turn up come rain, snow or shine to pull the little green wagon across the parking lot to the Tabor Home Units and Apartments. "Our volunteers do so much for us," says Administrative Assistant, Diane Compton. "They spend countless hours here. We have a lot of volunteers for different programs and all are very special."

"It is a very valuable program," says Sherry Hildebrand, CEO of Tabor Home. "And for the tenant, if he or she can eat at least one nutritious meal per day, by



Sharon Olafson and Sandra Geake have been delivering Meals on Wheels for 10 years.

coordinating with home care, we can provide the possibility for that person to remain in their own home longer."

It can also provide a welcome break for family members, who often find themselves bringing food or coming to cook meals for relatives at times when they aren't able to do it for themselves. "It can sometimes take a lot of the pressure off family," says Hildebrand.

A number of the volunteers for the

Meals on Wheels Program, like Sharon and Sandra, have been coming for many years. Another who recently retired had been coming faithfully since the beginning of the program. It's the kind of continuous commitment that isn't getting any easier to find. "It can be a real challenge to get people to come on a regular basis," says Hildebrand. "It's a big responsibility for the volunteers and we really appreciate everything they do."

### Volunteers are...

**Priceless! I see them every day giving a part of themselves.**

— Pat Sayer, Carman

• CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Students who enrol are often already employed with RHA Central and we support and encourage them in any way we can, says Hunter. That includes giving a full leave of absence for the duration of the course and holding their position if they wish to return when they graduate.

Pasowisty had worked for the RHA before taking her LPN training and she secured a new full-time nursing position upon graduation. She believes that doing her practicum locally, at the Portage District General Hospital, was a big factor. "It was a real benefit because they got to know me and could evaluate my work skills," she says. "The person that hired me was able to talk to my preceptor, who had spent a lot of time with me while I was on practicum. She gave me a good report and I think that also helped me to get a position." Dorothy definitely plans on enrolling in the rural BN program sometime in the next few years.

The retention rate among employees who graduate and return to an existing or new position within the RHA is high, and that makes any short term pain that the RHA may feel worth it, says Hunter. "When one of our LPN's goes into the BN program, that takes a nurse out of our staff," he says. "But it's a little short term pain for long term gain for us and for them it's an excellent opportunity to advance in their professional career."

**For more information regarding rural-based training opportunities in Central Region contact: [humanresources@rha-central.mb.ca](mailto:humanresources@rha-central.mb.ca) or (204) 428-2747**



### Gym nights draw crowds in Altona

Gilby Kehler gets his chance at kicking the BIG BALL during Altona & Area Family Resource Centre's Family Gym Nights which took place weekly in Altona and Gretna during January, February & March, 2011. This program has been keeping folks active in Altona and area for the past four years.

**For more information, contact Cheryl Pearson at (204) 435-2773.**

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# Making Carman a safer community



THE TOWN OF CARMAN, together with the RM of Dufferin has just been designated as a Safe Community (the third in Manitoba) through Safe Communities Canada, an organization dedicated to making Canada “the safest country in the world to live, learn, work and play.”

Safe Communities Carman/Dufferin (SCCD) has evolved out of the Healthy Communities initiative and brings together a number of partners, including Emergency Services, RCMP, RHA Central Manitoba Inc, municipal and town councils and schools, to focus specifically on injury prevention.

“SCCD is a networking of the

organizations that already exist within the community, and are already involved in injury prevention and safety promotion,” says SCCD co-Chair, Lynne Wilkinson. “What we are doing is pulling all those organizations together, identifying the priorities and then working with much more focus on those priorities.”

Four essential attributes for a Safe Community include a leadership team devoted to leading the process, the ability to sustain membership in the Safe Communities Canada organization, engagement of the entire community and setting safety priorities for the community.

Priority setting was a key component

of the application process, and eight priorities for Carman/Dufferin were identified (see sidebar). The exhaustive process for arriving at these priorities used statistics from Manitoba Health, as well as community exercises, which helped to add meaning to the data.

“First you have statistical injuries and then, as a community, you come in and look at that and discuss what we know about some of the possible causes of those injuries and add a qualitative aspect to it,” says Wilkinson.

To mark the Safe Communities designation, a community celebration evening was held April 28th, the day before the 2011 Healthy Communities Conference held in Carman.

Then the real work begins.

“Our short term goals are to put more emphasis on education in the community and to raise awareness of the organizations in town that are already promoting safety and what they are doing,” says Wilkinson, who adds that longer-term initiatives will also be developed to help make Carman and the RM of Dufferin a safer place to be.

## The Safety Priorities of Safe Communities Carman/Dufferin

The following were identified by Safe Communities Carman/Dufferin as priorities within the area for safety promotion and injury prevention.

- 1. Falls** (i.e. on ice, out of bed, from a ladder etc.)
- 2. Transport Accidents** (including on-road and off-road vehicles, pedestrian, bicycling, etc.)
- 3. Exposure to forces** (inanimate objects, i.e. a hockey puck and animate forces such as aggressive animals)
- Tied for 4
- 4. Over exertion and privation** (i.e. repetitive movements or dehydration)
- 4. Poisoning and toxic effects** (this could also include things like allergic reactions or improper use of medications).
- 5. Intentional self-harm**
- 6. Burns**
- 7. Assault**

### Volunteering is...

**Not how much we do, but how much love we put into doing that counts.**

— Sheryl Doerksen, MacGregor

## HEALTHY AS CAN BE!

Thank you for reading our May 2011 issue reaching households across Central Region. Created by the RHA Central, HEALTHY AS CAN BE! is published to share stories about health care, health promotion and health wellness.

Stories are written by RHA Central staff and/or Angela Lovell, freelance writer in Central Region. Many regards to the numerous interviewees who contributed to our stories.

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**Thank you for joining us!**



Pictured above is Lynne Wilkinson “passing the torch” to Dianna Meseyton-Neufeld for the 2012 Healthy Communities Conference to be held in Portage la Prairie.

## 2011 Healthy Communities Conference

THE THEME FOR THIS year’s Healthy Communities Conference, held in Carman on April 29th, was appropriately, Safe Communities.

“When Carman was asked by RHA Central to partner with them for the Healthy Communities Conference we were able to choose the theme, so it was a really good fit that the theme was Safe Communities,” says Conference co-Chair, Lynne Wilkinson.

Carman/Dufferin has just been designated as a Safe Community, so the

Conference was a good opportunity to explain what Safe Communities are all about and promote the safety and injury prevention priorities and initiatives for the area.

The Conference was organized by Healthy Communities Carman and RHA Central Manitoba Inc. and included guest speakers from other Safe Communities across Canada as well as presentations on safety and injury prevention topics.