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# Manitoba Stories

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Rosetta Projects



## What is the Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative (CDPI)?

CDPI stands for Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative. It's a grassroots initiative to prevent chronic disease in Manitoba. Regional health authorities and government provide training, funding and support, but CDPI projects are community initiated, planned and led.

CDPI programs address the three major risk factors that lead to chronic disease: smoking, physical inactivity, and unhealthy eating. CDPI supports people to live smoke-free, encourages healthy eating and promotes active living. Participating communities design programs to address the risk factors that affect their community.

CDPI is a five-year demonstration project jointly funded by Manitoba Health and Healthy Living and the Public Health Agency of Canada to March 2010. CDPI is implemented in 10 Regional Health Authorities in Manitoba involving 83 communities including 21 First Nation and 7 Métis communities. Approximately 330,000 Manitobans are being reached through CDPI.

### CDPI projects are:

*Grassroots:* Community members identify, initiate and lead projects.

*Evidence-informed:* Evidence is used to plan and design each project and to measure its effectiveness.

*Integrated:* CDPI aligns and blends with existing programs to add value and enhance their reach.

*Focused:* Projects target priorities or disadvantaged populations as identified by communities.

*Sustainable:* Strong partnerships and community ownership promote lasting effects.

### Why focus on preventing chronic disease?

Chronic diseases such as diabetes, arthritis, cancer, heart disease and stroke, kidney and lung disease are major causes of illness, disability and death in Manitoba. Six out of ten Canadians are living with at least one chronic disease. Chronic diseases are the leading causes of death in Canada.

Prevention is our best option for fighting chronic disease.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving/>

<http://www.healthincommon.ca/>



## Celebration and Inspiration

Most of the stories in this book began as telephone interviews with leaders or participants in Manitoba CDPI programs. The interviews were then transcribed and shaped into short stories which were sent back to the narrator for checking and change. Often the story also made the rounds of offices, supervisors or other interested parties. We did our very best to honour the spirit of the narration and incorporate every suggested change. Any errors that remain are those of the publisher, and please accept our apologies for those.

Almost without exception, everyone we talked to was going above and beyond what was expected of them, and many were selfless volunteers who gained only the pleasure of helping their communities and getting healthier themselves in the process. These volunteers, and the many vibrant and committed people we talked to who have CDPI as part of their day job, inspired us to be healthier too – to eat healthier foods, to get more active.

When you read through the stories or pick out various ones to enjoy, be aware that you are definitely comparing apples and oranges. The CDPI parameters encourage a huge variety in the way projects can be administered and what they can be. Each project fits a community's needs. Many grew out of existing projects or dovetailed into them, and these partnerships are encouraged by the Initiative.

Some stories are based on the experiences of a single group, such as a seniors centre in a small community, that applied for and received CDPI funds. They may have decided to construct a horseshoe pit, which seniors are now using every week, or they may serve healthy snacks at a weekly meeting, which helps bring people out, gets them socializing, feeling better about life, and getting healthier in body and mind. Sometimes the committee is little more than one or two intrepid souls who knock on doors and have a vision for a healthier community.

Then there are the larger centres like Brandon, Flin Flon or The Pas, where CDPI funding is meshed with Regional Health Authority programs and helped along by other community partners. The result might be hundreds more people in workplaces walking for exercise daily than there were before, or a major tobacco education campaign throughout a school district. The effort of all the hard-working people on the committees of the bigger communities is no less laudable and exciting for having lots of support.

The stories aren't placed together for any type of comparison or evaluation, but solely for celebration and inspiration. Let each story inspire you in different ways and energize you or your group towards initiatives that result in a healthier community.

We've placed the stories in alphabetical order according to community names. This is not an exact science, as many stories involved more than one community or an entire region. In these cases, the story is alphabetized according to the community featured most prominently in the story or the one most closely connected with the narrator, and these choices don't reflect in any way the relative importance of one community or another within the program. The index in the back of the book will help you to find stories that relate to a risk factor or program you'd like to get ideas for.

We made every effort to provide information from credible and reliable sources. However, the websites listed after the health facts indicate only where the facts came from. They are links to further information, not a CDPI endorsement of the content of those sites.

We felt honoured to be a part of this project, and hope that the stories serve their intended purpose: to celebrate what's been done in CDPI and to inspire continued energy for prevention of chronic disease in Manitoba.

Dianne Hiebert  
Marj Heinrichs

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## Alonsa

### Friendships, Partnerships, and Healthier Living

A Trek Across Canada walking challenge in Alonsa brought out 35 dedicated participants for the six-month program – that’s 17.5 per cent of this community of 200 people! Every week, seven team leaders recorded their group’s distance as well as the amount of fruit and vegetables the walkers had eaten for the week. When the final tallies were in, they had eaten 14,000 fruits and vegetables walked some 14,000 kilometres – across Canada, back again, and then some!

*“Partnerships and friendships were formed, and it brought our community together.”*

The cross-Canada trek really caught on in Alonsa, and the walkers gained unexpected connections through the challenge. “People were calling and saying ‘please can we join?’” said CDPI organizer Vickie Kien. “These were people that had never had anything in common. Partnerships and friendships were formed, and it brought our community together.”

The walking challenge attracted everybody from children to seniors, and many of them

also participated in Alonsa’s Walking Poker Derbies. Exercise equipment was up for grabs as prizes for the best poker hands, which were dealt out one at a time after participants complete the one-kilometre walking route that circles the town. About five hours later, and after five laps around the community, everyone gathered at the curling rink to laugh about their poker hands and enjoy some hot chocolate.

Aerobics classes have also proven to be popular, with more than 20 ladies coming out for weekly sessions held at the local school. Self-defence classes were also well received in Alonsa. CDPI paid for licensed karate instructors to come out from Brandon to teach the sessions, which 19 women of all ages signed up for to learn hands-on techniques for combating would-be attackers. CDPI also sponsored old-time dance lessons and barn dances, taught by a local couple in their late 70s who have been dancing together for decades. Recorded music by a local country band provided the perfect old-time soundtrack for polka dancing, fox-trotting, and all the other dances being taught. The Sunday afternoon dance sessions showed some former wallflowers how to really get out there and shake a rug. “Now when we have a function, you see the people who were at the dance lessons getting up and dancing when they never would have before,” said Kien.

An enthusiastic group of local seniors has really taken to walking and exercise since participating in CDPI-funded activities. Since the CDPI committee purchased Bocci ball sets and built horseshoe pits, the

seniors' competitive pursuits have moved outdoors. "They've taken it and run with it, and now there are posters up in town about tournaments," said Kien. "Those seniors used to sit and play cards and now they're all playing horseshoes and Bocci!"

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Take Note

**Walking is a simple way to improve overall wellbeing and reduce the chances of developing the health concerns associated with inactivity.**

- Walking is free and can be done almost anywhere
- Walking is within the physical capabilities of many people
- Walking may be a more realistic challenge than other more vigorous forms of exercise
- Walking can be integrated into people's lifestyles relatively easily
- The impact is low and strain on the feet and joints is minimized thus making the risk of injury very low

<http://www.walkbc.ca/benefits-walking>

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## Altona

### Women's Health Matters!

Over 300 women of all ages gathered in Altona last year for a women's conference that covered a wide assortment of health issues. The "Women's Health Matters!" conference was planned by a committee of 20 women with various backgrounds, including health, education, and recreation. Dorothy Braun, chairperson of the CDPI committee in Altona, says the community response to the conference was outstanding. "When we put the word out, people came forward," Braun said. "A group of women who would never cross paths or come together on a regular basis got together to plan this conference – lots of busy women taking on something more."

The conference committee worked with the school division to promote the event to young people, as well as advertising throughout the community. Women of all

ages attended the conference, ranging from high school students to senior citizens. Conference planners also partnered with the Central Regional Health Authority, which runs regional conferences every year and also sponsored the Women's Health Matters conference.

The conference featured 10 workshops and a distinguished line-up of presenters. Keynote speaker Dr. Anne Loewen spoke on "10 Things you can do to Save Your Life," and professional motivational speaker and consultant Deri Latimer dealt with "Building Personal Resilience." A similar topic was addressed by Karen Doell, a former Olympic athlete who has been diagnosed with Parkinson's. She inspired listeners with a speech on "Hanging in There in Spite of Barriers."

"We chose the topic of women's health because we know from the research that if you address women's health that will be taken in and impact the whole family," said Braun. A number of conference workshops focused on family matters, with subjects like "Lost in Translation: Keys to Understanding Parent/Teen Communication" and "Quick Meals for Healthy Teens and Busy Parents."

Other workshop subjects included nutrition, arthritis, depression, osteoporosis, and bladder control, which was humorously titled "I Laughed so Hard I Peed my Pants! A Woman's Guide for Improved Bladder Control."

In addition to networking and gaining new perspectives and ideas, women were

given the opportunity to connect with regional and provincial resources at the conference. “Feedback was very positive,” Braun reported, “and requests for more information and suggestions for a range of future topics was very broad.”

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*Take Note*

**Health Difficulties Facing Senior Women**

- Although women live on average six years longer than men, their later years are characterized by disability and illness.
- Women are more prone to suffering from Alzheimer’s, osteoporosis, chronic diseases, falls, vision problems and spend more days in hospital than men. They are also, on average, poorer than men and more vulnerable to inadequate nutrition and to difficulty in accessing uninsured health care such as medications.
- Older women are more likely to live alone, with inadequate social and material supports in their aging years.
- Senior women are prescribed mood-altering drugs (i.e., minor tranquilizers and sedatives) more than any other population group in Canada.

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/pubs/women-femmes/seniors-aines-eng.php>

[http://www.pembinavalleyonline.com/index.php?option=com\\_extcalendar&Itemid=187&extmode=view&extid=602](http://www.pembinavalleyonline.com/index.php?option=com_extcalendar&Itemid=187&extmode=view&extid=602)

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## Altona

### Reaching Out with Family Cooking

CDPI challenges communities to consider the most at-risk people in their midst and find meaningful solutions for these people, and that's exactly what the RHA Central's Healthy Living Together program in Altona has done.

As part of its CDPI planning, Altona developed a Community Kitchen program to promote nutritional food choices and allow women to network.

But when organizers noticed that a certain group was opting out, they took the spirit of finding solutions to heart by running special cooking classes for a local family. "Some aboriginal women showed interest in Community Kitchen but didn't continue coming, so we got to know a First Nations grandmother, and offered to run one for her family," said Dorothy Braun, chairperson of Altona's CDPI committee. "What we discovered was that in this family grouping there was lots of interest, but they were not comfortable

in the culturally mixed group setting, and some of them were very shy about their cooking skills."

They met with the family and found out the women were interested in cooking large casseroles, and wanted to be able to use items from the food bank. Some of the women had large combined families with lots of mouths to feed. One of the Community Kitchen partners used to run the food bank and had the standard grocery list which families are provided with every week, so organizers worked from that and created menus to promote healthy eating. A family resource coordinator facilitated the cooking and arranged child care for the family during the series of cooking sessions. These were held at times that suited the family, with one sequence of five sessions in two weeks and another of three sessions in two weeks.

Feedback from the family has been very positive, and younger family members – including two high school boys and two 12-year-old girls – have also joined in to learn how to cook. One of the women said what they really liked at the community kitchen was that they could all sit down to a meal together. "They like the fact that it's family – Grandma, her daughters, their children, and anyone else that wants to come," Braun said. "It has really strengthened bonds with this group in the community through connections to the resource coordinator and the other volunteers and allowed them to feel comfortable, given them a place to go, and allowed the community to get to know them better."

*"It's really encouraging to see communities find solutions that benefit the areas of their population that, in the past, have not always been a priority."*

*- Jennifer Baker*

Generous community partners have helped Altona's Community Kitchen program achieve substantial successes. The Rhineland Food Bank has provided resources for cooking and the Altona United Church has offered the use of their facilities for all Community Kitchen events at no cost.

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Take Note

**One of the best things we can do is to eat a variety of nutritious foods by following the recommendations from the Canada Food Guide:**

- Start your day the right way – eat breakfast!
- Eat three meals a day and snack only if you are hungry.
- Keep your bones strong. Choose calcium-rich skim or 1 per cent milk, skim milk cheese and low-fat yogurt.
- Keep your muscles strong. Enjoy meat and alternatives such as lean beef, skinless poultry, eggs, fish or soy foods, in moderation.
- Take time to eat your meals. It takes about 20 minutes for you to feel full after eating.

[http://www.gov.mb.ca/asset\\_library/en/healthylivingguide/healthy\\_living\\_guide.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/healthylivingguide/healthy_living_guide.pdf)

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## Altona

### Family Gym Nights Keep the Whole Family Active

Family Gym Night in Altona is heading into its third year and has been operating at nearly maximum attendance. Something's going right!

The concept behind the Family Gym Nights is to reach out to parents with pre-school children in an effort to promote health awareness, physical activity, and fight obesity in children. Ideally, children and their parents will pick up some healthy habits before any bad ones set in. "There is an educational component – to some extent the horse is out of the barn by the time they're school age," said Dorothy Braun, a community volunteer and chairperson of Altona's CDPI committee. Nutrition information is also integrated into the activities.

*Every child receives a small prize, and those with the most daily activity tickets stand the best chance of winning a grand prize in the draw.*

advertising campaign got the word out and started people talking. "We sent out notices through the schools, made information available at family resource centres, and put up posters all around town," she recalled. "In Gretna we put flyers in every mailbox."

The events were held once a month at first, but soon developed into a twice-monthly activity. Participants are also encouraged to stay active in the time between gym nights, and organizers came up with a unique way to motivate younger participants. "We challenged them to be active for 30 minutes a day and gave out tickets to enter into a draw for every so many minutes they were active in between," Braun said. At year's end, every child receives a small prize, and those with the most daily activity tickets stand the best chance of winning a grand prize in the draw.

Initially, a facilitator was hired to develop activities for three to five year-olds and their parents, but age limits are being extended in Rosenfeld because of its smaller population.

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Attendance has also been strong at Family Gym Nights in nearby Greta and Rosenfeld, which are held in local school gymnasiums. Braun said an effective

Take Note

**Healthy eating helps prevent problems such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, dental cavities and osteoporosis.**

- For Canadian 12 to 17 year olds, the overweight rate has more than doubled, and the obesity rate has tripled in the last 25 years.
- Obese children have damaged arteries comparable to those of a 45-year-old adult who had been smoking for more than 10 years.
- About 40 per cent of adult bone is built during the two years before and after puberty.
- Overall, 26 per cent of Canadian children ages 2 to 17 years are overweight or obese.

<http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/050706/d050706a.htm>



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## Beausejour

### Taking Charge of Fitness

The goal of Beausejour’s “Take Charge” program is to improve the overall health and wellbeing of participants who are feeling unfit and generally not exercising. Thirteen people signed up for this year’s 12-week program.

The eight people who completed the mid-term assessment all rated the program as highly successful and reported significant health benefits.

*“Their fitness and coordination improved, and they felt great about themselves.”*

“Their fitness and coordination improved, and they felt great about themselves,” said Take Charge instructor Sue Mackenzie.

Participants initially completed a fitness self-test followed by a blood pressure check and weigh-in. Exercise routines focused on cardio, balance, coordination, core work and resistance training, and lifestyle activities such as dancing and yoga were also incorporated into the program. Most of the “Take Chargers” ranged in age between 40 to 65, and many progressed from working with two-pound weights to handling five and seven-pound exercises by the end of the program. Similarly, many

participants who began with a five-minute threshold for cardio activities eventually became comfortable with thirty-minute workouts. “They were able to pretty well keep up – they were just amazing,” said Mackenzie.

The sessions were open to all, but only women took advantage of the CDPI-funded program. A nutritionist came in twice to give informational workshops on healthy eating, and other sessions addressed common chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis.

In addition to being a qualified fitness instructor, Mackenzie is a recently retired nurse with plenty of first-hand experience in the consequences of unhealthy lifestyles and inactivity. “The impact of chronic disease was so evident to me through my work in home care,” she said. “I do this because I would like to help people and because I’ve been there myself.”

The “Take Charge” program proved beneficial to the instructor as well. Mackenzie reports having more energy and feeling more coordinated. “I’ve finally got to the point where if I don’t do it, my body says ‘you’re missing something here.’” A number of “Take Charge” participants evidently felt the same way and are determined to carry on exercising on their own. “They felt stronger, had more energy, and wanted to keep going – four of them got together and continued as a group.”

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▼  
▼ *Take Note*

▼  
▼ **What is Resistance Training?**

▼ Resistance training is any exercise that causes the muscles to contract against an external  
▼ resistance with the expectation of increases in strength, tone, mass, and/or endurance. The  
▼ external resistance can be dumbbells, rubber exercise tubing, your own body weight, bricks,  
▼ bottles of water, or any other object that causes the muscles to contract.

▼  
▼ [http://www.emedicinehealth.com/strength\\_training/article\\_em.htm](http://www.emedicinehealth.com/strength_training/article_em.htm)

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## Bellsite

### Moving to Music

Toe tapping turned to dancing and the seniors of Bellsite are healthier for it. Wanda Beaudry is one of several volunteers in the small community of less than 800 who got together with the local seniors 50-Plus Club to plan for chronic disease prevention. Initially the group decided to start a coffee house in the local seniors centre. They would invite musicians to entertain and serve a small evening lunch with coffee and tea. A year later, "It's been a huge success," said Beaudry. Seniors are not only listening to musical talent from their area, but are getting up and dancing to the beat.

*"People who are stiff and have a hard time walking are actually getting up and dancing."*

Every first Saturday of the month volunteers from far and wide tune up their instruments and head for Bellsite. "Our community is small," said Beaudry, "We don't have a lot of volunteers." Instead of lamenting and dwelling on the inevitable fact of shrinking rural populations, the group put out an invitation to musicians in neighbouring communities as well as their own. The response has been overwhelming.

Artists, singers and musicians from surrounding communities and as far away as Pelly, Saskatchewan have come to perform. "The least (number of performers in one night) we've had is 12 and the most is 26," laughed Beaudry, adding, "Sometimes we have to limit them to two pieces of music each!"

Beaudry said in the beginning the gathering consisted of performers and an audience. Then one Saturday night she decided to introduce a bit of movement. As MC, Beaudry explained what CDPI funding is – money given to communities to use towards chronic disease prevention – and that the goal of the CDPI committee in Bellsite was to see seniors become more physically active. Then, after consulting with the performers, she invited people to get up and dance. And they did! "It was wonderful to see," she said. "People who are stiff and have a hard time walking are actually getting up and dancing. Even if they don't do a lot of dancing, they get out of their chair and try."

Participants span three decades with the oldest being in their 80s and the youngest in their 50s. Musicians have included talented youth as young as nine. "It's been amazing – a huge success," said Beaudry.

CDPI funding subsidizes the monthly coffee house lunches and has also been used for community walks on Mother's and Father's Day. "This year we held the walk between Mother's and Father's Day and called it a Memorial Day Walk," said Beaudry.

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▼  
▼ *Take Note*  
▼

▼  
▼ **Canadians Cut a Rug:**  
▼

▼ Personal participation in dance is on the rise across Canada, with over 5.5 per cent of  
▼ Canadian adults (or over 1 million people) taking dance instruction or participating in an  
▼ organized dance activity.  
▼

▼ [http://www.canadacouncil.ca/publications\\_e/fact\\_sheets/st127276333609375000.htm](http://www.canadacouncil.ca/publications_e/fact_sheets/st127276333609375000.htm)  
▼

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## Birch River

### Setting the Tone for the Day – a More Active Way of Life

Starting your day with something you do just for yourself? Some meditation perhaps? A little exercise? For most of us, reality is more like grabbing a quick bite and getting

going with our day.

Bernice Patience is in the process of changing that routine for herself, and lately likes to begin her days with some de-stressing Chi Kung. The breathing, stretching and movement exercises relax her and set the tone for her day.

*“CDPI has given us an avenue where we can reach a lot of people with things that are beneficial and will improve their overall health.”*

Patience learned Chi Kung in classes introduced to her community by its CDPI committee, of which she’s the leader. Now, long after the classes are done, she’s still reaping the benefits and practicing what she learned. Chi Kung, which is designed to tone both mind and body, is a less aggressive form of Tai Chi. “It clears your mind and helps you get in tune with yourself emotionally and mentally,” said

Patience, who also walks every day. The program has helped seniors with pain control, even in cases of arthritis.

Birch River’s CDPI committee also initiated a hugely successful diabetes clinic, with 67 people participating, out of a total population of around 400. The great turnout didn’t just happen – Patience went through the local phonebook and phoned everyone she thought might be interested, and those she knew had risk factors for diabetes. This way, she said, “We got people who weren’t normally involved in a lot of things and wouldn’t normally come out on their own.” Appointments were slotted for every 15 minutes, and after the diabetes testing was done, people got a free breakfast. The committee is considering a follow-up clinic targeting younger people.

Success means continuity, and that’s just what the people of Birch River are seeing in the programs initiated by CDPI. A walking activity Wednesday nights and community walks with juice and watermelon have resulted in more walkers than there used to be, even when the specific programs are over. Successes include one young woman who, when she started, couldn’t do the whole Wednesday night route, but is now walking regularly and keeping up with the group. A weight loss group that meets Mondays decided to continue through the summer for mutual accountability. A call for donations to equip an exercise room in the seniors centre resulted in 15 pieces of equipment and a regularly used room.

Many of Birch River’s CDPI programs so far have been geared towards seniors, but as a teacher, Patience’s biggest concern is with young people. Birch River is her hometown and she really cares about improving conditions for people and helping them improve their health. “A lot of times,” she said, “you can’t do it alone, but as a group you’ve got the resources.

CDPI has given us an avenue where we can reach a lot of people with things that are beneficial and will improve their overall health.”

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Take Note

**What is Chi Kung?**

- The literal meaning of Chi Kung is “energy exercise” or “working with energy.”
- The goal of Chi Kung exercise is to stimulate the flow of energy internally in the body so that it effectively rushes through and clears the entire network of Chi channels or meridians.
- Chi Kung draws on the accumulated wisdom of Chinese Taoist and Buddhist breathing practices and the practices and disciplines of the martial arts.

<http://www.worldwidehealth.com/health-article-Tai-Chi-and-Chi-Kung-Explained.html>

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## Blue Water District

### New Co-op Store and Wellness Day Promote Healthy Choices

A co-op store opened recently in Seymourville, Manitoba. For those Manitobans with a Safeway just down the street that might not be big news, but in Seymourville, groceries have traditionally been expensive and selection limited. It's been an hour's drive for a better selection of groceries. In Seymourville, freight comes in once in a week, and "you have to be there johnny-on-the-spot and have the money to pay for fruits and veggies," said CDPI facilitator Susan Spindler. "Milk is \$6.49 for two litres and you can buy a lot of pop at 99 cents per two-litre for that price."

The new co-op is offering a better selection of healthy foods, and to support that, the Blue Water district CDPI funded an "Explore the Store" event where facilitator Spindler and a dietitian promoted healthy

*Sixty women were checked for signs of cervical cancer at this year's Wellness Day. The Wellness Day tries to draw in women of all ages.*

food choices, such as oatmeal, brown rice, low-fat soups, and fresh fruits and vegetables. A table was set up with free coffee and literature was handed out on topics like diabetes awareness, smoking cessation, and exercise programs.

Everyone who took a label-reading tour with the dietitian was entered into a draw for a hamper of healthy groceries and a soccer ball. The co-op manager has even set up a corner of the store dedicated exclusively to healthy food.

CDPI also participates in an annual Women's Wellness Day in the district, in partnership with the RHA, the Pine Falls Women's Auxiliary, the Wings of Power Family Resource Centre, and a number of other groups.

Organizations such as the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Manitoba and the Alzheimer Society set up informational displays for the event, and this year Cancer Care Manitoba was on hand with a brand new presentation called "Know Your Risks." Another well-received workshop addressed "Motherhood and Stress."

A central focus of the Women's Wellness Day is preventing cervical cancer. For women who are more comfortable with seeing a female practitioner, the Wellness Day offers PAP tests with a female doctor. Event organizer Spindler, who is also the Blue Water District Wellness Facilitator, said the day is geared toward women who don't regularly have PAP tests. "We're trying to draw in women across the life span," she said.

Sixty women were checked for signs of cervical cancer at this year's Wellness Day, and organizers are looking for ways to increase that number. The Women's Wellness day is one initiative in the Blue Water district aimed at chronic disease prevention.

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Take Note

- Cervical Cancer is second only to breast cancer as the most common cancer in women.
- About 50 Manitoba women are diagnosed with cervical cancer every year.
- Most women who are diagnosed with cervical cancer have never had a Pap test or haven't had one in over 5 years.
- The best thing you can do to reduce your risk of cervical cancer is to have a Pap test regularly.

[http://www.cancercare.mb.ca/home/patients\\_and\\_family/prevention\\_and\\_screening/manitoba\\_cervical\\_cancer\\_screening\\_program/](http://www.cancercare.mb.ca/home/patients_and_family/prevention_and_screening/manitoba_cervical_cancer_screening_program/)



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## Brandon

### Co-operation Grows along with the Gardens

Gardens are all about growing, so it only makes sense that Brandon's success with its community garden program has also included overcoming some growing pains. With over 100 area gardeners and numerous organizations involved, getting everyone on the same page wasn't easy.

Brandon's Community Garden Network was conceived in the fall of 2007 when a group of community partners came together with a vision of unifying the city's various gardening programs. A year later, Brandon gardeners are working together as part of the network along with Samaritan House Ministries, the City of Brandon, Healthy Brandon, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and the Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation.

*The real advancement in the gardens was seen when the gardeners themselves where given control to set the layout of the garden and make decisions on their own.*

Nancy McPherson, the Brandon RHA's organizational lead for CDPI, has an inside perspective on organizing the network. She is a member of the Healthy Brandon committee, on the board of the Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation, and also launched a CDPI community gardening program before the network was created. "There were other community gardens that were operating on a shoestring. We were blessed with this money and it seemed that if we wanted to create a Healthy Brandon, we should share it," said McPherson. "So we created the Healthy Brandon Community Garden Network - we wanted to use a visionary term."

A spirit of sharing characterized the beginnings of the network, but as time went on, there were differences on how the gardens should be managed and how resources would be distributed - issues that could have derailed the network. The CDPI community gardening program had been able to acquire city resources that the older community garden projects had been unable to obtain. "We were very successful working with the City of Brandon to get a water source installed at our newest garden site. The other garden sites had been trying for years to get this, so they were very frustrated with their inability to motivate city involvement," McPherson explained. "Our gardens all looked so easy."

Ironically, getting the CDPI community garden project up and running had not been all that easy either. Key staff were on vacation or quit during high garden season

in mid-June, and there was also some disconnect between the group that planned the project and the one that implemented it. Things eventually fell into place, with 30 garden plots prepared along with 16 raised beds for people with mobility issues. The real advancement in the gardens was seen when the gardeners themselves were given control to set the layout of the garden and make decisions on their own. Based on requests from the gardeners, workshops were provided at the site about composting and freezing. Both sessions were well-attended, and a communal spirit developed among the gardeners.

*Plotting a Course for the Future*

As for the Community Garden Network, a gardener's talent for patience, perseverance, and learning from experience was needed to pull everybody together. McPherson says there were some struggles with being upfront, honest, and working in true partnership among the organizations. "I've had this lesson before and I'm surprised I've had to learn it again," she said. "It's tricky to balance

honouring the experience of the non-profits that had been slogging it out with such limited resources with the need to move forward in a positive spirit."

Some of Brandon's existing community gardens had been running on limited funds for eight years and were leery that government funding would be pulled, leaving them strapped to pay for planned improvements. But additional funding has been secured from Neighbourhoods Alive! and Wal-Mart Canada's Green Fund, and it appears that a common direction of cooperation for the network has taken root and will now be difficult to dislodge. "It's more of a philosophy, and a direction we're all moving in, that is not dependant on government funding," said McPherson.

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Take Note

**Did You Know?**

Gardening lowers blood pressure, reduces stress, and can improve both your physical and mental health. Gardening therapists use gardening to help people heal physically and emotionally and to express their emotions.

<http://www.healthyalberta.com/HealthyPlaces/554.htm>

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## Brandon

### Proud to be Tobacco Free

If you have any thoughts of quitting smoking and you live in Brandon, you've got lots of support available. Tobacco Free is one of the four pillars of Brandon's CDPI program and there's a strong, active committee working to help anyone wanting to quit.

In Brandon different agencies and groups have a long history of working together towards tobacco control; Brandon got a smoke-free by-law even before the

Healthy Brandon CDPI programs were implemented.

From smoke-free public places, the campaign has now moved on with CDPI to supporting individuals to be smoke-free, in their homes and cars, and especially

around children. The Tobacco Free committee is a partnership of RHA staff and representatives of other interested agencies such as the Manitoba Lung Association. This means there's a lot of expertise on the committee and it's just a

*Tobacco Free is one of the four pillars of Brandon's CDPI program and there's a strong, active committee working to help anyone wanting to quit.*

matter of making that expertise available.

There were early signs that Fiona Jeffries, who heads the committee, would be an anti-smoking advocate. "When I was a little kid," she said, "I was the one flushing Daddy's tobacco down the toilet." Her dad quit smoking in 1981, despite her pestering, and Jeffries has continued to learn better ways to advocate for being tobacco-free. Fortunately, she's also a Health Promotion and Education Specialist with Brandon RHA and part of her role is to be involved with chronic disease prevention, so leading Tobacco Free is a good fit for her.

The committee chose a workplace emphasis. Using CDPI funds, it put together Quit Baskets, which contain self-help booklets on how to quit and some practical hands-on tools such as toothbrushes and mints – when you're quitting smoking, it helps to put something in your mouth – and little stress balls, handheld games or toys for those who just need a few minutes to calm their nerves. They also contained information about different nicotine-replacement products. With the right information, tools and support, said Jeffries, "You can double their chances to quit."

The group put together ten baskets and targeted small businesses that don't have the resources to offer their employees a quitting program. Five businesses expressed interest, and baskets were put there. The baskets prompted discussion about smoking and quitting, and got people talking about ways to quit. In a few cases

the baskets happened along at the right time, and gave smokers wanting to quit a nudge in the right direction.

The committee's role model is the Brandon RHA itself, which has had all its facilities and grounds smoke-free since 2006. Not only is cessation support offered to all smokers on staff, but also every tobacco user admitted to hospital in Brandon gets a quick consultation, with further support if they're interested. Studies show that when facilities and communities go smoke-free, smoking does slow down. Lots of times people want to quit anyway, and a smoke-free workplace is the incentive they need. The Brandon committee has more ideas, too – they're looking at a group program in

which a smoker could attend a few sessions for encouragement to quit, and they're also considering training peer advisors in workplaces.

So for those smokers who don't have anyone to flush their tobacco for them, there's still lots of help available as Brandon moves towards a healthier, tobacco-free city.

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Take Note

**As soon as an individual quits smoking, the benefits start:**

- Quit smoking and you'll start feeling better within 24 hours. The minute you stop smoking, your body will begin cleansing itself of tobacco toxins. Two days after you quit, your risk of heart attack will start decreasing.
- Within one year of quitting, the risk of dying from smoking-related heart disease is cut in half.
- Within 10 years, the risk of dying from lung cancer is cut in half.
- After 15 years, the risk of dying will be nearly that of a non-smoker.
- More than 50 per cent of former smokers report they are able to become smoke-free after one or two serious attempts.

<http://www.heartandstroke.mb.ca/site/c.lgLSIV0yGpF/b.3661109/>

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## Brandon

### Residents Turn Off the TV, Get Off the Couch and Get *In Motion!*

If you like to walk, you're lucky if you live in Brandon. With over 40 km of walking and hiking trails, Brandon is vying with Brantford, Ontario, for the title of the Walking Capital of Canada. The Healthy Brandon *in motion* committee is building on the walking momentum. Healthy Brandon is the name of the CDPI initiative in Brandon, which has divided its program into four separate "pillars," of which *in motion* is the physical activity "pillar." In partnership with many other community organizations, they've sponsored events to get more and more people in Brandon out walking and active.

Way back in October, 2006 Healthy Brandon *in motion* hosted a kickoff event to declare Brandon as an *in motion* community. Participants walked to City Hall where the mayor proclaimed Brandon officially as *in motion*. Local celebrities

*Over 3,000 people enjoyed an evening of skating, walking, fireworks and socializing.*

and athletes raced couches down 9th Street to encourage everyone to get off the couch and get "in motion." It seems the kickoff was successful: thousands of Brandonites participated in a walking challenge this October to honour the second anniversary of the initiative, and of course, to try to capture the elusive title from Brantford.

Other sociable sports are also getting a boost in Brandon. The Healthy Brandon committee recently nominated Brandon Riverbank and the City of Brandon for a Reh-Fit Centre Foundation Healthy Living Award. The two organizations collaborated to launch a lighted skating oval in the River Corridor area, and the area has since been expanded with lighting and a link to cross-country ski trails. The facility is available free of charge to the public every day throughout the winter for day and evening skating, walking and cross country skiing. It has become a hub of outdoor activity in Brandon in the winter-time, last year hosting the New Year's Eve kickoff of Brandon's 125th anniversary. Over 3,000 people enjoyed an evening of skating, walking, fireworks and socializing.

Among many other events, Healthy Brandon *in motion* has also sponsored a TV turn-off week in February, a skating party, free swims at the Sportsplex and a month-long challenge to workplaces to encourage continued physical activity.

Partnerships with local non-profits and other groups are the key to success in Brandon's initiative. Groups are

encouraged to brand their physical activity initiatives as *in motion* so that this becomes a part of Brandon's "genetic code" for the future. Permanent *in motion* signage is in place in the city. The initiative targets 30 to 59 year-olds but all ages are joining the fun and gaining the health benefits that come from being more active. "Healthy Brandon *in motion* is working towards building a healthier Brandon through regular physical activity," said Donna Epp, *in motion* co-chair.

A creative and user-friendly website provides a quick and easy way to get the word out about upcoming *in motion*

events. The website celebrates and promotes partnerships, allows on-line registration and is expandable as needed. "It is a breathing, living document," said Epp, "always 'in motion.' We had fun with it, and are still having fun!"

Click in at [www.brandoninmotion.ca/](http://www.brandoninmotion.ca/)

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Take Note

**The benefits of recreational skating:**

- Improved muscle strength and definition.
- Improved balance and coordination.
- Weight loss.
- Stress relief.
- Cardiovascular fitness.
- Fun!

[http://figurespeedskating.suite101.com/article.cfm/figure\\_skating\\_training\\_program](http://figurespeedskating.suite101.com/article.cfm/figure_skating_training_program)

**Burning Calories on the Ice**

While speed skaters can expend 950 calories per hour, almost anyone can burn 450 - 600 calories on the ice. What's more, the body has to work harder to maintain core temperature in chilly conditions.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2006/dec/16/healthandwellbeing.features3>

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## Brandon

### The More You Keep Moving, the Better You Get

Brian Fowell was devastated when he was told by his doctors that he wouldn't be able to work for six months. A heavy-duty mechanic, Brian had torn the rotator and bicep at the top of his arm while at work.

"We were lifting a tire," he recalled wryly, "and the two other guys decided it was too heavy."

When the doctor told him how long he'd be off, he said, "I felt real down on myself. I wasn't used to being at home and I had no idea how much work I'd be able to go back to."

With time on his hands, Fowell noticed an ad in the paper for community gardens, and went over to check it out. He came in on the ground floor of the project, which was just starting on an 11-acre plot originally set aside as a school site. He helped measure out his plot, and the other plots as well, and planted his garden. Once his arm started to heal, he noticed some people were getting a bit behind with their

*"The people there are really happy and they're lining up to get involved. The more you keep moving, the better you get."*

weeding, so "instead of complaining," he said, "I tackled a row here and a row there." Other gardeners came along and said, "What are you doing? This isn't your garden," but before they knew it they were helping too, and the garden has become a communal affair. There's a lot of trading of produce that goes on, said Fowell, "and we've got our own little marketing system."

Fowell has a history of lending a hand. He's originally from Carroll, 20 miles south of Brandon. "Out there, this is what we do," he explained. "We just help each other out. So when I came to Brandon, my roots came with me. My mom and dad were big into gardening. It's nice working in the dirt."

It was a great year for a garden. Potatoes, beans, peas, carrots, cucumbers, beets and pumpkins grew heartily in the community plots. The food is a significant money-saver for some, but people also came for the relaxation, the joking, the camaraderie, the comparison of who's got the biggest tomatoes. All ages came to garden, including some new Canadians who are "so happy to get their feet in the dirt." Fowell's family came to help, including his wife and his 28-month-old granddaughter Kendra and her parents. This spring Kendra stomped along happily behind her grandpa as he planted beans, but when he turned around he realized she'd been picking up the beans and eating them almost as fast as he could plant them.

Fowell's shoulder is substantially better, and he's back at work, although he says he'll never have the arm he used to. But he

credits the community garden for easing him through an extremely difficult time in his life. Last year he was nominated for and received the Golden Carrot award for his help and leadership in the gardens. “I was very, very pleased about that,” he says half-jokingly. “You don’t always get recognized.” What he’s most pleased about is the success of the gardens. “The people there are really happy and they’re lining

up to get involved. Anything to get them moving,” he concludes. “The more you keep moving, the better you get.”

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*“When I go into my garden with a spade, and dig a bed, I feel such an exhilaration and health, that I discover that I have been defrauding myself all this time in letting others do for me what I should have done with my own hands.”*

– Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1841

Take Note

**Reap a Healthy Body**

- Gardening uses all the body’s major muscle groups. Gardening also improves coordination and burns calories.
- Depending on the activity, working in the garden for 45 minutes can burn the same number of calories as 30 minutes of aerobics or jogging. Even something as simple as planting seedlings can burn 160 calories in only 30 minutes.
- If exercise is your goal, your total gardening time should add up to at least 30 minutes per day. As with all exercise programs, warming up is important before you start. You will get more exercise taking smaller loads in your wheelbarrow and making more trips than you will by making fewer trips with heavier loads.

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/paguide/gardening.html>



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## Brandon

### Healthy Workplaces in More Ways than One

Imagine the sustainability of your CDPI program if the businesses in your community took it up as their cause, incorporated it into their budgets and allotted staff to it. That's what's happening in Brandon as businesses large and small are incorporating employee health initiatives into their corporate culture. Brandon RHA has 2,400 staff, making it the biggest employer in Western Manitoba. With health as its business, the Region is putting its money where its mouth is by setting aside \$35,000 annually for staff wellness initiatives. Any staff member can apply with an initiative and whatever is designed has to be available for all staff to participate. Cindy Buizer, who oversees the program as the RHA's Coordinator of Staff Education, is also the Region's rep to Healthy Brandon *in motion*. "We care about people's health enough that we're taking care of staff," said Buizer.

Taking care of staff includes purchasing a

*"We care about people's health enough that we're taking care of staff."*

cart full of yoga equipment and providing rooms for the sessions, while participating staff members pay for the instructor. If you're ready for weight-watchers, you can get 50 per cent off your fees for two 10-week sessions. Staff can have \$5 per paycheque deducted (\$120 per year) to get unlimited access to three fitness areas with a full array of equipment like cardio machines and Virtual Gyms supplied and maintained by the RHA. Like to ski? The RHA pays for the bus to the hill and half the cost of the lift tickets. Busses fill up immediately, said Buizer. This fall the RHA is running a six-week walking challenge with teams of four staff members each. This is the Step by Step Challenge developed by Winnipeg *in motion* and adopted by Healthy Brandon *in motion*. In a similar nine-week challenge in spring, 172 staff participated. "Our goal is to actually change habits," says Buizer.

#### *A Gilded Success Story*

The RHA initiatives are impressive, but no more or less so than the efforts of smaller Brandon corporations like Guild Insurance, with 36 staff members. As a Brandon Workplace *in motion*, Guild has incorporated a "health and wellness benefit" right into its recruiting program. Staff members can get \$200 a year for any recreational membership, such as golf, hockey, curling, or a swimming or gym pass. A year or two ago, Kristin Andrews, Human Resources Advisor at Guild, attended a CDPI Workplace Wellness Seminar. "I went as a Guild Insurance rep wanting to see whether I could get our

workplace active,” she said. She came away with a binder full of practical ideas to make physical activities and health a part of employees’ daily lives.

Today each department at Guild has cold water coolers to encourage hydration and drinking water rather than coffee or soft drinks. There’s a full kitchen for preparing healthy lunches rather than grabbing fast food to go. About half of Guild staff members will walk for half an hour at lunch in the Brandon vs. Brantford Walking Challenge this fall. All the activity is producing an overall team spirit. “If someone’s happy at work,” says Andrews, “it’s inspiring.” Guild Insurance is a community-minded business, and “rather

than putting our dollars into advertising, we’ll put it into kids’ soccer teams, health benefits for our staff – we feel that money’s going to a better place.” To keep the spirit of the healthy workplace going, a second Healthy Brandon Workplace Wellness Forum is planned for the fall of 2008.

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Take Note

**Did You Know?**

Adult Canadians spend more than 60% of their waking hours at work.

**Accessing Workplace Wellness**

According to a 2008 Healthcare Survey, only 37% of employees with benefit plans have access to workplace wellness programs – a decrease from 2005 (41%), 2004 (43%), and 1999 (38%).

- Of those employees that have access to wellness programs, just 40% are using them, down from 45% in 2005.
- Those who strongly agree they are satisfied with their job are over twice as likely to be in excellent or very good health (75%) than those strongly dissatisfied (34%).

<http://ebnc.benefitnews.com/asset/article/644281/staying-current/workplace-wellness-programs-need-boost-employers.html>

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## Brandon

### *In Motion at Work!*

In 2008, 1,858 employees in Manitoba signed up for the Workplace Physical Activity Challenge, in which workplaces across the province challenged each other to see who had the most active employees. A total of 105 workplaces took part in the challenge, which was organized by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Manitoba, and 43 of them were in Brandon alone! The impressive turnout had a lot to do with Healthy Brandon *in motion*, a combined Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative and *in motion* group that promotes increased physical activity in the Wheat City.

It's no surprise that it was Brandon employees who ended up winning the grand prize in the Heart and Stroke Foundation Challenge. Fittingly, the winners worked at Brandon's Community Sportsplex, which received an assortment of sporting equipment along with other prizes. "The Challenge has really increased our awareness of the benefits of physical activity," said Sportsplex manager Perry Roque, who's also co-chair of Healthy Brandon *in motion*. "We've seen a reduction in staff absenteeism and notice that staff are making physical activity part

of their daily routine, walking or riding bikes to work or joining a gym or running club."

Sportsplex staff are encouraged to be active whenever they can. Staff members bring their walking shoes to work and join "walk and talk" meetings, getting healthy activity and more time to discuss issues. Sometimes they even pick up garbage along the way, tripling the benefits. One of the clerks began walking to and from work every day and also organizes walking challenges in different locations around the city that are open to anybody. And staffers are willingly giving up a chunk of their coffee breaks in favour of a 20-minute afternoon walk – getting a healthy energy boost to get them through to the end of their day.

"CDPI is some of the best money we can spend," said Roque. "Education is really important – we're lifelong learners, educating ourselves about our bodies and about our health and making sure we stay active."

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Take Note

Did You Know?

Adult Canadians spend more than 60% of their waking hours at work.  
Promoting walking in the workplace has benefits for both the employee and the employer.

Having an active and healthy workplace can lead to:

- Improved productivity.
- Fewer insurance and worker compensation claims.
- Reduced absenteeism.
- Decreased accidents.
- Reduced staff turnover.
- Lower-cost related to retirement, training and orientation.
- Improved staff attitudes towards the organization and higher staff morale.
- A more receptive climate for, and ability to cope with workplace changes.
- Enhanced business.

<http://www.walkbc.ca/workplace-walking>

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## Brandon

### Warning! Laughter may be Hazardous to What Ails You!

This comedic catchphrase was the lead-off line on posters advertising “The Laughter Fix,” a motivational community event held in Brandon this spring that featured comedians, special guests, award presentations, belly-dancing – and, of course, lots of laughing!

The dinner evening was supported by Healthy Brandon’s “Living Well With Stress” working group, which helped to design the event to focus on relieving stress, getting people together, and inspiring them to live healthier lives.

The Healthy Brandon initiative incorporates the three CDPI pillars of physical activity, healthy eating, and smoking cessation, and adds a fourth category by addressing stress issues as well. “Brandon is the only community in the province that made the decision to

*Laughter may be the best medicine, but the dedication and hard work of community-minded people also goes a long way toward improving our lives.*

look at this specific area as being highly important when it comes to Chronic Disease and our prevention initiatives,” said working group chair Tracy Young. “Healthy Brandon, and more specifically Living Well With Stress, is committed to building a healthier Brandon through stress reduction initiatives, life management skills sessions and training opportunities.”

Over 130 Brandonites attended The Laughter Fix, which featured CBC’s well-known comedian Dean Jenkinson. Another highlight of the evening was the “Power to Inspire” awards presentation, which honoured individuals who have motivated and inspired others in Brandon to live a healthier lifestyle and address stress. In addition to an overall honouree, nominees were recognized in three different categories: Mind, Body, and Soul.

One of the laughs of the evening came when the winner of the overall Power to Inspire award was ironically unable to accept his award in person because he was busy doing the very things he was being honoured for!

Laughter may be the best medicine, but the dedication and hard work of community-minded people also goes a long way toward reducing our stress levels. One of those people is Young, who juggles Healthy Brandon work with her regular duties in Mental Health Promotion for the Brandon Regional Health Authority. “I do a lot of speaking about life management and the close tie that stress has to our health. It is

certainly a strong passion for me,” Young said. “We need to be aware of how stress impacts on both our physical and mental well being. We need to be more mindful of how we are addressing stress and how effectively we are managing it in our daily lives.”

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Take Note

**Laughter Fun Facts**

- Laughter positively affects all body systems, including respiratory, circulatory, blood, cardiac, and immune systems.
- A daily laughter workout of 15 minutes can burn 40 calories and melt away 4 pounds over the course of a year.
- Laughter can actually help to lower blood pressure and is also very good for people with diabetes.
- The positive effect of laughing lasts for 30 to 45 minutes.
- Laughing reduces the effect of stress by lowering stress hormone levels.
- Laughing lifts your mood – even if you have to force yourself to laugh.

[http://www.gnb.ca/0131/Healthy-NB-en\\_sante/mental\\_fitness-e.asp](http://www.gnb.ca/0131/Healthy-NB-en_sante/mental_fitness-e.asp)

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## Cranberry Portage

### Fit Families

You've heard of Poker Derbies but how about a Walking Derby? Thirty-five Cranberry Portage residents in family groups, including all ages from infants to seniors, took a circular walk around the community this spring. They checked in at five different spots along the way and, according to reports, a good time was had by all. The local in motion committee organized the derby and CDPI funding provided healthy snacks. The Derby's success led to the launching of a walking club.

*The scavenger hunt left no stone unturned as contagious laughter followed the participants.*

Encouraged to get out and walk, people were given forms to monitor not only their walking, but also other physical activities such as gardening and yard work. From walking, the fun factor heightened to a family hike and scavenger hunt at the end of May, where CDPI again provided healthy snacks. The scavenger hunt left no stone unturned and contagious laughter followed the participants.

Cranberry Portage is a community of 700 people about 30 minutes from Flin Flon. Its CDPI program started in April and was quickly linked with in motion. Where some groups focus on healthy living for youth, seniors, or working adults, Cranberry Portage targets the entire family.

When a group of parents launched a baseball program for children aged 4 to 12, CDPI was there with funding for the equipment. Participation gave a whole new meaning to "Take me out to the Ball Game." Parents and grandparents volunteered and formed age-related teams playing a few times a week in the evenings and on weekends.

Promoting healthy choices was also the goal of the elementary school health fair. Among the many displays, students were amazed at one that outlined the amount of sugar in their favourite drinks. They ate the healthy snacks provided at the fair with a new appreciation.

In Cranberry Portage, where families gather, CDPI is there to promote a healthier lifestyle and keep everyone active.

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Take Note

**What makes a healthy snack?**

The Canada Food Guide recognizes four main food groups:

- Vegetables and fruit
- Grain products
- Milk and alternatives
- Meat and alternatives

For a healthy snack, aim to include two of the four food groups. Here are a few simple nutritious snack ideas:

- Pack a few whole grain whole wheat crackers or a small apple with a cheese stick.
- Cut up veggie sticks and send them along with a yogurt dip in a separate little container.
- Make your own trail mix with a few different whole grain cereals, dried fruits and sunflower seeds.

<http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/ViewDocument.aspx?id=41>



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## Cross Lake

### Blue Lights for Smoke-Free Homes

If you've ever flown between Winnipeg and Thompson at night you know it can look pretty dark down there. Imagine glancing out the airplane window and seeing a community sparkling with blue lights below you. That is the sight you'd see from the night sky over Cross Lake, and the blue lights are a sign that one house at a time, Cross Lake is working towards a smoke-free environment for homes.

Eugennie Mercredi started the Blue Light project in November 2007. She got the idea at a conference in Thompson and decided to run with it. With funds from CDPI, she bought blue light bulbs, then she and her partner Reg Mercredi went door-to-door asking people if they were smoking in their house. If the house was smoke-free, she gave them a blue light-bulb. "People were pretty excited about it," she said. They wanted the bulbs. At one house, a man opened the door and had a cigarette in his hand. He still wanted the bulb, but Mercredi said, "No way!"

*People are proud to bring awareness of their home being a smoke-free environment.*

By the time Christmas rolled around, there were a lot of blue lights in Cross Lake and "it really looked awesome." People are proud to bring awareness of their home being a smoke-free environment.

Mercredi has tackled the project from many different angles, advertising it on local radio and TV stations, distributing pamphlets, posters, stickers, and posting signs that say "Second-hand Smoke Kills." She ordered material from the Manitoba Lung Association and the Manitoba Cancer Association and made a package about what smoking does to people.

There are a lot of smokers in this First Nation community of 6,700 people, but the Mercredis believe awareness is growing and most people are smoking outside. Every year on May 31 people are challenged to give up smoking for 24 hours and are given tips on what to do instead.

Other communities including Brandon are interested in trying the Blue Light project. "It's good to network and to create awareness in our communities," said Mercredi. "We all strive for the same thing."

Mercredi herself quit smoking three years ago. As an aboriginal diabetes worker and CDPI leader, she has become aware of practising healthy eating and active living and being a role model. In conjunction with Manitoba Foods, she helped set up a community garden workshop which attracted 21 participants. A lot of people at Cross Lake are now making their own gardens with free seeds from Manitoba Hydro.

Some of the blue light bulbs are wearing out now. “I need more bulbs,” says Mercredi. Every time she goes to Winnipeg she checks at stores for blue light bulbs. At times she becomes overwhelmed by the health needs in her remote community. As part of CDPI Mercredi is working to initiate community walks. “Sometimes I walk alone,” she says, “and I motivate myself by saying, ‘I’m going to walk today for people that are blind,’ or, another day, ‘I’m going to walk for people in wheelchairs.’ Something always comes up to keep us going.”

Mercredi’s activism has just ramped up a few notches, since she’s been elected as a

councillor for her community for the next four years. Her experience as the Woman’s Traditional Chief will stand her in good stead, and politics runs in the family: her brother-in-law Ovide Mercredi is a former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. While Eugennie Mercredi is busy on Council, Reg Mercredi will carry on and get other community members to help keep CDPI projects growing.

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Take Note

**Second-Hand Smoke Dangers:**

- More than 1,000 non-smokers will die this year in Canada due to tobacco use -over 300 lung cancer deaths and at least 700 deaths from coronary heart disease will be caused by second-hand smoke.
- More than 50 of the 4,000 chemicals in second-hand smoke are cancer-causing carcinogens. The chemicals also contribute directly to other diseases, such as asthma, heart disease and emphysema – for smokers and non-smokers alike.
- Second-hand smoke has at least twice the nicotine and tar as the smoke inhaled by the smoker.
- Regular exposure to second-hand smoke increases the chances of contracting lung disease by 25% and heart disease by 10%.

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/tobac-tabac/second/index-eng.php>

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## Dauphin

### Free Recreation Passes Remove Couch Potatoes' Last Excuse

Dauphin, the City of Sunshine, has been called an all-season wonderland, and several CDPI initiatives are promoting active and healthy living for area residents. One of the most popular programs is a free recreation pass giveaway, which has been accessed by an average of 200 people per month. For more than a year and a half, thanks to CDPI funding and in collaboration with Manitoba's *in motion* initiative, families have been able to receive passes once a month for each family member for a variety of recreational facilities. The program's most popular features have been swimming and bowling, and for those who don't want to get wet or hit the lanes, passes are available for the walking track at the Rec Complex, indoor playground for younger children, and even a skateboard park. There is even a free monthly swim at the pool, which features the province's only indoor wave pool.

*"People love the recreation passes – they can't believe they're free; the whole family can go."*

Anybody lacking safety equipment can go to the Friendship Centre to pick up free CDPI-provided helmets, elbow and knee pads for skateboarding and biking. Swimsuits and swim shorts are also available for anyone who needs them. The goal is to reduce all barriers to physical activity, and free safety gear and activity passes cut down on the number of excuses available to would-be couch potatoes. "People love the recreation passes," said Crystal Amyotte, a CDPI committee member. "They can't believe they're free – the whole family can go."

Of course, all that physical activity requires proper nourishment, and a number of programs have been designed to encourage healthy eating. In addition to well-received gardening and canning workshops, the CDPI started cooking clubs at the Friendship Centre that run for three to four weeks at a time. Another program that runs out of the Centre is Dauphin's Food for Thought hot lunch program. Junior High and High School students come to the Friendship Centre for free nutritional hot lunches that include foods like pizza buns, soup, and salad. Volunteers also go to area elementary schools twice a week between November and March to serve hot lunches that students sign up for.

Reaching young people with an effective message for disease prevention is a key focus of Dauphin's CDPI committee. Anti-smoking kits that include neon rubber bracelets with slogans like "Kick Butt" are distributed to youth. The committee is also planning a presentation by a Canadian

Cancer Society representative for middle school students where the kits will be given out. The plastic bags are filled with resources to quit smoking, information about second-hand smoke, and CDPI bracelets. People can ask for them at the Friendship Centre, clinics, and the health centre.

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Take Note

**Swimming Benefits**

Cardio and respiratory benefits: Swimming favours blood flow back to the heart and the pumping of blood to the legs. The body's horizontal position promotes good circulation.

Muscular benefits: Swimming is a complete physical activity that puts all of your muscles to work.

Anti-stress relief: Water is a very effective element for relaxation. It frees your muscles of tension and puts you in a state of well-being.

Weight control: Since swimming is an activity that requires a lot of endurance, it burns a lot of energy and then goes to work on any extra fat you may have on your body.

Adapted from

[http://www.divine.ca/en/fitness-and-nutrition/articles/c\\_11\\_i\\_2928/swimming-and-its-benefits-1.html](http://www.divine.ca/en/fitness-and-nutrition/articles/c_11_i_2928/swimming-and-its-benefits-1.html)

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## Erickson

### Volunteer Facilitators Fan Out to Promote Healthy Living

The town of Erickson may be a small community, but it has big ambitions when it comes to promoting active living initiatives. The local CDPI committee includes the nearby towns of Sandy Lake and Onanole, and has trained ten volunteer facilitators to run specific programs. “We are targeting everyone in the community,” said CDPI chairperson Tara Elliott. “There isn’t an age that doesn’t need to get a little more exercise.”

Community response to the programs has been outstanding, with open gym nights drawing between 30 to 40 people ranging from age four right up to senior citizens. People of all ages are also the focus of the area’s “Let’s Try It” campaign, which features clinics and workshops that allow individuals to try new physical activities. Free skate nights, baseball events, cross-country skiing, and volleyball nights have been offered, while volunteer facilitators have organized

*“None of them had ever skated before, so we lent them skates and they loved it so much their faces just lit up.”*

running and walking groups. Other community members have run exercise boot camp, taught yoga, and even given karate classes. Skating nights have been particularly successful, and skating events in Onanole with pizza and a movie night afterwards proved to be highly popular.

The CDPI committee is divided into two distinct groups – healthy eating and active living – and both brainstorm to come up with creative ways to put on new events. One cooking class in nearby Sandy Lake, for example, focused on barbecuing healthy food, with an Erickson facilitator running the event and talking about healthy eating while the barbecue took place. Another cooking workshop targeted young moms, including handy tips like sneaking vegetables into grilled cheese sandwiches in order to get discerning kids eating their veggies with a smile. “We’ve had a lot of successes with both sides of our program,” said Elliott. “Being a small community, everyone pulls together.”

Community partners in Erickson include the local Legion, where winter walking groups are held, and the library, which is used for meetings and workshops. The town’s fitness centre has also supported the “Let’s Try It” initiative by offering the free use of its facilities to participants for clinics and exercise sessions. The Town Council is also on board with the CDPI and has responded enthusiastically to various presentations and programs.

Family involvement has been crucial to the success of exercise events in the area,

with entire families coming out for soccer games, gym nights, road hockey, and free skate night. One family of five moved to Erickson from the Philippines and really took to ice skating. They were having difficulty getting used to the cold winters and finding activities for the family and decided to give the Canadian tradition a try. “None of them had ever skated before, so we lent them skates and they loved it so much their faces just lit up,” Elliott said.

“They all went and bought skates, and the next time we had a free skate they were all there.”

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Take Note

**Healthy Barbecue Tips**

Grilling is a heart-healthy way to cook if done right:

- Choose foods that are lower in fat such as chicken breasts, fish, and lean cuts of meat. Trim all excess fat prior to cooking.
- Marinate your foods using an olive oil and lemon dressing. This will not only give flavour and tenderize your meats, but will also help to make barbecuing healthier because the dressing can keep your foods from charring.
- Charred foods are the greatest sources of unhealthy chemicals, so cook your foods on medium.
- If you do happen to burn your steak or potatoes, remove the charred parts.
- Try wrapping your foods in aluminum foil to keep them from burning.

[http://www.heartandstroke.com/site/c.ikiQLcMWJtE/b.4149377/k.865B/Barbecue\\_cues.htm](http://www.heartandstroke.com/site/c.ikiQLcMWJtE/b.4149377/k.865B/Barbecue_cues.htm)

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## Erickson

### Active Living Championed

The CDPI committee in the Erickson area covers three rural municipalities, and its Active Living programs have been spreading like a prairie wildfire! A big reason for the exponential growth has

been the Activate the Champions Campaign, which is also supported by Manitoba *in motion*. The campaign was co-coordinated by the area's Active Living facilitator, Russell Thorne, who trained ten area volunteers to implement various fitness initiatives. "It was as though I had extra hands in the communities," Thorne said.

The Active Living Champion volunteers were shown how to start walking programs and work with individuals using the Canadian physical activity guide. "Anywhere, Anytime" exercises were also

*One highlight of the campaign was a family that came out to nearly every Let's Try It event – they were given a prize in recognition of their stellar attendance record, and other families started showing up together too.*

covered, and the champions fanned out to promote the programs. In addition to walking clubs, the volunteers initiated "Anywhere, Anytime" exercise workshops and clinics. Unexpected classes and initiatives developed, and the volunteer leaders – ranging in age from late 20s to 70s – took further training in order to enhance their knowledge and abilities.

Younger people in the community have been getting into the act as well, with the Erickson High School Grade 11 and 12 Leadership program designing an Elementary School Gym Blast event that encourages younger children to be more active and stick with it.

Another success in the Erickson area has been the Active Living Kit, which groups can borrow for free. The CDPI committee kicked in \$400 towards the kit, and another \$400 worth of sporting equipment was donated. It includes a whole baseball set, weight training equipment, volleyball set, yoga equipment, skates, skis, soccer set, and active living toys for young children. With a \$20 deposit, groups of all ages, ranging from family gatherings to teenagers looking to play some road hockey, have signed out sporting gear. The concept has gone over so well that the committee has secured funding to develop another kit for nearby Onanole.

With such a wide variety of activities being promoted, it's no surprise that active living has caught on in Erickson. One couple, for example, had never used resistance

training equipment before they attended a fitness centre orientation. Eight months later, they're continuing to use the facility regularly and report a noticeable change in their weight and how they feel.

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Take Note

**Family Fitness Ideas:**

- Designate one evening as family fitness night. Each week, a different person designs the family workout that you will all do together. Whether it's swimming, rollerblading, walking, Frisbee golf, or a two-on-two basketball game—everyone gets to do something they enjoy, and your workout will never become dull.
- Have each family member pick an exercise at the beginning of the week and do as many reps as they can. Then train throughout the week with the goal of improving by the weekend.
- Combine exercise and household chores. On small pieces of paper, write down chores and body weight exercises. Throw the papers into a couple of hats and have everyone pick one of each.

[http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/fitness\\_articles.asp?id=382](http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/fitness_articles.asp?id=382)



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## Flin Flon and Area

### Tackling Tobacco: Youth to Youth

Grassroots and peer group efforts work. That's the lesson Deanna Johnson has learned as the Regional Smoking Reduction Coordinator and Community Health Developer in the Flin Flon area. Johnson feels strongly that youth are effective in reaching their peers, so she increased the number of Tobacco Tackle Teams from Grade 4 to High School in various communities. Each team is unique and has different ideas on the ill effects of tobacco. "You really have to go with the group and listen to what works in their community," she said. "Let them do their thing. It has to be the kids' project."

One of the teams in Flin Flon put on a play called, "How to Say No." The Grade Fives wrote the script and performed for Grade 4 to Grade 6 classes. They also made bookmarks with tips on how to say no and gave them to their peers. Flin Flon High

*"Instead of pushing the smokers to the corner, let's try to get them to understand the addiction."*

School students, after holding a contest to reveal how much money they spent on tobacco and what amount they chewed, surprised themselves at the high number of tobacco chewers in their midst.

Cranberry Portage youth produced colourful posters consisting of pictures of themselves and their thoughts about tobacco on each. "The kids were so proud of the posters," said Johnson. Printed copies will reach every Frontier School Division school, and as a result of the project, the students went on to write a graphic novel.

"CDPI funding lets us do better projects," observed Johnson. That was the case in Cormorant where the students submitted posters on second-hand smoke in a contest. Resisting the temptation to correct grammar, Johnson and her co-facilitator allowed the captions to be the students' own words. With funding from CDPI, winning posters were printed off on poster paper and distributed to Frontier Schools.

Cormorant students also put fun into tobacco awareness by setting up original carnival games for all classes to enjoy. The students moved from station to station answering tobacco questions before laying up a perfect throw at "Dunk the Junk," bowling down pins in "Cigarette Bowling," or tossing beanbags through holes named after different chemicals – just a few of the games offered.

The Pas Grade Four students made a multi-media booklet including their thoughts and experiences about tobacco.

It is not always fun and games learning the perils of smoking. One teacher's grandfather passed away from a smoking-related illness, and as a result her father quit smoking. Inspired by their teacher's experience, students went on to create straight-talking advertisements.

"Instead of pushing the smokers to the corner," says Johnson, "let's try to get them to understand the addiction." Giving young

people the information and skills to say no and allowing them to positively influence each other is yielding successful results in the Frontier area.

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Take Note

**Teen Smoking in Canada:**

- Canadians under the age of 19 consume about 1.7 billion cigarettes every year.
- Teens between the ages of 15 and 19 who smoke consume an average of 12.3 cigarettes a day, down from 13 a day in 1999.
- More than 90% of teenagers who smoke as few as 3 to 4 cigarettes a day may be trapped into a lifelong habit of regular smoking, which typically lasts some 35 to 40 years.
- Tobacco eventually kills half of the people who get hooked on it, and this year, tobacco will kill about 2,000 Manitobans.

<http://www.heartandstroke.mb.ca/site/c.lgLSIVoyGpF/b.3661109/>

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving/smoking.html>

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## Flin Flon and Area Caught in Motion

Over 1,000 people in Flin Flon/Creighton and area were caught in the act by the Motion Patrol this summer. No arrests were made, but they were all cited for being physically active in public and had their names entered in the “Get Caught in Motion” contest. The program encourages any resident that witnesses someone they know being physically active to phone in and enter their names for a grand prize draw. Physically active suspects were also given spot prizes like t-shirts and gym or pool passes by Motion Patrol officials.

*“It’s not just about increasing their own physical activity – it’s about making them aware of who else is doing it.”*

Anyone caught golfing, swimming, cycling, walking, or even playing outside with their family was eligible to be entered in the draw. Community response was enthusiastic to say the least. “One lady who phoned in said, ‘I have a list of people that I caught in motion!’” said organizer Fran Labarre. “She felt really good about phoning in – people get to do their good deed.”

Many called in to recognize active people that inspired them, and physically active children also received a great number of ballots. “It’s not just about increasing their own physical activity,” says Labarre, “it’s about making them aware of who else is doing it.”

CDPI funding was integral to the success of the program, which was run in conjunction with *in motion* and the NOR-MAN Regional Health Authority. “We used to just put posters up, but CDPI money allows regular clips on the radio and in the local paper,” Labarre noted. Three Nintendo Wii systems were purchased for top prizes, and the remaining funds have been spread around to other programs as well.

Healthy fresh snacks are now supplied at Flin Flon’s Splash Pool Summer Days, and CDPI money also enabled organizers to purchase a variety of gear for the event, including parachutes and sacks for the always-popular sack race. Kids aged 3 to 10 have a blast at the event with hula-hoops, bouncy balls, and a mural painting session keeping them occupied and active when they’re not in the pool. A new ghetto blaster and PA sound system was also bought to keep community events running smoothly.

With the success of this year’s “Caught in Motion” program, organizers are thinking up ways to carry its momentum through the winter as well. “We want Flin Flon to be the healthiest community in Manitoba,” said Labarre.

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Take Note

**Canadians and (in)activity**

- The number of Canadians who report they are active enough to achieve health-related benefits doubled from 21% in 1981 to over 40% in 2002.
- The health and quality of life of over 60% of Canadians are at risk because of dangerously inactive lifestyles.
- People are more likely to remain active if they engage in physical activities they feel competent doing, find enjoyable and can easily access and fit into their daily schedules.
- People are more likely to become and remain active if they perceive the benefits of participation outweigh the costs, be they time, effort and energy spent or simply dollar costs.

<http://www.cbc.ca/manitoba/features/getmoving/article03.html>

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## Flin Flon

### Free To Be Me

Of all the chronic diseases, difficulties with mental health may be among the least understood and most agonizing. Support can be hard to find. In Flin Flon, thanks to a drop-in program called “Free To Be Me,” residents with mental health issues have a welcoming place to socialize and exercise.

Free To Be Me operates under the direction of a volunteer committee with administrative and program assistance from the NOR-MAN Regional Health Authority. A group meets twice a week to support each other and participate in numerous activities coordinated by Judy Fairbairn, a facilitator with the Free To Be Me program. “They need social interaction – in order to promote better wellness, they need to get out, otherwise they’re not going to get better because they’ll close themselves off,” said Fairbairn. “It gives them the group setting instead of being by themselves.”

The group varies in membership, but

includes a core of about 12 participants who join in regular special events and go on outings around the community. Indoor activities include basketball, bingo, shuffleboard, cards, and crafting, and there are summer games such as bocce ball, croquet, and lawn darts.

CDPI funding has allowed enhanced programming for healthy lifestyle changes. Members can participate in new and exciting activities that promote healthy eating and active living. CDPI funding has paid for bowling parties, purchased pedometers for walking clubs, and facilitated healthy snack cooking sessions. A floor shuffleboard set was also bought, along with a dart game and croquet set. Instructors were brought in to teach yoga and gentle stretching exercises that can be done at home, which Fairbairn said was enjoyed by all. “Free To Be Me gives them the advantage of things they can’t afford and places they might not go,” she said.

An atmosphere of acceptance and togetherness is an important basis of the group. “A lot of the people who come have experienced social stigma,” said Fairbairn. “In our group everybody knows everybody else and they accept each other for who they are.”

All the activities are free, and the group contributes by participating in fundraisers like raffles and Christmas baskets. Ages of group members range from 35 to 65, and the Free To Be Me committee is currently focusing on reaching younger people as well. “The next generation will be more

comfortable to seek help,” Fairbairn said. “Some of the older ones still struggle with that.” Fortunately, “Free To Be Me” is open to all in Flin Flon who need help with their struggles in a non-judgmental environment.

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Take Note

**Mental Illness in Canada:**

- Twenty percent of Canadians will personally experience a mental illness during their lifetime.
- Mental illnesses indirectly affect all Canadians through illness in a family member, friend or colleague.
- Mental illnesses affect people of all ages, educational and income levels, and cultures.
- The onset of most mental illnesses occurs during adolescence and young adulthood.

[http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/miic-mmac/chap\\_1-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/miic-mmac/chap_1-eng.php)

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## Flin Flon

### From Round Lettuce to Caesar Salad

They're not really picky eaters – they're just not used to eating salads as part of a meal because it is not something they ate growing up. April Head-Nickel, a member of the CDPI committee at the Flin Flon Community Youth Resource Centre (CYRC), is trying to change how children, youth and their parents view healthy food choices and physical fitness. Her clients are unsure of different varieties of foods out there that they haven't tried. "If the lettuce isn't round or the apples aren't red they don't touch it," she said.

Head-Nickel said at the Flin Flon Community Youth Resource Centre they are providing healthy snacks and information along with cooking courses that include a variety of fruits and vegetables. Traditionally the First Nations people in the area used various roots and berries to supplement their diet. Along with ongoing changes to their way of life,

*"We are constantly trying to educate them about healthy food choices and why that particular food is good for them."*

people have swapped traditional foods for processed, and often sugar-laden, foods. With the help of CDPI funding, the Centre is able to educate people on nutrition and introduce them to a variety of healthy foods. "We are constantly trying to educate them about healthy food choices and why that particular food is good for them," said Head-Nickel. Food bingos are held as a fun way of introducing new foods, and cooking classes, aimed at the younger generation, show how to prepare different, simple and nutritious meals.

Head-Nickel said aboriginal youth and parents are often not aware of the damage they are doing to their bodies when they eat processed food and don't make nutritious choices. With teaching from the local health nurse and adding visual supports such as showing how much sugar is in a can of cola, the message is getting across. "Families are saying, 'today I ate a bag of sugar' and realizing this is not so good," said Head-Nickel, who is seeing good progress in young people. Most would still rather pick up a red apple than a green or yellow one, but many are also choosing yogurt over puddings and taking fresh, raw vegetables for snacks. Some are even enjoying Caesar salads and cooked vegetables. "I'm always trying to figure out why they don't eat a particular food and find an alternative to introducing that food again in a different way," said Head-Nickel. "Sometimes it's as simple as cutting up the fruit and then they'll pick it up and eat it."

Head-Nickel is also trying to get an exercise program going for parents and youth after

a survey showed many are interested in incorporating physical activity. “Many of our youth and parents are not comfortable to join the local gym or to sign up for any other fitness programs, but they will get on a treadmill at the Centre or ride the stationary bike,” she said. For the Centre, it is all about staff taking the time to listen to the parents and youth and then find ways to encourage them with activities that they are comfortable doing. Walking and cycling have been complemented with education on the value of increased physical activity and discussions on healthy weight for individuals. “We’re trying to tone up our families by educating them on physical fitness. Sometimes parents are just uncertain about what they should do,” said

Head-Nickel. When parents realize how good it is for their children to be active by just simply go for a walk or a swim, it makes a difference in how often they take them.

CDPI funding allows the CYRC to continue to educate the youth, parents and children about being physically active and making good health choices.

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Take Note

**Handy Healthy Eating Tips:**

- Enjoy a variety of foods every day.
- Choose low fat foods more often.
- Read labels for hidden fats.
- Choose healthy serving sizes.
- Eat your fruits and veggies.
- Make healthy choices in restaurants and grocery stores.
- Choose high fibre foods more often.

[http://www.gov.mb.ca/asset\\_library/en/healthylivingguide/healthy\\_living\\_guide.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/healthylivingguide/healthy_living_guide.pdf)



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## Flin Flon

### Seniors Walk and Talk in the Right Direction

The CDPI's Walking in the Right Direction program has motivated a group of Flin Flon seniors to exercise, socialize, eat healthier, and even make some inspirational jewellery!

Aimee Deans, the recreation programmer for the City of Flin Flon, says the weekly walking routine has developed into an important social connection. "The walkers have become really good friends," said Deans. "It's a great meeting place – a hub for them during the week. This program is successful because of weekly participation."

Flin Flon's Walking in the Right Direction is for seniors, with increased physical activity being the main goal. Along the way, it's developed a focus on healthy living as well. "The group meets weekly every Tuesday morning for one hour; we walk, exercise, have a healthy snack,

and do some socializing," said Deans. "We have seniors aged 60 to 85, mainly females, an average of 15 walkers per week. Occasionally, special guests come in to speak about nutrition, diabetes, menu planning. We've made trail mix, and done yoga."

The walking takes place every week from September until June inside Flin Flon's Community Centre, which provides a safe indoor environment for the seniors. Each walker is given a pedometer and the group walks to tunes they've chosen – often old favourites from the 1940s, 50s and 60s – to create an upbeat walking atmosphere. "We do our laps to get our kilometres in," Deans said. "The goal is one kilometre per day." That might seem like a daunting distance for some, but it's attainable for the walkers in this group. One lady found an interesting way to motivate herself and the group. She made an encouragement bracelet with 11 beads on it, then turned one bead over for every lap completed – 11 laps was half a kilometre -, marking the half-way point of the day's goal. Soon, the group made bracelets for all the other walkers too.

"They walk half a kilometre, turn over their beads, have some water, then change direction and complete the kilometre," said Deans. The bracelet trend has added an encouraging – and stylish – element to a healthy weekly get-together.

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▼  
▼ *Take Note*  
▼

▼  
▼ **Benefits of Active Living**  
▼

▼ Studies show that adults 60 years and older benefit more from regular exercise than 30-year-olds. The benefits include:

- ▼ • increased flexibility and mobility.
- ▼ • increased energy and endurance.
- ▼ • increased muscle strength and balance.
- ▼ • reduced risks of falls and injuries.
- ▼ • increased self-confidence and greater independence.
- ▼ • better management of chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure and osteoporosis.
- ▼ • better opportunities for socialization.
- ▼ • better ability to relax resulting in reduced anxiety, tension and depression.

▼ <http://www.tbdhu.com/Safety/SeniorsSafety/ActiveLivingForSeniors.htm>

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## Flin Flon

### Winter Trails Encourage Everyone to Get Active

On your mark, get set....get healthy! You could be a winner at the Flin Flon ski race, even if you're not the first to cross the finish line. The Flin Flon Ski Club has made good use of CDPI funding to build trails and provide opportunities to get whole families involved in outdoor activities.

An annual event on the cross country ski trail encourages participation for every age group. The race is the Centaloppet – a four-kilometre “race”

which people can do at their own pace and socialize as they go. Eventually, everyone ends up at the chalet for healthy snacks. The event is free and attracts large numbers, encouraging family activity and promoting the Ski Club at the same time. Dave Price, Ski Club vice-president and CDPI committee member, said the event is fun and also good for people. Little ones are sometimes pulled in sleds up and down the hills along the trails

*“The Canadian shield has very beautiful scenery and these are the finest trails pretty much anywhere.”*

by their parents. In some cases children as young as three or four are already on skis. Price said his mother was visiting from Wales during the event one winter and won a prize, even though she'd never been on skis before. “She won the prize for being from the farthest away,” laughed Price.

Cross country skiing is a sport that can be done at a reasonable cost and is made even more affordable in Flin Flon with annual swap shops where people can trade or buy used equipment. “We make it possible for people to ski without a big expense,” said Price.

CDPI funding was also used to set up a cross country ski course for young children. The Jack Rabbit program teaches children ages 5 to 9 how to ski using fun and games on the snow. The club also has a Moms and Tots group where some of the moms go for a ski while one or two stay back and entertain the little ones at the chalet.

Flin Flon has a total of 27 kilometres of ski trails in some of the most stunning terrain in the country. “The Canadian shield has very beautiful scenery and these are the finest trails pretty much anywhere,” said Price. A two and half kilometre section of the trail is lit so people can ski in the evening as well as during the day. “Even if people are working, they can get a ski in,” said Price. The trails are open to members or to anyone who pays a daily trail fee, and are also used by area schools as part of the physical education program.

CDPI funding has also contributed to a walking trail in the community. The trail winds around Ross Lake in the middle of the town. Plans are underway to light a portion of that trail to promote physical activity outdoors in the evenings as well.

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▼  
▼ *Take Note*

▼  
▼ **Did You Know?**

▼  
▼ Every year, 2.5 million Canadians don cross country skis and take to groomed trails. Cross-  
▼  
▼ country skiing is not only the most popular ski sport in the country – it is experiencing a  
▼  
▼ surge in popularity among Canadians and is our fastest-growing winter sport.

▼  
▼ <http://www.southcaribootourism.com/index.php?page=322>

▼  
▼ [http://www.alive.com/782a2a2.php?subject\\_bread\\_cramb=94](http://www.alive.com/782a2a2.php?subject_bread_cramb=94)

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## Flin Flon

### More than a Healthy Meal

A community effort at Flin Flon's Food Bank is offering more than just nutritious meals. Using food supplied by CDPI funding, the Taste Testing/Meal Bag Program offers a unique way to get people to cook nutritious meals at home.

CDPI committee member Carol Hydamaka is the food bank chairperson; she works together with Flin Flon's community dietitian to select the meals, which are then cooked by community volunteers from six Flin Flon churches. "They cook up a big batch and take it to the food bank," Carol said. "People taste it, and if they like it, bags containing the recipe and all the groceries necessary to make it are available." When asked how she gets the volunteers to do the cooking, Carol replies matter-of-factly, "I just phone them up. I've known some of these women for forty years."

Carol also administers Flin Flon's prenatal nutrition program, and some of these clients use the food bank too. Recently when Carol asked one of her aboriginal clients what she had eaten the day before, the answer was that one of her meals had been lentil soup. Carol was surprised, as

lentils are not a common choice in the aboriginal community. "Where did you get the recipe from?" she asked. The mom replied that she had tried it at the food bank and then made it at home, and that she and her husband had eaten it all up! Other recipes the Meal Bag program has distributed include apple cobbler, cabbage roll casserole, and hamburger soup.

A Pentecostal church was the first location of the Food Bank program, and some people thought the name of the Food Bank – Lord's Bounty – might keep clients from coming because they'd think it was "churchy." It hasn't deterred anyone from coming, although there have been some touchy moments. In the early days of the program, one lady asked Carol, "What are you, some kind of \_\_\_ do-gooder?" Undaunted, she replied, "No, I'm a Christian, and I'm doing what I'm supposed to do – feeding the poor." The lady's response was unexpected. "She gave me a great big hug," Carol said, "and we've had a good relationship ever since."

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Take Note

**Five keys from Canada's Guidelines for Healthy Eating**

- Enjoy a variety of foods.
- Emphasize cereals, breads, other grain products, vegetables and fruits.
- Choose lower-fat dairy products, leaner meats and foods prepared with little or no fat.
- Achieve and maintain a healthy body weight by enjoying regular physical activity and healthy eating.
- Limit salt, alcohol and caffeine.

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/surveill/nutrition/population/national\\_health\\_survey-enquete\\_nationale\\_sante-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/surveill/nutrition/population/national_health_survey-enquete_nationale_sante-eng.php)

<http://www.cafb-acba.ca/> (Food Banks Canada)

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## Flin Flon

### New Field Promotes Soccer as a Healthy Lifestyle Choice

Soccer is widely considered to be the most popular sport in the world and is rapidly gaining popularity in Flin Flon, Manitoba. Dean Grove is the assistant superintendent of the Flin Flon School Division and a member of the local CDPI committee. He said interest in soccer is growing in the community and the committee wanted to generate even more interest in the sport. However the only soccer pitch in town was heavily used and wearing down, so if the profile of the sport was to be raised to get more kids involved, a new field needed to be built. Acknowledging the health benefits of the game and the growing interest, CDPI funding was put into developing a new soccer field in the region. “There are over 500 people playing soccer in our area from the ages of five to adult,” said Grove. “The new field will help soccer to grow as a healthy lifestyle choice.”

The location of the new pitch in Foster Park near the lower income part of town

*“The new field will help soccer to grow as a healthy lifestyle choice.”*

was carefully chosen to give access to kids who might not have transportation to a field further away. Soil was also a consideration. “We’re on the rocks here and it’s hard to play on rocks,” said Grove. The new field has been built on land that needed extensive drainage. Refurbished soil has been brought in to cover soil that was found to have high levels of toxic contaminants from local mine waste. New sod was placed on top. Organizers are pleased to have refurbished a new recreation spot in the community and have plans for a walking path around the outside of the field. Grove noted that the project started with the vision of the soccer club and became a reality due to a community effort with input not only from CDPI, but from the Phantom Lake Soccer Club, the City of Flin Flon, HudBay Mineral, the Rotary Club, the Northern Neighbours fund, the Truesport Fund, the Neighbourhoods Alive Initiative, Manitoba Community Places grant and Manitoba Infrastructure grants.. “Everybody chipped in a little bit to make it happen,” he said.

Grove said parents like to put their children into soccer programs because of the relatively minor cost for equipment – you just need sneakers, socks and shin pads – and the ability for just about anybody to play. “Anybody who can run can play soccer,” he said, adding there are teams at different skill levels to further accommodate players. It is not just children who play soccer in Flin Flon. This past summer there were four women’s teams and between 20 and 25 men play once a week.

CDPI funding was also used to develop new coaches for the soccer program. In keeping with CDPI's focus on nutrition as well as increased physical activity, the soccer clubs are encouraging players to put good food into their bodies. "We're trying to avoid lower nutrition foods at snack time and talking to teams more about nutrition," said Grove.

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Take Note

**Health Benefits of Playing Soccer:**

- **Cardio gains:** You'll work up to your target heart rate and reap cardiovascular benefits, including improved blood pressure, increased endurance, and a stronger heart.
- **Add muscle, lose fat:** As opposed to an activity like jogging, where you repeat a motion over and over, switching rapidly from one action to the other engages all of the fibres of your muscles. By doing this kind of physical work regularly, you're more likely to gain muscle mass and burn fat.
- **Build bone:** In soccer, the running around that you do can be considered as a type of weight-bearing exercise, which can boost your bone strength. Children playing soccer can also increase bone density.

[http://health.lifestyle.yahoo.ca/channel\\_section\\_details.asp?text\\_id=4240&channel\\_id=2041&relation\\_id=23745](http://health.lifestyle.yahoo.ca/channel_section_details.asp?text_id=4240&channel_id=2041&relation_id=23745)



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## Garden Hill First Nation

### Targeting Kids – And Moose – to Increase Physical Activity

How many students get to go moose hunting for their fall field trip? Anyone in senior high, if you're from Garden Hill First Nation. And don't feel bad for the elementary school kids – they're going fishing!

Marilyn Wood is on the CDPI committee in Garden Hill. She said children as young as eight years old are developing diabetes in the community and she takes it personally.

"I felt like we failed her, we didn't catch her in time," she said of an eight-year-old child that developed diabetes. "They're getting younger and younger."

Health Care professionals are doing everything they can to prevent more children from developing the chronic illness. They go into the school to try and reach children in their early years with nutrition and physical activity information.

*"The meat is better for them than pizza pops and stuff like that – they understand that now."*

They have introduced a 'no junk food' policy and teach young people how to cook and bake nutritious food. Visual aids are used to help children understand how much sugar is in a can of pop or how much fat is in a hamburger or french fries. They also use a foot model to show children what happens to a foot when diabetes sets in. Children are shown how sores begin and how, eventually, the foot might have to be amputated. Wood said the children remember a lesson better if there is a visual presentation to go with it and that they ask a lot of questions during these sessions. She said she believes they are gradually making headway with healthy eating in the community.

There is also a gardening program at the school with a small greenhouse and children are given a small garden plot as well as seeds. They grow the basics – lettuce and carrots – which they call their "exercise food." "We try to bring it to their level by using their language," said Wood. Fishing nets were purchased with CDPI funding and the elementary school children are taken out in the winter on the ice to go fishing. The fish are cooked right there so children learn the nutritional value. Wood said this has become part of the curriculum and the students love it.

In the fall high school students are flown out to traditional camps for a week to go moose hunting. They not only hunt the moose, but learn how to dress and prepare the hide. "The meat is better for them than pizza pops and stuff like that," said Wood. "They understand that now." The effort is a collective effort including the Chief and

Council, the school and the parents. Chief and Council go with the students as guides and chaperones. The outing also provides an opportunity for good physical activity. “They’re taught how to move, which is good,” said Wood.

Wood said they provide healthy snacks and also use visual presentations for prenatal clinics. Prospective parents are showed models of babies in various stages of development which include evidence

on how cigarette smoking affects a foetus. “It seems to be working, it’s making them think,” said Wood. “We’re showing them a lot of things they can do to have a healthy baby.”

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Take Note

**How Are Unborn Babies Affected?**

- Smoking is known to have an effect on babies before they are born. Nicotine, carbon monoxide and other chemicals in tobacco smoke are passed on to the baby through the placenta.
- Nicotine increases a baby’s heart rate and breathing movements. Some of the chemicals passed on through the mother’s blood are known to cause cancer.
- The chances of a baby’s dying at birth or shortly thereafter are increased if the mother has smoked during pregnancy.
- A clear relationship exists between the number of cigarettes smoked during pregnancy and a slowdown in the growth of the foetus. These babies are often smaller than average and more prone to perinatal complications, illnesses and death.

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/tobac-tabac/body-corps/preg-gros-eng.php>

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## Hamiota

### RCMP Cheering Students on at Boot Camp

When the RCMP showed up at the Hamiota School, it only meant one thing – it’s time for Boot Camp!

Kerri Wilson, DHAT.com (Daily Health Awareness Team committee) facilitator for the RMs of Miniota, Woodworth, Blanshard, Hamiota and the Town of Hamiota, said the committee’s goal was to use CDPI funding to increase physical activity in the schools and to do so in a fun and challenging way. The “Boot Camp” took place in four schools and was based loosely on the RCMP P.A.R.E. (Physical Ability Requirement Evaluation) program. It used items already available in the school. “You don’t need special equipment, you can just pull together what you have and make it fun,” said Wilson. As well, the course was made in such a way that everyone, from Kindergarten to Grade 8, and with a variety of physical abilities, could participate.

*“We had an amazing response. The teachers couldn’t believe how the lunches changed.”*

The 100 meter obstacle course, outlined with yellow police tape and balloons, involved walking, pushing, pulling, carrying, lifting, vaulting, jumping, climbing and running. The job of the RCMP? To cheer the students on, of course. “We encouraged them positively,” said Wilson, “but it did have a Boot Camp feel to it.” In some cases Wilson and a police officer would challenge each other while the students cheered them on. Wilson admitted she didn’t just lose weight during the two-week event, but her voice as well! Prizes were given out for accomplishments such as the fastest time and the most improved time. “We didn’t all win first prize, but we all had fun,” she said. Each participating school was given a giant Tied in Knots game as a prize for participating in the challenge.

Another successful CDPI venture was a healthy eating challenge in the schools. Students were challenged to bring (and eat!) all four food groups in their lunches. At the end of the challenge the class that had eaten the most fruits and vegetables won a cooking class. “We had an amazing response. The teachers couldn’t believe how the lunches changed,” said Wilson. Changes were happening in the larger community as well with the encouragement of the CDPI committee. Restaurants were asked to provide healthier options, such as serving salad dressing on the side, adding whole wheat items and baking instead of deep-frying some foods. Placemats were printed with healthy options such as ‘load your pizza with vegetables instead of meat,’ and information on what is a healthy serving size. “We did see significant

changes,” said Wilson. “It was well-received.”

Last year the FIT Family Fun Challenge was an open-ended photo contest. Families were encouraged to take photos of their families being active – “doing what they do,” said Wilson. “Families that play together, stay together. There are easy and diverse ways for families to be active together.” There were prizes for the winners and all together there were 50 entries, with a great variety of activities showcased. This year FIT included a geocaching challenge, an outdoor treasure hunt using Global Positions System (GPS) technology (available for participants to borrow) to find caches on trails in their municipality.

Wilson said an Assiniboine RHA study showed that men in the region are, on

average, eating only two to three servings of fruit and vegetables a day. As well, obesity rates in young children are increasing and it is anticipated that the next generation of children will have a lower life expectancy than those of us living as adults right now. “It takes a commitment from everyone to address the lifestyle issues related to chronic disease,” she said. “The health sector can play roles in prevention, education and treatment but ultimately individuals need to take charge of their own wellbeing. Communities can support these things by creating awareness and opportunities.”

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*Take Note*

**Importance of healthy lunches and snacks at school:**

- A healthy lunch and snacks provides children with the energy and nutrients they need to grow and learn and play at school. Without adequate energy from food, they may feel sluggish and find it difficult to concentrate in class.
- Nutritious lunches and snacks provide children with many of the essential vitamins and minerals they require for healthy growth and development.
- Children tend to have small stomachs, so they can't eat a lot at one sitting. Healthy snacks keep children from feeling famished by mealtime, which can help prevent nutrient-poor food choices and overeating.
- Providing healthy lunches and snacks helps children form healthy eating habits that can last throughout their lives.

<http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/ViewDocument.aspx?id=41>

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## Keeseekowenin First Nation

### Keeping Physical Activity in the Family

Grandma serves the ball, Dad bumps it up and little Johnny gets it over the net! Volleyball is inter-generational in Keeseekowenin, thanks to the CDPI in the community. “We look for things the whole community can do, where whole families can come,” said Lenore Delorme, CDPI committee member on the reserve. Family Fun days are held with a variety of activities to include all ages. Delorme said the volleyball tournament attracted 10 teams of four, with the oldest participant a grandmother in her 50s and the youngest a child of three. There is also a lot of baseball going on in Keeseekowenin and the community had a community broomball tournament in the winter time. “If we want people to be active we have to find activities that everybody, from grandparents to grandchildren, can do,” said Delorme.

Delorme said a gardening workshop also turned out really well and encouraged good eating habits. There is a community garden where people are given seeds and can make use of a prepared plot and shared

gardening tools. People are mostly planting basic vegetables like potatoes, carrots and cucumbers, said Delorme, but she has noticed more and more people making gardens on their own yards.

A square dance teacher has been lined up to give jigging lessons as well as other dance techniques. These lessons will conclude with a dance where participants “will be able to show off their stuff,” said Delorme.

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## *Take Note*

### **Did You Know?**

A person weighing 80 kg can burn 516 calories during an hour of volleyball, which burns more calories than softball, golf, or doubles tennis.

[http://www.basketballmanitoba.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1065&Itemid=](http://www.basketballmanitoba.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1065&Itemid=)

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## Killarney

### It's for the Town

Killarney residents love to go to the beach in the summertime, and lately the town hotspot is getting a lot of traffic in the winter too. A community-wide effort has resulted in a new facility for ice-skating at the beach on Killarney Lake, complete with a warming shack, picnic tables, and even a unique zamboni to clear the ice. The local CDPI committee partnered with the Killarney Foundation and Healthy Killarney to complete the project, which was assisted by community volunteers at every step. “Everyone’s really been helping out when people find out they’re doing it for their town,” said CDPI Wellness Facilitator Stephanie Outhwaite. “When I’d ask people to come and help and asked how much it would cost, they’d just say ‘Oh no, it’s for the town.’”

Local electricians and plumbers volunteered their time for the project, and Manitoba Hydro chipped in with materials as well. A physics teacher helped his students to build a skate-propelled

zamboni complete with a solar-heated water tank that siphons water from the lake. School classes regularly skate at the site, which also hosted a CDPI-funded Groundhog Day event last winter that included a barbecue and family-oriented activities – and of course a lot of skating.

Cross-country skiing is also being promoted in Killarney through a joint program with the local school, CDPI, and Manitoba in motion. Forty sets of durable waxless skis have been purchased, ranging in size to fit five-year-olds to seniors, and they can be rented for only \$2. Newcomers to the sport can pick up some trail tips at workshops run by a local volunteer coach who is also an avid cross-country skier. Many kilometres of groomed trails are ready for skiers in Adam Lake Provincial Park, and the CDPI committee is working on an all-season trail complex that will connect with the town’s park, lake, seniors’ home and hospital.

For those who prefer to get their exercise on solid ground, the Killarney Mileage Club offers three groups you can join – walking, learn to run, and the half-marathon group. An in motion 19-member team travelled to the Manitoba marathon, and an in motion grant received through the CDPI committee paid the travelling expenses of the coaches to this event. All 19 runners met or exceeded their goal in the run. The committee has also been able to purchase dry-fit t-shirts for all Mileage Club members who meet their personal goals.

Walking is a popular activity in Killarney, and over 300 people came out for an

evening Earth Day Walk that raised awareness for the walking trail network being planned for the town. Killarney's recreational options have been expanding exponentially recently, and many activities are taking place in the brand new Shamrock Centre. In addition to official-sized hockey rinks and a 600-person meeting hall, the Shamrock Centre features facilities for exercise classes and circuit training.

All the activity is making a positive difference. A two-week exercise Boot Camp this year included an hour and a half every day of skating, aerobics, circuit training, yoga, walking, and running. Many of the

participants embraced the challenge and reported amazing results. One Boot Camp participant said, "I'm a better mother - I'm making healthier food and exercising with my kids in the evening." Another woman, who had gained 30 pounds, attended the camp. She lost four inches off her waist in two weeks and has kept the weight off. "She was so happy," reported facilitator Outhwaite, "that she went out and ran the half-marathon."

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*Take Note*

**Fitness and medical professionals agree that cross-country skiing is one of the best cardiovascular fitness activities:**

- The sport keeps the heart pumping at an elevated rate for an extended period of time.
- It boosts "good" HDL cholesterol and helps control blood pressure.
- Cross country skiing also builds endurance, strengthens the spine and helps maintain normal weight or aids weight loss.
- A 175-pound man can burn up to 800 calories per hour on cross-country skis.
- Cross-country skiing is also an ideal low-impact sport (easy on knees and joints).

[http://www.alive.com/782a2a2.php?subject\\_bread\\_cramb=94](http://www.alive.com/782a2a2.php?subject_bread_cramb=94)



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## Leaf Rapids

### Leaf Rapids' Biggest Losers

They call themselves the Leaf Rapids Biggest Losers. No, they don't have self-esteem issues and this group has not (yet) appeared on the NBC television hit show "Biggest Loser," but they have been losing weight. In fact, all together, 10 people from Leaf Rapids have lost about 100 pounds in the last year and kept it off.

Penny Howlett, CDPI committee member and an employee at the Leaf Rapids Health Centre, said the weight loss program has been a highlight of the CDPI program in her community. "I've seen a difference," she said. "Even the people that came for awhile and dropped out have been keeping their weight off."

The success is based on group support and education. The group meets weekly at the Health Centre and everybody weighs in. They exchange recipes and ideas on ways to lose weight and eat well. "People are

watching how they cook as much as what they cook," said Howlett. The group has invited a dietitian to talk about healthy eating and specific topics such as the glycemic index (GI). They learned that choosing low GI carbohydrates produces only small fluctuations in blood glucose and insulin levels, and thus reduces the risk of heart disease and diabetes and is a key to sustainable weight loss.

Howlett said since the program was started she has notice that people are making use of the health centre fitness room, walking more, cooking meals in a more healthy way and talking to other people about weight loss. For a time there was a weekly recreational dance and in the winter there was a snowshoeing group.

"I've heard from people that they feel better and that they love to go for a walk because it makes them feel better, gives them more energy, and they just feel better about themselves," said Howlett. "A few have had their high blood pressure go down just by walking and watching what they eat."

The message of good nutrition and other chronic disease prevention ideas are brought to children in the community with a teddy bear clinic. Stations are set up in the school with various healthy living themes and children can bring their dolls or teddy bears for the doctor to examine. One visual presentation, kept on the pop machine, is especially revealing. Baby bottles are labelled with a variety of liquids people might give their children and filled with the amount of sugar cubes that liquid

would hold. For example, chocolate milk has the equivalent of 12 cubes of sugar, unsweetened apple juice 13, unsweetened orange juice 11, Kool-aid, 14, pop 12, breast milk 8, and formula has the equivalent of 8 sugar cubes.

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“Remember to brush your child’s teeth,” advised Howlett.



### Take Note

*“All truly great thoughts are conceived while walking.”*

- Friedrich Nietzsche

*“Everywhere is walking distance if you have the time.”*

- Stephen Wright

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## Lundar and Eriksdale

### Setting Healthy Patterns

It's never too early to teach kids how to exercise and eat well. In Lundar and Eriksdale, pre-schoolers at home and kids in daycare have been eating healthier foods since the CDPI-sponsored "Wiggles, Giggles, and Munch" workshops, which taught parents and daycare facilitators fun and effective ways to incorporate nutritious foods into everyday snacks and meals.

The CDPI committee has initiated a variety of healthy living programs and events targeting the area's youth. Promoting nutritious eating habits and making healthy food fun have been a consistent focus. "We try to reach them in their daycare years and get them into healthy eating habits before their school years," said CDPI community coordinator Chrissie Erickson. "Parents learn how to pack a healthy lunch, and our daycare facilitators take the lessons back to their workplaces."

*People from community centers in neighbouring towns such as Arborg and Riverton also attended the workshop and have been busy working to provide healthy foods at their arenas as well.*

In the "Spot Rewards" program, kids who are spotted with healthy food in their lunches can win activity-related prizes such as soccer balls. A couple of prizes are up for grabs every day, and the focus here again is on fostering nutritious eating habits at an early age. "There's so much pre-packaged snack food - we're all working and it's easy to throw those into the lunches," says Erickson. "By the time they get to Junior High, their patterns are set."

Adults in the two communities have been drawn to successful community walks and Wellness Fairs, while teens have taken advantage of numerous events designed to increase physical activity opportunities in the area. A day-long instruction course in cross-country skiing was put on in partnership with KidSport Manitoba, which donated 12 pairs of skis and boots. Basketball tournaments in both towns have taken place during the annual Carnival, and CDPI committee members began a gym night for 12 to 18 year-old girls with special events like bellydancing.

Like many rural areas, boys here tend naturally towards hockey, so the CDPI co-sponsored an Esso Fun Day Hockey Clinic for girls. Turnout for the event exceeded expectations, with 25 girls from Eriksdale and Lundar coming out, and a girls' hockey team is now active, with team members from both communities. The hockey arena was also a focus for a well-attended food workshop aimed at providing healthy snacks and getting rid of some of the junk foods available at canteens in arenas and

schools. Information from the workshop has been put into practice at both community arenas and schools, which have been offering snacks like fruit, yogurt, and chili as alternatives to the usual hotdogs and fries. As an added bonus, people from community centers in neighbouring towns such as Arborg and Riverton also attended the workshop and have been busy working to provide healthy foods at their arenas as well.

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Take Note

**Nutrition and Learning**

- Healthy eating helps children grow, develop and do well in school.
- A healthy diet makes children more settled, attentive and ready to learn.
- Poor nutrition is associated with poorer learning outcomes.
- Children's brain function is diminished by short-term or periodic hunger or malnutrition caused by missing or skipping meals.
- Children at nutritional risk have significantly poorer attendance and punctuality. Their grades suffer and they are more likely to have behaviour problems.
- Well-nourished students who skip breakfast perform poorly on tests and are less able to concentrate.

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/child-enfant/food\\_thought\\_schools-reflection\\_aliments\\_ecole-eng.php#2](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/child-enfant/food_thought_schools-reflection_aliments_ecole-eng.php#2)

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## Mafeking

### Pulling Together for Sociability and Health

Located about halfway between Swan River and The Pas, the small community of Mafeking has faced many of the challenges typical to northern towns. But shrinking economic opportunities and an aging population haven't stopped Mafeking from pulling together and getting behind a number of CDPI programs. Noella Unger, a local paramedic who is also a CDPI facilitator, says a variety of workshops have been well attended, including diabetes, heart and stroke, and cancer events.

Diabetes awareness breakfasts have proven to be an effective way to screen people for the disease and get them informed as well. Nurses are on hand to do the screenings and give advice regarding diet habits and exercise. "People coming out found the information they learned really important; some of them hadn't realized how the

*"People coming out found the information they learned really important; some of them hadn't realized how the actual course of their disease progressed."*

actual course of their disease progressed," said Unger. "They got a better idea and understanding of the challenges they faced."

Because of Mafeking's small size, some activities take place as part of a cluster of other communities. Nearby Barrows also has a CDPI committee, and both towns collaborate with Birch River and Bellsite. They all get together for an annual family picnic that's open to everybody who wants to enjoy games and a potluck meal featuring local in-season foods. Last year, CDPI funds paid to install two horseshoe pits, and someone brought a bocci ball set for the day. "Our little park runs right beside the creek – the kids had a great time because they could play in the creek," said Unger. "The goal is just to get people out, get them active, and socialize – some people don't go out as much as they should."

Getting people together in Mafeking should get a lot easier with the completion of a new community centre. The local school has closed due to declining enrolment, but the town recently bought the building and is in the process of repairing the facility, which includes a gymnasium. "Our little community is really starting to pull together," said Unger. "We're getting the school roof fixed and we'll have a real community centre."

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Take Note

**The two population groups at highest risk of diabetes are:**

- Seniors – 10% of Canadians aged 65+ have the disease, compared to 3% of those aged 35 to 64.
- Aboriginal people – Type 2 diabetes rates are 3 to 5 times higher in aboriginal communities than in the general population.

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ccdpc-cpcmc/diabetes-diabete/english/facts/index.html>

**Did You Know?**

Manitoba was the first province in Canada to study the magnitude of the diabetes problem.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/diabetes/strategy.html>

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## Mallard

### Mayor Promotes Healthy Living

Liz Dano says she wouldn't be the mayor of Mallard if it wasn't for the Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative. No, CDPI funding did not pay for her campaign, but working on CDPI projects pushed Dano to want to continue to work for the health of her community. She felt that being in the mayor's seat would allow her to do that. "But sometimes I do wonder what I got myself into," she laughed.

As mayor, Dano is not afraid to get her hands dirty, and she worked alongside families in the community garden this year. She advertised the garden by word of mouth and had a sign-up sheet at the council office. The garden plot is located in an area within the townsite, about a five-minute walk from most of the houses. Handily, it was next door to one of the elders, an avid gardener, who gave helpful pointers to first-timers. The CDPI program purchased seeds and volunteers packaged them up for the gardeners. People grew a

*"After a little while it didn't matter about the challenge. They just wanted to walk."*

variety of vegetables, including potatoes, tomatoes, celery, peppers, corn, radishes, carrots, beans and onions. Some even planted flowers. A community tiller was made available for everybody to use free of charge and there were also shovels and hoes at the site.

The garden not only provided people with good, healthy, chemical-free food, but also brought community people together and proved to be good exercise for participants. "It was nice to be there and see everyone working together," said Dano, who got involved by planting one row for an injured friend and one row for a single parent in the community. The gardens were small and most of the vegetables were eaten as they ripened, leaving little, if any for canning or freezing. "But it was enough to get them started and at least we know what we're eating," said Dano, who predicts the community garden will grow.

Another CDPI project in the area was the 'no smoking' campaign at the school. A poster contest was held for students from Kindergarten to Grade 9 and cash prizes were given for the best poster in each grade.

A walking challenge took place between the Dauphin Friendship Centre and surrounding communities. Each community was supposed to walk across Canada and the first community that got across would be the winner. Dano said to begin with, people got walking just to win the challenge, but before long she noticed people were buddying up and walking just

for fun. “After a little while it didn’t matter about the challenge. They just wanted to walk,” she said.

For those that prefer their exercise on the water rather than on land, the community has acquired two canoes through an *in motion* grant. People over the age of 18 can use the canoes for no charge. Thirty life jackets in various sizes were purchased through the Lifesaving Society Manitoba

and the Manitoba Coalition for Safer Waters PFD Loaner program. And you never know who you’ll meet on the water. That person paddling towards you just might be the mayor of Mallard!

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Take Note

**Paddle sports like canoeing and kayaking are low-impact exercises that benefit your entire body:**

- A good stroke starts at the feet and resonates up through the legs, abdomen, and torso to the paddle shaft.
- You will tone upper-body muscles, increase your flexibility, and improve circulation, which benefits your joints by bringing them nutrients.
- Paddlers can expect to do about 300 paddle strokes per kilometre. A brisk pace of 8 km/hour burns around 400 calories, which means several hours of paddling is a great way to lose weight!

[http://www.alive.com/6224a15a2.php?subject\\_bread\\_cramb=94](http://www.alive.com/6224a15a2.php?subject_bread_cramb=94)



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## Minnedosa

### A Great Lunch Canteen, a Skating Oval and Swooshing

There's nothing like a little swooshing to burn up a few calories! But before you try it, you might want to check out what's for lunch at the Tanner's Crossing School in Minnedosa. The daily special is \$2.25 and a soup and sandwich only \$3.00. With prices like these for a hot lunch, who's not going to take advantage? And every school day, about 80 students do buy their lunch at the new canteen set up by CDPI. It's not that Minnedosa parents don't feed their children – they do! But with both parents working in many families, convenience sometimes takes priority over healthy choices. Glen McNabb, co-chair of the local committee, said he and his family have always tried to eat well, but even so the canteen has been a huge benefit to them.

The goal of CDPI in Minnedosa is to provide opportunities for good nutrition

and physical fitness, and they've had lots of programs to meet that goal. Family fun nights have given community members the chance to skate, play snow soccer, and even try out cross-country skis. The Rolling River School Division offered the committee free use of the division's cross-country skis, and the great thing, said McNabb, was that "we have had people that have gone out and bought skis after trying out the free skiing."

Have you ever tried swooshing? Minnedosans had a chance at last winter's Festival du Voyageur. Swooshing, in case you didn't know, involves about six people strapping themselves onto a twelve-foot long two-by-six board and, "if they all work together," said school principal McNabb, "they can actually make it move." There was also delicious fun to be had making a popsicle out of maple syrup and snow.

Perhaps CDPI's greatest success has been with the skating oval created in the park in winter. Picture street lamps lighting the ice, along with Christmas lights for a festive look, straw bales for sitting, and a fire pit in the middle of the oval for socializing. The oval was immensely popular, used by families during the weekend, youth in the evenings, and people of all ages during Christmas break. "Any time I was there, there were always people there, and they were so thankful," said McNabb, who admitted to flooding the oval himself. In a great partnership, the town maintenance staff kept the oval clear all winter with their snow removal brush.

The CDPI committee isn't resting on its laurels. Minnedosa people like to walk and they have excellent walking paths through the community, around a buffalo compound, along a former hydroelectric dam, down the beach road, through the heritage village, and over the bridges that cross the Little Saskatchewan River. Now the committee is planning a walking path to link the school with the existing paths, and it would like to include some workout stations along the way.

Minnedosa is finding creative ways to get active and as more and more people join in the fun, the community is getting healthier too.

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Take Note

**Physical Inactivity Health Risks:**

- premature death
- heart disease
- obesity
- high blood pressure
- adult-onset diabetes
- osteoporosis
- colon cancer
- stroke
- depression

[http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/fitness/work/benefits\\_e.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/fitness/work/benefits_e.html)

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## Neepawa

### Rising to the Challenge and taking a Mexican Cruise with Shoes

Falling out of a tree was not what Jim Aitken had in mind several years ago when he went out to do some trimming. But accidents happen, and for Jim, now 67, the result was hip surgery and a big slowdown in physical activity over the year that followed. What got Jim going again was a Mexican Cruise with Shoes! That's right – a Mexican Cruise with Shoes, a team walking program devised by the CDPI Committee in Neepawa in 2006. Teams of five people, formed from business staffs, families, or just groups of friends and neighbours, challenged each other to get active, walk or do some physical exercise over a 17-week period. Team members kept track of how far they walked and also got a mile credit for every ten minutes of other exercise they did. Every

*One wintry night one of the couples appeared at their neighbour's door, and said, "Get on your stuff, you're walking us back home." Home was a mile away, so both couples got their exercise that night.*

week the stats were calculated and posted on a border around the inside of the library. The goal was to get to Cancun.

Jim's family formed a team in which the internal rivalry became intense. Jim bought an exercise bike and he and his grandson, who was in soccer, track and basketball, phoned to spur each other on to beat the female component of the team. Besides the exercise bike, Jim got out as often as he could to shovel or get active in other ways. By Week 11 the Aitken team, otherwise known as The Hot Tamales, had made it to Cancun and by the end of the 17 weeks they were almost to Brazil. The team admits that it was their 15-year-old who logged almost half of those miles. Four other teams also made it to South America and nearly half of the 36 teams made it to Cancun. Challenges every few weeks kept the teams going, with Mexican-themed prizes like fruit trays or cacti. One group of rural neighbours phoned each other to say, "Let's go for a walk," but one wintry night one of the couples appeared at their neighbour's door, and said, "Get on your stuff, you're walking us back home." Home was a mile away, so both couples got in their two miles that night!

Since 2006, people in Neepawa have enjoyed many other CDPI activities, including a pedometer program which allows walkers to chart their progress. The first week, the team charted what they normally walked, and then in the following three weeks, they tried to work up to 10,000 steps a day. The team that came up with the largest increase

on average won their own barbecue party, with hamburgers, shrimp kebabs, fruit trays, and drinks. Twenty-eight businesses in town signed up with 238 people participating in all. This summer 50 seniors were using the pedometers in an 11-week program, which included a monthly information evening on health-related topics like avoiding falls, stretching, balance and healthy eating. A one-month pedometer program in June for mentally handicapped people was so successful that it was extended into the summer. Participants were keen to see those numbers and try to make them bigger every day.

Neepawa is getting active, and even with all the other fun, people have been asking CDPI to bring back the Mexican Cruise with Shoes. Keep an eye out for it – an inspiring new Cruise could be back in Neepawa soon!

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Take Note

**Did you know?**

- Males in Manitoba are over twice as likely to die as the result of injuries as are females.
- The rate of deaths from injuries in Manitoba is highest among seniors.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving/docs/injuriesmb.pdf>

**Consequences of Falls**

- Restriction of activity/functional deterioration.
- Loss of confidence/fear of falling in future.
- Pain/limitation of activity following a fall.
- Decreased quality of life.
- Social isolation.
- Depression and feelings of helplessness.

<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/fallsprevention/project/reports/speaker/Canberra.pdf>

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## Niverville

### Workshop Kickstarts an Exciting Community Initiative

A capacity-building Start Fresh<sup>1</sup> workshop snowballed into a vibrant community initiative in Niverville. Annette Fast was part of a group working on opening a daycare and says her friend dragged her to the workshop to get funding ideas. But the evening sent her and an energetic group of Niverville women in an entirely different direction. Inspired by the stories of CDPI in other small communities, the group formed the Niverville Association for Healthy and Active Living, and began to drum up ideas for their own town and applied for grants to fund them.

By February, a full-scale Family Fitness Challenge was underway. The idea was to get families outside and active in one of Manitoba's coldest months, but in fact February was so cold that the outdoor kickoff – an activity circuit re-using old

Christmas trees – had to be postponed a whole week. To introduce families to the Challenge, the committee distributed 400 calendars to students in the elementary school. Kids were encouraged to document all their family's activities on the calendar. Every family who logged over 1,000 minutes of physical activity in February would be entered into a draw for a Wii game. Seventy-nine children also entered posters in a contest to promote the Family Fitness Challenge, and 26 seniors and staff at the Niverville Heritage Centre judged the posters.

As the bitterly cold weather continued, indoor activities were also allowed to be part of the Challenge. At the end of the Challenge, 71 families had turned in activity calendars and had logged a total of 109,000 minutes of action. Partnerships with the elementary school staff, the Town of Niverville, Manitoba in motion, Heritage Center and Start Fresh all contributed to the amazing success of this initial effort.

The committee kept moving forward. It envisioned a website to draw together all Niverville's health and activity initiatives, and before long, with \$399 in CDPI grant money and a lot of volunteer labour, a dynamic website called Niverville Active Living went online. In a third initiative called the Cholesterol Challenge, weekly speakers offered healthy tips and ways of reducing bad cholesterol. Fourteen women attended the seven-session Challenge.

The Association has no shortage of future plans. Proceeds from a planned cookbook

*At the end of the Challenge, 71 families had turned in activity calendars and had logged a total of 109,000 minutes of action.*

<sup>1</sup> Start Fresh is the way CDPI is being implemented in South Eastman RHA.

could go to the purchase of a Handi-Van that would allow more seniors to get out and about. Envisioning all the greasy food available at the annual fair, the committee plans to set up a booth next summer offering healthy alternatives. As for the Family Fitness Challenge, people are stopping Association members on the street and asking when it's going to happen again. The answer is – in February, of course! No month is too cold to get out there and get active for health!

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Take Note

**10 Ideas for Cold Weather Exercise:**

- Building a snowman
- Trail horseback riding
- Dogsledding
- Curling
- Hockey
- Skating
- Walking/hiking
- Snowshoeing
- Tobogganing
- Night skiing

[http://www.canadianliving.com/health/fitness/10\\_ideas\\_for\\_cold\\_weather\\_exercise.php](http://www.canadianliving.com/health/fitness/10_ideas_for_cold_weather_exercise.php)

**Check Your Head For Exercising in the Cold:**

Remember that your head may be responsible for 40 per cent of your heat loss. A good exercise hat is essential. Make sure it's small enough that if you start to overheat, you can put it in a pocket or hold onto it.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/weekly-checkup/coldweather-injuries.html>

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## Pikwitonei

### Energy-boosting Snacks in School

Pikwitonei School principal Dana Tattrie is grateful to the Burntwood Regional Health Authority for funding a school snack program through the Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative. He said the program has been beneficial to the students by providing awareness of healthier food choices and giving students the opportunity to try a wide variety of healthy snacks normally not available in their small community.

*“This program helps in learning by giving the students the boosted energy they need in the middle of the morning.”*

“This program helps in learning by giving the students the boosted energy they need in the middle of the morning,” he said. After having the snacks, students are able to better concentrate on their school work. Tattrie says there has been positive feedback from all students and staff in regards to this program.

Snacks are chosen for their nutritional value, and most often includes fruits, fruit juices, milk and yogurt. “Students look

forward to their daily snack and are always willing to try new foods,” said Tattrie.

Studies have shown that nutrition affects how students learn, develop, and achieve educational goals. Pikwitonei is a small school within a small community. Tattrie said it is a great benefit to everybody that the school is able to work closely with the Health Centre and other community groups.

The CDPI committee was also the driving force behind the purchase of physical fitness equipment which is used three nights a week at open gym nights for children and adults. The committee also participates in events such as the annual Terry Fox walk and community walks with adults, elders and children.

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Take Note

**What are Canadian Youth Eating?**

- Only one-half of boys and two-thirds of girls report eating fruit five days a week or more.
- 50 per cent of boys and girls report not drinking enough milk.
- In the last 20 years, intake of soft drinks has more than doubled.
- Soft drink consumption increases dramatically in boys between grades 6 and 10.
- Good eating habits in childhood and youth have immediate and long-term benefits.
- Food is the most advertised product to children on TV. There are almost no ads for fruit and vegetables, milk, or whole grain products.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyschools/foodinschools/why.html>



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## Pine Creek First Nation

### Gardens Make a Comeback

Years ago, most people in Pine Creek First Nation grew their own potatoes, carrots, and onions on farms and gardens. These days, though, the northern Manitoba community of 1,200 has come to depend on grocery stores and restaurants to supply their food. Like many isolated towns in the north, groceries are very expensive, and restaurant offerings tend toward fast food. Many residents don't own a vehicle, and hiring someone to take them on the hour-long drive to buy fresh fruits and vegetables costs between \$80 and \$100.

*Many of the younger walkers completed the entire trek, and a 75-year-old woman went the whole distance as well.*

Not surprisingly, self-reliant gardening is making a comeback in Pine Creek. The local CDPI committee has supported a community garden project for the past three years, and participation is increasing. "There were some gardens before we started, but now that we have seeds provided more people are interested," said CDPI committee member

Shirley Nepinak. "Younger people are trying it, and this year they're growing corn, onions, carrots, cabbage, lettuce, potatoes, tomatoes, and peas."

The Pine Creek committee meets every month with CDPI representatives from Duck Bay and Camperville, which hosts an annual canning workshop open to residents of all three communities. The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs has supplied each town with garden tillers, implements, and loads of black dirt and fertilizer to help with the gardens.

The three communities got together in 2007 for the first annual "Spirited Walk," starting in Duck Bay and ending in Camperville. Each participant got a t-shirt, and for this year's walk, the first 100 participants to start the four-hour walk receive a lightweight backpack with reflective stripes, which they can fill with granola bars, fruit to go, juices, and water. The walk wraps up with a meal for participants. Many of the younger walkers completed the entire trek, and a 75-year-old woman went the whole distance as well. One couple walked from Ebb and Flow, about an hour and a half's drive, and then continued on the Spirited Walk from Duck Bay to Camperville.

Other preventative health programs sponsored by CDPI include exercise promotion and a diabetes screening event. Through CDPI, Pine Creek applied for and got a special grant for exercise equipment for their arena, which also hosts the area's Healthy Snack program. Each of the three

communities received \$500 to distribute nutritious snacks, which were given out at arenas during public skating and at drop-in centres. “The kids looked forward to the snacks and drinks,” Nepinak said. “More of them came out because they knew there would be something there for them.”

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## Take Note

Drawbacks to gardening in northern zones include a short growing season, severe winter temperatures, cold soil, Chinooks and high winds, permafrost, acidic and alkaline soil, and drought. **But northern gardening also has several advantages over the southern climes:**

- Sunshine is abundant in the summer.
- Less pollution.
- Longer days.
- Many plants, such as peas, prefer the cooler temperature of the north and produce excellent crops.
- Low humidity reduces the growth and spread of harmful fungi.
- Few insect pests survive the cold winters.

<http://www.telusplanet.net/public/pchenier/thesis/introduction.html>

<http://food.cimnet.ca/cim/43.dhtm> (Manitoba Food Security Network)

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## Point Douglas

### Getting Along Swimmingly

From frightened to friendly – it doesn't take children long to warm up to seniors when there's a fun time in the swimming pool to bond them. Myfanwy Cawley, Resource Coordinator of the Point Douglas Seniors Coalition, said one of their most successful programs, funded by CDPI, has been a joint project bringing the generations together.

The Seniors Coalition teams up with five local daycares for a weekly swim. "It keeps the seniors active and is a precursor to swimming and teaches the kids not to be afraid of the water," said Cawley. Or seniors, as it turns out. "It usually starts with the kids being terrified of the seniors – they're small, here's a strange person and a big pool – but it goes from that to the kids being so excited to see their senior that they're knocking them down to give them a hug!"

CDPI funding provides swimsuits for the children and healthy snacks. It's a win-

win situation. "Everyone is benefiting. It's not a do-gooder program at all," said Cawley. Seniors not only keep fit with the swimming, but they are able to have contact with children, something that is especially important to the elderly that might not have grandkids in the area. The children get one-on-one care in the pool, which is kept warmer than most public pools for the sake of the seniors. "We're building healthy relationships," said Cawley.

Healthy relationships are also being built between the tenants of the seniors' home. CDPI funding helped to purchase kitchen equipment so people can gather for potluck lunches several times each month, improving the sense of community in the building. "That has been a huge impact for a small amount of money," said Cawley.

Another popular and successful project has been a Mass Food Handlers certification program. How do you prepare nutritious, tasty and safe food using only crock pots, can openers and cans? Together with the City of Winnipeg, the Seniors Coalition put on the course in two different locations for church groups, community centres, and school parent councils. "Food, as we all know, is one of the best community development tools there is," said Cawley. She said the course brought people together, strengthening partnerships in the community and improving relationships between ethnic groups. "We watch people go from asking 'who are those people?' to being friends and colleagues," Cawley said. "It's very exciting." The certification

program was so successful that calls keep coming in asking them to do it again.

A children’s drop-in soccer program – “done by the seat of our pants with almost no money” – provided children with a place to play, proper footwear, and a healthy snack. It started with about 30 children and has grown to a point where the city has taken it over as a funded inner-city project.

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Take Note

**Seniors and Swimming**

Swimming is a perfect exercise for seniors with osteoporosis because it’s a low-impact exercise which strengthens muscles that support the joints and keep joints flexible.

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/diseases-maladies/seniors-aines-ost-art-eng.php>

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## Riverton/Arborg

### Successful Partners Across Generations

The CDPI Committee in Riverton/Arborg has managed to move computer gamers off the couch and on to a physically active and social life style. Nintendo Wii was purchased for both Riverton and Arborg Parks and Recreation facilities where teens are kept moving using this highly physical interactive game. The communities can borrow each other's Wii games for tournaments. This program is not just for teens, but crosses generations to involve seniors. Riverton Elks provided a Nintendo Wii for the seniors opening the doors to a "seniors vs. youth challenge." The gaming did not stop there.

The CDPI committee also purchased Dance Dance Revolution, another interactive game system, for the local high school.

*Tobogganing down hills and traipsing around on snowshoes built a healthy appetite.*

The committee is able to make their funds stretch into many arms of the community by partnering with existing programs. Supporting schools and various community groups fuels the excitement of helping in many areas. When Cynthia Thomsen was asked to come on board she

went to the first meeting not promising anything. Three years later she is a very involved Committee Coordinator. The key to the committee's success is finding ways to promote projects people are already doing. "Funds are drastically limited," noted Thomsen. "To provide a small snack in a program makes a huge difference." The Friendship Centre asked for snacks during the day program for up to 60 children, ages 5 to 9. They also funded the local library snack for story time. Many children do not bring fruit to school, so it was fun to introduce new varieties like guava and mango in a taste testing adventure at the elementary school. The same children benefited from nutritious meals during their Heritage Day winter activities. Tobogganing down hills and traipsing around on snowshoes built a healthy appetite.

Some other programs that benefited from committee funds were Jump Rope for Heart, Arborg Parks and Recreation kids programs, soccer referee clinic, swim instructor clinic and many others. There are plans to send a couple of teens for training to the N-O-T (Not on Tobacco) program designed specifically for teens by the American Lung Association.

Those who seek CDPI funds come to a meeting with a written request and are required to name, somewhere on their event: "partially funded by CDPI" or "donated by CDPI." Piggybacking on so many programs could be an administrative nightmare, but Thomsen explains her simple method. "Anytime I send funds, I

send a monitoring form with them. If you get money, you need to send this form back, and that pretty well takes care of it.” Accountability then rests with the recipient of the funds rather than with the disburser and saves time and money in administrating the program.

“I’ve had fun with just about everything,” said Thomsen. This unique group continues to work together with an array of existing programs to build a healthier community.

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Take Note

**Wii Gamers and Calorie Burn**

- A 2007 study showed that gamers using Wii sports games burn more than 1,800 calories over 12 hours of play, the average time gamers spend playing every week.
- By burning nearly twice the amount of calories with Wii compared to traditional video game platforms, gamers can potentially lose 12 kg of body weight with regular Wii use.
- Gamers playing action mat games that detects foot movements can burn a whopping 451% more calories compared to simply watching television.

<http://www.canada.com/topics/bodyandhealth/story.html?id=e4cac3b3-1f74-4616-be23-4d3b27afb65b>

**Can’t Get Enough**

Studies show that 79% of Canadians aged 13-19 don’t get enough regular, physical activity to meet international guidelines for optimal growth and development.

[http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/paguide/child\\_youth/video\\_games.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/paguide/child_youth/video_games.html)

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## Rossburn

### Activist Committee Turns Attention to Preventive Health

When the rural community of Rossburn shifted services, a concerned group of citizens formed an advocacy group to air their concerns over the loss of the town's emergency room and acute care services.

When the group was approached by CDPI, some decided to join the preventative health program in an effort to improve the health of area residents. Rossburn's CDPI committee has now run a number of successful programs and plans to expand in the future.

The committee organized a Wellness Clinic with a nurse practitioner and dietitian on hand to give workshops on healthy eating, exercise, and proper weight-to-height ratios. Humorous tent cards with nutritious eating tips were laminated and distributed to all the restaurants in the area, and healthy eating habits are also being promoted at the local arena. CDPI funds have been used to send canteen coordinators for local curling and hockey tournaments to healthy eating workshops,

*Some of the walking program participants have experienced life-changing benefits.*

and various tournaments have used \$100 instalments to supply healthy alternatives to the standard arena fare, including soups, yogurt, vegetables, and granola. The arena also hosted a very successful adult beginner skating program, which brought people to the skating arena who would have most likely never come out otherwise.

The CDPI has also run two walking programs in the community, providing pedometers along with help from Manitoba in motion. The summer Walk-Across-Canada Challenge saw twelve teams of four walk or bicycle, with results posted in the Recreation Director's window. Some teams crossed Canada twice during the program.

The winter program incorporated walking, skating, and cross-country skiing. This time there were ten teams of six. Students participating were able to record their steps while playing volleyball and basketball and farmers could record steps during chores. The top three teams were recognized and rewarded.

#### *Life-Changing Benefits*

Some of the walking program participants have experienced life-changing benefits. One high strung, nervous girl found the walking challenge calmed her down. Another girl, on being told she was diabetic, said she was just going to take her pills and not worry about diet or exercise. But once she began the program, she lost weight, stuck with it, and is now controlling her condition.

Individuals like these are now more likely to participate in other exercise activities in Rosscorn, such as the aerobics program, which has recently added stepping equipment as part of joint program with CDPI and in motion. The CDPI committee also has plans to help establish a new fitness center and financially support the training of a fitness instructor to attract young people with classes such as Pilates, hip-hop, and yoga.

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Take Note

**Some tips for keeping your eating healthy if you spend a lot of time at the arena in winter:**

- Eat before the game to lessen the temptation to snack during the game.
- Seek out healthy options. More arenas are offering a variety of healthy food like soup, salad, wraps or fruit.
- Skip the pop or alcohol. Water is a better option.
- Walk around the arena a few times during intermission instead of just using intermission as eating time.
- Limit yourself to one “forbidden” food per game.

[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2209759\\_eat-healthy-nhl-hockey-games.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2209759_eat-healthy-nhl-hockey-games.html)



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## Sandy Bay First Nation

### The Big Bags are Too Much

Sales of the big bags of chips are down in the Sandy Bay School, at least partly because the Healthy Living Together/CDPI program of Central Region has made better choices available. A healthy vending project at the Sandy Bay School has been a big hit with the kids, who participated in a taste test to determine the most popular nutritious items. CDPI funds were used to support the vending machine healthy choices initiative and get the program running.

*Students are voluntarily making better choices in Sandy Bay.*

Serving sizes offered in the machine are more appropriate for children, who can choose between snacks like Smart Pop popcorn, pretzels, Baked Lays, fruit to go, and cheese and breadsticks packs. Mandy Armstrong, a former community nutritionist who now works as a community facilitator, says that students are voluntarily making healthier choices: “In that school the practise was that basically chips were sold from several classrooms and they were the big bags – sales of those are down. Kids now are saying the big bags are too much. Feedback was really positive.”

Two teachers at the school have made the commitment to keep the machine stocked with healthy snacks.

Sandy Bay First Nation is grappling with the same health crises found on many Canadian reserves, such as high premature mortality rates and diabetes epidemics. Diabetes is being seen in increasingly younger patients, and Healthy Living Together programs have been working to address these problems by helping youth in the community make better eating choices and exercise more.

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## *Take Note*

### **Healthy Eating and Academic Performance**

- Children's brain function is diminished by short-term or periodic hunger or malnutrition caused by missing or skipping meals.
- Children and adolescents who are breakfast eaters (whether school breakfast or breakfast elsewhere) are less likely to be overweight.
- Skipping breakfast is more prevalent among girls, low-income children, older children and adolescents, and among some Black and Hispanic adolescents.

<http://www.osnp.ca/statistics.html>

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## Sandy Bay First Nation

### Partnerships Enhance Program Value

Central RHA's Healthy Living Together/CDPI initiative has resulted in a flurry of excellent programs in Sandy Bay, reaching residents of all ages. The Healthy Living Together CDPI initiatives align well with other funding sources, such as in motion, pooling resources to encourage people to get active for their health.

*"It's a great 'Aha!' moment when they see the cost savings of buying healthier foods."*

With these and other partnerships, Sandy Bay young people have been introduced to such new sports as tae kwon do, for which equipment was purchased through the Healthy Living Together/CDPI program. Partnerships often result in double benefits; for example, profits from a healthy choices vending machine in the school went towards skating helmets.

Other Healthy Living activities for youth include Summer Fun Days, a three week drop-in day camp program in partnership with Brighter Futures, the school, and youth employment programs. An average of 65 kids attended the camps, while under-12 dances drew around 90 participants.

Adults in the community are also getting new ideas for healthy living. Healthy Eating on a Budget classes have been offered, with a nutritionist giving PowerPoint presentations based on the Canada Food Guide. A "Price is Right" theme was used to compare prices of natural foods, and the results inspired shoppers to go with healthy choices. "It's a great Aha! moment when they see the cost savings of buying healthier foods," said Mandy Armstrong, the program's facilitator.

Other initiatives include Make and Take cooking classes, where prenatal participants get together and make a meal to try in the class, and also receive one to take home. In a Veggie Voucher program, young adults got coupons for buying vegetables on a grocery tour that explained how to prepare the veggies as well.

Besides all this, a variety of walking programs have been implemented, including one in which participants in a diabetes project became team leaders who kept track of their groups' results and competed for a monthly prize. Sandy Bay youth also got the walking bug during the Walk Across Canada Challenge, in which 80 students combined their walking distances and completed the sea-to-sea cross-country trek.

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## *Take Note*

### **Short-term benefits of walking:**

- Controls weight, blood sugar and cholesterol levels. A brisk walk can burn up to 100 calories per mile or 300 calories per hour.
- Improves cardiovascular fitness and circulation. Walking gets the heart beating faster to transport oxygen-rich blood from the lungs to the muscles.
- Facilitates medical rehabilitation and recovery from many ailments, including heart attack.

<http://www.ec-online.net/Knowledge/Articles/feet.html>

[http://www.healthyontario.com/NewsItemDetails.aspx?newsitem\\_id=226534058](http://www.healthyontario.com/NewsItemDetails.aspx?newsitem_id=226534058)

[www.seniors.cimnet.ca](http://www.seniors.cimnet.ca)

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## Selkirk

### “Look, a Carrot!”

Imagine the delight of a child who pulls a carrot from the ground for the first time. Thanks to the CDPI gardening project in Selkirk, a young family was able to have their very first garden and learn to freeze and preserve their vegetables for the winter as well. “She was so excited,” said Elaine Elliott of a young gardener. “She said ‘look, a carrot!’ She couldn’t believe her own eyes.”

*“The whole family was involved, which says a lot about how we’ll make a difference in the community.”*

Elliott, coordinator of the Selkirk CDPI, said a family of seven was the only participant in the first attempt at a gardening program. However, that family ended up having a whole “church family” supporting them in their efforts. “We partnered with a little Catholic church out of town where nobody was going to tear the garden apart for us,” she said. St. Margaret’s Catholic Church members tilled up the soil and donated a tool shed which they also moved to the plot and fixed up free of charge. “They are so pleased, they want to make the garden bigger for next year,” said Elliot. The Selkirk Food Bank

also helped out by collecting Canadian Tire dollars which were used to buy gardening tools.

The garden produced a variety of vegetables, including about 25 pumpkins, many of which will be used for the Growing Years Halloween event. The gardening family will also be taught, through the Resource Centre, how to use pumpkin for cooking and baking.

Waltraud Grieger, Executive Director of the Growing Years Family Resource Centre, said at first they were disappointed that not more people were interested in gardening. But the lone garden was so successful and the produce so plentiful, “it was just a fabulous testimony as to how well this is going to go. Next year we’ll have more,” she predicted, adding, “The whole family was involved, which says a lot about how we’ll make a difference in the community.” The remaining garden space was used by Rene Gauthier, soup kitchen and garden project coordinator, to grow vegetables for the soup kitchen.

The garden isn’t the only project that is expanding. The Community Kitchen in Selkirk has also had to move to a larger facility in order to accommodate everyone who wants to participate in the nutrition and cooking classes. There used to be a waiting list for families wanting to learn to shop for and prepare economic but nutritious meals. Now, thanks to a cooperative effort between the Growing Years Family Resource Centre, the local soup kitchen, the food bank and the City

of Selkirk, the cooking program is run out of the large soup kitchen facility. The cooking class has brought in nutritionists, dietitians and even taught the art of good hand-washing. Participants have learned how to buy inexpensive cuts of meat and get value from it, how to use a crock pot, and how to can and freeze garden produce. There have even been field trips to the grocery store to show families how to consider sodium levels and trans fats in the food they are buying. Participants learn to plan a meal, prepare it in the soup kitchen, and then can take that meal home to their family for supper.

Elliott said the CDPI committee has noticed a big difference in the types of

snacks young parents are bringing for their children. “They are bringing celery and carrot sticks. They’re not bringing that pre-packaged stuff anymore,” she said. “We’re seeing results.”

CDPI funding in Selkirk has also been used for walks, distributing smoking cessation information, a Wiggle, Giggle and Munch program, and a “What’s in your Lunch” program for school children.

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*Take Note*

**Gardening offers many benefits including:**

- The satisfaction of watching something take root and grow.
- An opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and to introduce children to the joys of nature.
- An enjoyable form of exercise for all ages.
- An opportunity to beautify your community and improve property values.

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/life-vie/garden-jardin-eng.php>

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## Seven Oaks

### Seniors Stepping Out to Hawaii and Beyond

Senior citizens in Seven Oaks are stepping their way to better health and having a lot of fun along the way. Janelle Curtis, the Seniors Resource Coordinator for Seven Oaks, says that two CDPI exercise programs have brought together seniors living in homes and apartment blocks and given many something to look forward to each week. “For them it’s the one thing they can count on,” Curtis said. “I think it’s got a lot of the tenants connected – now they know each other’s names, and that’s been a major, major thing.”

One of the CDPI programs that has been implemented is called “Stepping Up,” a physical exercise class that focuses on cardiovascular and resistance training. Equipment and training is provided in part by CDPI, and peer seniors are given one-day training classes and resource materials that teach them how to lead the weekly

*“It’s got a lot of the tenants connected – now they know each other’s names, and that’s been a major, major thing.”*

classes. Group sizes range from 10 to 25 participants, who start off with stretching and marching before moving on to a variety of activities using dynabands for resistance exercises.

“Stepping Out” is another program offered to Seven Oaks seniors. CDPI funds provide this walking program with pedometers, log sheets, and celebrations when the groups reach their goal. Four teams from different seniors’ apartments set individual distance goals, starting with a cross-Canada trek. One group from Luther Home decided to walk from Winnipeg to Hawaii within a year. When they made it, each member received a commemorative Seven Oaks Healthy Living t-shirt with “Luther Home Walkers” on the back. As soon as the Luther team reached Hawaii, they immediately set out straight for Malta!

CDPI also supports a Canada Day walk, where seniors meet in Kildonan Park to enjoy the holiday while getting exercise too. Free transportation to the celebration is provided in partnership with Fehrway Tours and Beaver Bus Lines, while CanadInn has generously catered the entire event. Everyone enjoys getting outside and getting to know people from other blocks.

The programs are open to all, and are advertised by newsletters and posters at malls, apartment blocks, politician’s offices, Shopper’s Drug Mart, and senior drop-in centers. The idea is to reach out to isolated seniors and bring people together through recreation. “We stress having fun

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[www.seniors.cimnet.ca](http://www.seniors.cimnet.ca)



## *Take Note*

In addition to the long-term benefit of prolonging life, seniors can experience many short-term benefits from walking:

- Generates a sense of well-being, and can relieve depression, anxiety and stress by naturally producing endorphins, the body's natural tranquilizer.
- In people age 65 and older, simply walking regularly or engaging in other moderate exercise can reduce the risk of dementia.

<http://www.ec-online.net/Knowledge/Articles/feet.html>

[http://www.healthyontario.com/NewsItemDetails.aspx?newsitem\\_id=226534058](http://www.healthyontario.com/NewsItemDetails.aspx?newsitem_id=226534058)



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## Shoal Lake

### Students Warm to Hot Nutritious Lunches

The food you eat directly affects the performance of your brain. Eating the right food can boost your IQ, improve your mood and sharpen your memory. Knowing this, the CDPI committee in Shoal Lake takes good nutrition into the schools. At exam time they hand out free nutritious snacks of yogurt and muffins to students, boosting concentration at a key point in time. Pat Mills said a hot, nutritional lunch is the main focus of CDPI and volunteers even go from classroom to classroom with trays of free vegetables to encourage students to have a good snack. “At first we heard some complaining,” she said of the change to nutritious food in the canteen, “but it has become very successful.” Peer pressure has worked in a good way. “If one kid will take some, others will too.”

Mills says a nutritionist was brought into the school and students are beginning to realize the correlations between eating junk food, obesity, and ill health. The school will also bring in the Lungs Are For

*“Now you see them walking even when the weather is miserable.”*

Life program which is designed to help students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 develop the skills they will need to avoid smoking or using other harmful drugs such as cannabis and alcohol. One of the goals of the Lungs Are For Life program is to reach young people before they try their first cigarette.

Physical activity is also encouraged, with CDPI providing oranges for the nutritional break at the annual Terry Fox run and the Jump Rope for Heart event. The children’s skating program is supported with funding to provide helmets and purchase ice rental time so that all children can participate, regardless of their ability to pay.

Adults are also encouraged to increase their physical activity in Shoal Lake. Mills said she has noticed weight loss directly related to walking programs in the community and she has seen one family member start walking and bring other family members on board.

CDPI provides pedometers for the seniors walking program – people borrow the pedometers and are challenged to keep track of their steps. Walkers found they got fit, lost weight and have a better quality of life. “Now you see them walking even when the weather is miserable,” said Mills. Walking is a cost-effective way to decrease risks for cancer, heart disease, diabetes and strokes and allows people to live longer and with more vitality. In Shoal Lake they have found that tracking with a pedometer is a great way for community members to get, and stay, motivated.

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## Take Note

### **Students, Drinking, and Pot**

By the end of high school, about 90% of Manitoba students will have consumed alcohol, and nearly 75% of all students will have tried cannabis.

<http://74.125.95.104/search?q=cache:vJ08jo1Ft38J:www.afm.mb.ca/pdf/Alcohol%2520and%2520other%2520drug%2520use%2520by%2520Manitoba%2520students%25202005%2520report.pdf+students+canna bis+alcohol+canada+stats&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=42&gl>

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## Snow Lake

### CDPI Supports Family Centre

The last thing most kids want to do right after school is study. That means if you want to teach them something between the end of the school day and supper time, it needs to be done in an enjoyable way. At the Snow Lake Family Resource Centre, staff running the free after-school program make sure learning is done in an atmosphere of fun. The Centre is about a one-minute walk from the school and has an after-school program from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. for Grades 1 to 4 on Mondays and Wednesdays and Grades 5 to 8 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. “We provide information about health, but we make sure it’s different than going to school, a fun place for them to come and hang out,” said Anne-Marie Butt, Family Resource Centre Coordinator.

Thanks to a grant from CDPI, students – as many as two dozen in the winter time – are given a healthy snack every day. Students are involved in choosing nutritious food from the Canada Food Guide. Getting the

students more physically active is another goal of the Centre and CDPI funding provides prizes for races and games to encourage participation. Activities include indoor crafts and games as well as trips to the local youth centre to use the pool table and ping pong tables. When weather permits, children are encouraged to go outside for a variety of games including hop-scotch, jump rope and enjoy play structure activities.

Butt said CDPI assists the community of Snow Lake to pass on information about health to people of all ages. The Family Resource Centre works with seniors in the area as well as children and realizes that sometimes chronic disease prevention is about the little things and getting out information regarding nutrition and physical activity. Events that encourage health can have a big impact on the life of a senior.

Because Snow Lake is a semi-isolated northern community located over 200 km away from the nearest community, the resource centre provides a major support system. The population is about 850 and there are no government-funded social service agencies in the town. Besides providing emergency intervention for families and individuals in crisis, the Centre offers counselling, educational workshops and a public resource library. With a great community responsibility and limited resources, Butt said the Centre is “very fortunate” to have the support of the CDPI.

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▼  
▼ *Take Note*

▼  
▼ **Youth and Inactivity**

- ▼ • 59% of Manitoban teens are inactive.
- ▼ • Most Manitobans (61%) aren't active enough to achieve health benefits.
- ▼ • Girls are less active than boys.
- ▼ • Up to 82% of Canadian children and youth aren't active enough for optimal growth and development.
- ▼ • Canadian teens spend 35 hours a week in front of a screen.
- ▼ • Children are 40% less active than they were 30 years ago.
- ▼ • Childhood obesity in Manitoba has tripled in the past 25 years.
- ▼ • Manitoban children (ages 2 to 17) are more overweight and obese than Canadian children in general. 31% of Manitoban children are overweight/obese compared to 26% of Canadian children.

▼ <http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyschools/issues/physical.html>

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## Snow Lake

### Making the Beach Accessible Beach for All

Seven years ago Roger Wiesner had a work accident that left him a quadriplegic. Now Wiesner is hoping that one day soon he will finally be able to put his feet in Snow Lake again – without help. By next summer, thanks to a boardwalk project funded partially with CDPI dollars, Wiesner and other people with walking difficulties will be able to get near the water.

Betty Rudd, Secretary of the Snow Lake Boardwalk committee, said the town is surrounded by water but many elderly and disabled have been unable to cross the grass and sand to get to the water's edge. "The lake is very important to the community," she said. "The basic plan was to make a six-foot-wide walkway from one end of the lakefront parking lot in town across the beach to the other parking lot to make it possible for everybody to cross the beach." The walkway did not unfold as originally planned but now starts with an asphalt path from one end of the parking lot to a food booth and the tennis court as well as to a 24 by 32 foot platform.

*"It will be nice to get the feet in the water again."*

This platform can be used for a variety of functions, including lakeside church services or community functions, or simply for people to sit, relax, and take in the view.

CDPI put \$2,000 into the project and a hard-working committee did some serious fundraising to come up with over \$50,000 more. "It was hard work, but we're getting there," said Rudd. One of the committee's fundraising ideas was to sell engraved boardwalk planks. Planks for the platform are made of Trex, a recycled wood and plastic product with a 25-year guarantee. Wiesner said this product costs more than treated lumber but requires much less maintenance. Each plank includes an engraving of the donor's name. Volunteers spent the winter engraving 240 pre-sold planks (sable color for corporate sponsors and Winchester grey for private citizens) so they would be ready for installation in the spring. The planks were sold for \$50 each and could include up to 30 characters.

"The boardwalk is nice and smooth," said Wiesner, who is now able to get his wheelchair almost into the lake. "The beach is a pretty nice place to go in the summer time." He recalled a time last summer, while volunteers were busy screwing down the planks for the boardwalk, and an elderly couple came by. "She was in a wheelchair and he was pushing her around. It was good to see," said Wiesner, who recognizes and appreciates increased mobility for the disabled. The new path is accessible to people from the local hospital so patients and visitors there will be able

to access the water's edge as well. "It's very beautiful," said Rudd. "People in the hospital will be able to sit and watch the children on the beach and people with disabilities will be able to spend time at the beach with their families." Future plans include building benches for the platform and planting flowers along the path.

Wiesner, 48, said he takes life "day by day" since his accident. With access to the waterfront of his home town, some of those days are now going to be spent watching his family playing in the water or simply taking in the view. And one of these days, he said, sticking his own feet in the lake.

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Take Note

**Did You Know?**

According to Statistics Canada, in 2001 there were 147,580 people in Manitoba with disabilities, or 14.2% percent of the population. The nationwide average was 12.4%, or over 3.6 million Canadians with disabilities.

<http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-577-XIE/canada.htm>

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## Split Lake

### Mother's and Father's Day Parties for Fun and Health

Put on a pretty/funny/crazy hat and draw a picture of your husband. And then pin the tail on the donkey. If that sounds like fun to you, you might want to spend next Mother's Day in Split Lake where Norma Beardy and her CDPI committee have been known to put on a pretty fun party! "We wanted to get them motivated," said Beardy. "We were all laughing and it was really fun." Women were given prizes for creative hat-making, including the most floral hat, weirdest hat, funniest hat and biggest hat.

The fun and games were only part of the event, where about 70 mothers, daughters, aunties, sisters and grannies were presented with carnations and given a good, healthy lunch including fruits and vegetables. "It's not easy; we have to go so far to get those things," said Beardy of the fresh produce. But the effort is worth it. Fast food disappears quickly from the only grocery store in town. The CDPI committee, in cooperation with the

*"We wanted to get them motivated – we were all laughing and it was really fun."*

Community Health Representative and the Diabetes Coordinator, has cooking classes to show families healthy meal choices they can prepare at home. At the Mother's Day event, as well as at other, smaller gatherings, women are educated on disease prevention and healthy lifestyle information is made available. "I try to get everybody involved. Training comes from the home," said Beardy.

The men of Split Lake are also getting chronic disease prevention information and inspiration. The CDPI committee put on a Father's Day event, planning a barbeque and activities to get the men active and having a good time. "We had them drawing their spouse and some of them were scared to do that," laughed Beardy. The weather didn't permit the outdoor games they had planned, but with some improvising, the event was a success. As with the Mother's Day event, the committee prepared for about 50 and over 70 showed up. The organizers gladly went to the local store for more prizes. "I think they just enjoy the togetherness and seeing what others are up to," said Beardy. Brochures and posters were available and some of the men came to Beardy later to ask for more information on chronic disease prevention. "I think they're starting to be aware," she said.

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Take Note

**Positive effects of laughter on the immune system:**

- An increase in natural killer cells that attack viruses and some types of cancer and tumour cells.
- Stress hormones are lowered by laughing. (Stress hormones can constrict blood vessels and suppress immune activity.)
- An increase in T Cell activity (very important in the treatment of AIDS). Laughter helps these cells to “turn it up a notch”.
- Eustress or good stress is created by laughter.

[http://www.afunnybusiness.ca/laughter\\_facts.htm](http://www.afunnybusiness.ca/laughter_facts.htm)



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## Swan River

### Bridging the Communications Gap for a Healthier Community

Serina Juechter is a CDPI facilitator and career counsellor in Swan River who is uniquely positioned

to build bridges between the town's aboriginal and medical communities. She is a Metis woman who was born and raised in Swan

River, developing countless friendships and connections along the way. "I know everyone on a personal level, and that makes it effective for me to work with them on a professional level," explained Juechter.

Juechter has a particular passion for diabetes awareness and prevention. The disease is epidemic among Canada First Nations, and the Cree grandmother who raised her was also stricken. "My grandmother died from complications from diabetes, so it always played an important role in my life," she said. "And so I've been so happy with the CDPI money and the role to promote something I strongly believe in."

*"It really brings out the whole community – they all play together, and everybody interacts."*

CDPI programs are bridging the gap in Swan River between the aboriginal community and the medical community. More than 20 per cent of Swan River's population is aboriginal, and many – especially elders – have difficulty understanding information from doctors regarding their diseases. Because of the difficulties in communicating, some avoid getting the care they need. In cases of diabetes, Cree-speaking patients may not know how the disease is affecting their bodies or why they have been given medication. "A lot of them have language barriers and they might go to the doctor, get pamphlets, and not even know what it says, so I can explain it to them," said Juechter. "That is where I can make the biggest difference."

Preventative programs in Swan River include a diabetes cooking class led by Jenny Cowan of the Parkland Regional Health Authority. The weekly spring and fall sessions are open to anyone wanting to learn healthy cooking. After everyone pitches in preparing vegetables and cooking, a meal is served, followed by a question and answer period. At the end of the seasonal session, all participants get a diabetes cookbook.

Exercise programs are also a major focus for Swan River's CDPI committee, which works in conjunction with the local Friendship Centre. "Most of all what we're working on is physical activity, targeting everyone from toddlers to our elders," Juechter said. CDPI funds have supplied tennis equipment and horseshoes pits for

the centre which are getting plenty of daily use. “The interest level is higher than we’d anticipated – people anywhere from 12-year-olds to elders join a little tournament, sit and visit,” said Juechter. “It really brings out the whole community – they all play together, and everybody interacts.”

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Take Note

**In Manitoba**, the prevalence of diabetes is almost five-fold higher in aboriginal women than women in the general population. Among men, the prevalence is approximately three-fold higher in aboriginal populations than in general populations.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/diabetes/documents/strategy/app-a.pdf>

Diabetes is a significant concern in aboriginal communities for a variety of reasons other than increasingly high rates of the disease, including:

- Earlier onset.
- Greater severity at diagnosis.
- High rates of complications.
- Lack of accessible services.

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/pubs/diseases-maladies/\\_diabete/2001\\_evidence\\_faits/intro-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/pubs/diseases-maladies/_diabete/2001_evidence_faits/intro-eng.php)

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## The Pas

### Golden Agers Band Together for Sociability, Health and Activism

There is only one senior's group in The Pas, but the Golden Agers make sure there are lots of activities for any senior in the town who wants to join. The Golden Agers' mission is to relieve isolation and loneliness of the elderly and improve their mobility and fitness.

They operate a senior citizen's centre that provides recreation, education, and cultural events for members. The non-profit group rents a building from The Pas Kinsman club which is equipped with card tables, a meeting room, computers, and a library area with videos and DVDs that members can borrow.

One of the things that keeps members coming back is the CDPI Healthy Snack program. Seniors who live alone tend not to eat as well as they should, and Golden Agers President Sharon Arnold says the nutritious food is very important for their health. The CDPI-funded snack is "like the carrot in front of the rabbit," Arnold said. "It entices them to come. If there are things

left over, I like to include everyone, and send things home."

The Golden Agers also advocate on behalf of seniors in their community and across the province on issues like housing and public facility accessibility. Sharon sits on the provincial Age-Friendly Council, which is currently working with the government to get a 40-unit seniors' complex built in The Pas. Manitoba Housing is willing to finance one-bedroom units, but the council is pushing for two-bedroom units because many senior couples with illness and mobility problems are much more comfortable with separate bedrooms.

Mobility around town is another issue being addressed. "Our mall doesn't have electronic doors, and one of our seniors' housing units doesn't even have electronic doors," Arnold explained. "Heaps of snow in winter limit accessibility - we lobby, and the snow gets cleared."

CDPI is one of many sources that the Golden Agers count on for funding. The group looks for grants from private foundations, local businesses, Town Council, and organizations like Community Places and New Horizons for Seniors. The Golden Agers have also teamed up with the Legion and Rotary Club, and the Kelsey bus line donates two buses for special outings. "When you're little like us you have to look for freebies," says Arnold.

Daily scheduled activities for the Golden Agers include exercise programs on Monday and Friday mornings with whist and crib in the afternoon, shuffleboard

on Tuesdays at Valhalla Court (a seniors' housing complex), and carpet bowling on Thursday afternoons. An 11-passenger van gets the group out of isolation and allows seniors to ride in style, and van drivers are willing to help with walkers or wheelchairs. "We take them up to Flin Flon for shopping, to the Seniors Games, grocery shopping, to the local airport if they're flying out for medical trips, or to the library - we ask for donations to pay Autopac and gas," Sharon said. "Our seniors appreciate it, and they're all as generous as they can be."

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Take Note

**Seniors and Their Communities:**

- A higher percentage of seniors reported a **strong sense of belonging** to the community in 2005 compared to 2001 (72% vs. 65%). Seniors feel more connected to their community than do other Canadians.
- Seniors are **politically engaged**. One in five seniors attended a public meeting in the past year. Compared to younger Canadians, seniors are more likely to follow news and current affairs, and almost 90% of seniors voted in the 2000 federal election.
- Most seniors enjoy a **good social network** as measured by the number of close relatives and close friends with whom they are at ease and can rely upon for help, and by the number of other friends they make.

<http://74.125.95.104/search?q=cache:Yp56a2PjD3MJ:dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection/HP30-1-2006E.pdf+canadian+seniors+isolation+fact+sheet&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=22&gl=ca>

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## The Pas

### Strengthening Families and People with Schizophrenia

People with schizophrenia and their families in The Pas are receiving crucial support from the Manitoba Schizophrenia Society (MSS), a non-profit organization which runs peer support groups open to anybody with a major mental illness. The Society receives funding from CDPI to run meal and exercise programs, smoking cessation workshops, and to promote healthy eating habits.

The MSS also focuses on informing the public about the challenges facing people with schizophrenia. “We have quite a few programs to educate the public,” said MSS outreach worker Nancy Shewchuk. “These include a ‘Hearing Voices’ workshop, which is a three-hour workshop simulation to help people understand schizophrenia.”

Family support is also a key component in the recovery process, and the Society runs a 12-week “Strengthening Families Together” workshop that teaches families

how to understand and support a family member who has been diagnosed with a mental illness. A “Hidden Victims, Hidden Healer” program also offers education on how to be a caregiver to someone with a mental illness without neglecting the caregiver’s own needs. This program is based on eight steps for caregivers – awareness, validation, acceptance, challenge, forgiving, releasing guilt, self-esteem, and growth.

People with chronic mental illness die as much as 25 years earlier than others. In addition to a lack of motivation caused by the illness itself and medication side effects, schizophrenia patients going to the hospital for another illness may be overlooked and receive inadequate treatment because they are labelled schizophrenic. Low finances mean some are unable to afford healthy food or physical activity programs, and reports indicate that 80 per cent of people with schizophrenia tend to smoke.<sup>1</sup> “Nicotine seems to target something they think they need,” said Shewchuk. “It’s important to give them resources.”

A big benefit of the peer group is getting people together to discuss the challenges they face and encourage each other to look for resources, take their medication as prescribed, and find meaningful things to do – it is a holistic program that focuses on the body, mind and soul. The weekly meal program became a popular time to gather, offering healthy dishes like soup, salmon on whole wheat buns, and vegetables.

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<sup>1</sup> Michael T. Compton, MD, MPH: John Newcomer, MD – Medscape Psychiatry & Mental Health. 2007

“They liked getting the food – the success was that people came more regularly because we had money for good food. You have to give them what they want to get them to come,” said Nancy. “Sometimes we lose them, and sometimes we have to hunt them down. I need to get to them!”

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Take Note

**Stigma and Inadequate Mental Health Care**

- The stigma attached to mental illnesses presents a serious barrier not only to diagnosis and treatment but also to acceptance in the community.
- Families report being stretched to the limit and unable to cope.
- Only one in five children in need of mental health services receives care.
- Large numbers of people with mental illness are living on the streets.
- Eight-six percent of hospitalizations for mental illness in Canada occur in general hospitals.
- In 1999, 3.8% of all admissions in general hospitals (1.5 million hospital days) were due to anxiety disorders, bipolar disorders, schizophrenia, major depression, personality disorders, eating disorders and suicidal behaviour.

[http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/miic-mmac/chap\\_1-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/miic-mmac/chap_1-eng.php)

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## The Pas

### Pedometers Inspire Walkers

Three and a half million steps in just a month and a half! The Joe A. Ross School on Opaskwayak Cree Nation put pedometers purchased with CDPI funding to good use by keeping track of their steps during school hours. One teacher noted that children were motivated to finish assignments quickly so they could go for a walk around the school between classes. At the end of six weeks, they counted 3,468,463 steps with 72 pedometers. That is approximately 2,600 km or the equivalent of walking nearly to the west coast and back!

*“The pedometer program improved morale and increased physical activity. Everyone was very enthusiastic and appreciated the help and effort.”*

Health Canada information estimates that one in four children between the ages of two and 17 are overweight or obese, with childhood obesity in Manitoba tripling in the last 25 years. To maintain or improve your health, Canada’s Physical Activity Guide recommends 30 to 60 minutes of moderate physical activity daily.

The CDPI committee in The Pas and Opaskwayak Cree Nation teamed up with the *in motion* Committee, as well as students from the University College of the North nursing students to motivate children to do more physical activity. Dr. Martin Collis, a renowned personal and professional wellness speaker, was invited to give the audience an extra boost of inspiration in October, 2007.

Packages including 72 pedometers, physical activity guides and nutrition guides were distributed to Joe A. Ross School as well as the Kelsey and Opasquia Elementary Schools in January, 2008. Remaining pedometers were sold to staff members at Joe A. Ross School for \$10 each and the money raised was used for healthy snacks in the school. “The pedometer program improved morale and increased physical activity,” said CDPI committee member and Primary Health Care Nurse Lori Veito. The initial goal of the committee to increase the physical activity of school children was definitely met, she said.

Veito said CDPI has also supported a seniors walking program, called “Walking Buddies” that has also been implemented where seniors can stretch and walk in the local hall. At Christmas time she took eight senior walkers out for lunch to recognize and reward them for a good and continued effort, a gesture they “loved” and will help to inspire continued efforts.

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▼  
▼ *Take Note*

▼  
▼ **How Many Steps Each Day Will Provide Positive Health Benefits?**

- ▼ • Children (age 8-10): 12,000-16,000 steps/day on average.
- ▼ • Youth (age 10-20): 11,000-12,000 steps/day on average.
- ▼ • Healthy Adults age 20-50: 7,000-11,000 steps/day on average.
- ▼ • Healthy Adults age 50-70: 6,000-8,500 steps/day on average.
- ▼ • Adults with disabilities and chronic disease: 3,500-5,500 steps/day on average.

▼ (There are approximately 1,320 steps in a kilometre with an average stride of 76 cm)

▼  
▼ <http://www.walkaboutns.ca/countingsteps.aspx>



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## The Pas

### Student Nurses Provide Manpower Boost for CDPI Programs

The CDPI committee in The Pas is happy to see Cindy Nordick at their meetings. She is the course leader for a community health-related clinical class taken by nursing students in The Pas that provides a major manpower boost to local CDPI programs.

These willing student volunteers are able to advance CDPI objectives while learning and receiving course credit at the same time.

The second-year students study in The Pas as part of a joint baccalaureate nursing program with the University College of the North and the University of Manitoba. These future nurses get involved with the planning of CDPI events, contacting speakers, finding venues, networking, advertising, and budgeting. “We all know that in health care, budgets are often very limited, so you need to be creative in

*“When they graduate, and are working, they will already have some experience as to what’s involved in the planning and implementing of events, conferences, and workshops.”*

what you can provide,” Nordick said. “The whole idea is that when they graduate, and are working, they will already have some experience as to what’s involved in the planning and implementing of events, conferences, and workshops.”

Students learn the importance of promoting preventative health programs for the public that focus on decreasing health care needs. Making people more aware of the health benefits of diet, exercise, and quitting smoking is now a fundamental health care strategy, and The Pas’ nursing program has embraced a hands-on focus on prevention. “Years ago you didn’t hear anything about community health in the nursing program,” said Nordick, “but in our program now there is a whole term of community health.”

In addition to learning the nuts and bolts of event planning, the volunteers have been able to showcase their creative energy. On one project, the students lobbied the mayor and council of The Pas with a PowerPoint pitch for a Community Garden project and plans for follow-up public forums. And during a “Get Caught *in motion*” campaign in collaboration with CDPI and Manitoba *in motion*, students got the word out by writing a series of “active living” newspaper articles, creating a 60-second public announcement on the importance of being active, and even running a phone-in question and answer show on the radio. Students also went around the town catching people who were physically active and giving them in motion prizes as well as a ballot to enter for a grand prize.

A different group also showed their persistence and creativity while working with the Manitoba Métis Federation on a children's health fair called "Spring Into Health." The school children got involved with a poster contest to promote the fair all around town. Contest winners were highlighted in the local newspaper getting healthy lifestyle and nutritious food prizes, and many got their parents to come to the evening event, which was attended by 300 people. Games included a timed obstacle course, food bingo based on the Canada Food Guide, and a taste-testing Wheel of Fortune that featured different foods the kids wouldn't normally try. Speakers representing a variety of health-related programs were on hand to talk about issues like anti-smoking and diabetes awareness, and interactivity was encouraged by issuing passports. After

visiting and participating at a booth, the person got a stamp, and getting stamps from six different booths qualified them for a passport prize-draw at the end.

The nursing student volunteers work hard and are enthusiastic about the course. "It has provided them with concrete learning experiences and a realistic picture of the complexities of public health education events," said Nordick. While the students get practical quality education, the CDPI in The Pas gets a cadre of dedicated workers for its program events – a win-win situation for all!

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### Take Note

Community health nurses practice in diverse settings and roles, including:

- Home health
- Public health
- Street health
- Primary care
- Community health centres

<http://www.communityhealthnursescanada.org>

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## Thicket Portage

### CDPI Helps Get Families Out and Active

How do you get the whole town to show up for a long and healthy walk? For starters, give out good prizes! In the tiny, isolated community of Thicket Portage the CDPI committee managed to get about 75 walkers out for a one and a half hour long walk to the airport and back. Not bad for a community of less than 150 people. “Everybody gets involved,” said CDPI committee member Natalie Bittern. “This walk is an annual thing in the community.” Prizes last year included train tickets, bus tickets and donations from a variety of corporate sponsors. As a way of promoting healthy eating, there are also fruit plates to be won. To make it fair, every walker gets their name in a hat and at the end there is a draw for the prizes.

Bittern says there has been a noticeable improvement in clients at the Health Centre. “They want more information on healthy eating and people are starting to

make their own gardens,” she said.

Another successful community and family activity has been fishing. In the summertime children are taken to nearby Paint Lake for a fishing trip and in the winter families are encouraged to go ice fishing. A skating rink has been cleared on the ice close to the fishing holes so that people can also go skating. The work of clearing was done by a volunteer with a shovel last year and was a huge success.

Bittern says children are active in the community all year round. “We have a lot of very active children. They’re bicycling and you can hear them yelling around in the bush,” said Bittern. Laughing, she added, “They call it ‘cowboys and Indians.’” CDPI is planning to give out a healthy snack per day at the school to add to the children’s diet. There is a community sports day and barbeque at the school and family gym nights when the weather gets inclement. Some of these activities are in partnership with other agencies in the community.

In order to promote smoke-free homes, CDPI in Thicket Portage is adopting an idea from neighbouring Cross Lake and handing out blue light bulbs. A blue light bulb outside a home lets smokers know they are entering a “no smoking” zone. “It worked well for them,” said Bittern, “so we’re going to try it here.”

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## *Take Note*

### **Did You Know?**

According to the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 22% of Canadians in small communities (under 1000 people) are totally inactive, compared with 12% of urban residents.

<http://www.cflri.ca/pdf/e/rf0111.pdf>

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## Thompson

### A Bit of Time Makes a Big Difference

Bonnie Rempel gets goose bumps when she talks about the Families and Schools Together (FAST) program funded by CDPI in Thompson. “It’s absolutely amazing!” she said. “It really does make a difference.”

FAST is an eight-week program for families that targets nutrition, mental well-being and physical activities.

Families meet once a week from about 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and a different family prepares a meal each week for the group.

Rempel is the school principal, but at FAST events, she takes a back seat, washing dishes and observing parents interact with their children. She said the program is very empowering for parents. As part of the evening agenda either the mom or the dad sits for 15 minutes with one child and has a special play time. They are instructed to sit with the child, listen to the child, and have child-directed play. “Some of these families have as many as eight children. I’ve seen parents crying because they have never played with their child like that

*“Such a small amount of time makes such a difference in a child’s life.”*

before,” said Rempel. “It’s just amazing. It gives you goose bumps!” Rempel said it is incredible to see what 10 or 15 minutes of one-on-one child-directed play can do for a relationship. “Such a small amount of time makes such a difference in a child’s life.”

Watching what happens in the kitchen is equally amazing. Families plan meals and take turns cooking for the whole group. A meal for more than a dozen families is cooked at home and brought to the FAST gathering where children serve their parents and everyone gets to play a role that is new to them. Gifts are given in return for a good, home-cooked meal.

FAST brings in speakers from organizations such as the Addictions Foundation and Mental Health to help adults make connections and increase their knowledge of healthy lifestyle choices. “They realize they are not the only one going through [their issues] and that someone is going to help them,” said Rempel. The FAST program not only benefits families, but the entire community. FAST graduates are now running the school’s parent council and others are volunteering in a variety of ways. One participant went back to school and got his high school diploma and volunteers at the school’s outdoor program, teaching children how to trap and skin animals.

FAST graduations are usually emotionally charged events where each parent receives a book with affirmations that the team collects during the sessions. They include things like, “you are so gentle and patient”

and “you are a strong woman.” Many break down and cry on grad night and many stay connected well beyond the eight-week program. The goal, said Rempel, is to assist families in developing protective factors for improvement in building community, conflict resolution, parent empowerment and parent-child bonding. Her conclusion after four cycles of the CDPI-funded program? “FAST works!”

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Take Note

**Nothing Beats a Home-Cooked Meal...**

- Home-cooked meals tend to include more vegetables and fruit and fewer fried foods and soft drinks.
- They offer a variety health benefits, including decreasing the risk of obesity.
- Meals cooked at home cost less than restaurant, takeout, or pre-packaged meals.
- Home-cooked meals can also be a fun way of showing others that we care.
- More than 80 per cent of Canadians say that they enjoy preparing meals at home.

<http://www.healthyalberta.com/HealthyEating/315.htm>

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## Thompson

### A Garden in the Zoo

You may not have known there is a thriving zoo in Thompson, not to mention a zoo complete with community gardens. The unusual combination has been a huge success, with summer day camps triple-booked and waiting lists for the popular garden plots.

Many residents in the northern Manitoba community of Thompson don't have access to healthy food, and Erin Wilcox is trying to help reverse that trend. As Executive Director of the Thompson Zoological Society, she works with CDPI and other groups to promote community gardening and food security. "We want gardens all around the community," Wilcox said. "Thompson has a huge number of low income families, and we want to offer the gardens to them so they are food secure."

Along with her duties at the Thompson Zoo, Wilcox sits on the Thompson Food Security committee, which is where she found out about CDPI. With help from CDPI funding, the zoo first planted

*"We didn't expect it to be that popular... We see there's a big need, and it's really hitting people's interest."*

vegetable gardens three years ago and has recently enhanced the program, teaching basic gardening, insect education, composting, harvesting, and preservation. All of its gardening is chemical and fertilizer free, and people are taught not only to garden but how to harvest some the natural plants that grow in that area. "We've run about 16 sessions so far," said Wilcox. "Initially it started out as a kids' camp, and now we have adult groups and children's groups."

All ages are welcome to come and garden, and children as young as two have participated alongside their grandparents, who appreciate the accessibility of the raised garden beds that allow easy access for the elderly, disabled, or those in wheelchairs. Volunteers built the 17 garden beds, which have proven so popular that there's a waiting list for the next batch of 11 beds. Seeds are supplied and shared, and a tool lending program is available for lower income participants. A summer student is on staff to give advice and assistance. "We want to have a holistic feel and encourage people to ask questions," explained Wilcox.

#### *Overgrown Demand for Earth Roots Camp*

The Earth Roots Kids Camp has been a smashing success, with six different elementary schools clamouring for limited spaces. The camp has a composting and germination project, and features different themes for each day. "Our approach is to really hit the younger generation – make it fun," said Wilcox. Judging by the size of the turn-out, the kids' camp accomplished this

goal and more. Word travels fast in small communities, and the first session of the camp was triple-booked! “We didn’t expect it to be that popular,” Wilcox said. “We see there’s a big need, and it’s really hitting people’s interest.”

Thompson residents are equally interested in storing the fruits – and of course vegetables – of their labours. Accordingly, Bayline Regional Roundtable, MB Food Charter and other partners have helped people to buy inexpensive freezers that they can pay off interest-free. The program educates people on how to best harvest and store their produce.

As for Erin Wilcox, the lifelong Thompsonite has a number of new initiatives to enhance the community’s

green-thumb momentum. “There are so many learning and teaching opportunities,” she said. In addition to working with other agencies to make more community gardens available to those who don’t have their own space, a Northern Farmer’s Market is being planned. It will showcase the potatoes, carrots, peas, beans, radishes and lettuce that are lovingly grown in an often unforgiving climate, along with the wide variety of berries, teas, and wild rice that grow naturally in the area.

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Take Note

Northern Manitoban communities are looking at many different ways to enable them to be “food secure.” Among these:

- Greenhouse pilot projects
- Northern garden initiatives
- Livestock production pilot projects
- Community foods program – making traditional foods widely available again
- Freezer purchase program
- Train youth for their future role as leaders in food self-sufficiency
- Develop food businesses like bakeries

[http://www.gov.mb.ca/ana/food\\_prices/2003\\_northern\\_food\\_prices\\_report.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/ana/food_prices/2003_northern_food_prices_report.pdf)



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## Thompson Food Bank Promotes Healthy Choices

Hungry people don't necessarily ask for healthy food when they access the local food bank. "It never happens," said Major Grayling Crites. "There's an immediate need to fill that hunger." Crites is a Thompson CDPI committee member who oversees the operation of The Salvation Army's food bank. He said occasionally people come in and say they are diabetic and ask for fruits or vegetables, but even that is rare. Knowing the risk factors for diabetes, especially prevalent in the North, food bank operators do their best to bring in healthy food. When they get donations of money to buy food they try to stay away from sugar-coated foods and shop for nutritious items.

CDPI funding enabled the food bank to buy shelving and more freezer and refrigeration space. With more room for fresh produce, the food bank can promote healthier eating for people who are going

*With more room for fresh produce, the food bank can promote healthier eating for people who are going through a difficult time and dealing with a limited food budget.*

through a difficult time and dealing with a limited food budget. They have also purchased books with healthy recipes which people are given along with their groceries. Another idea that has worked well is a "meal-in-a-bag," a grocery bag full of all the ingredients to cook up something nutritious. With the help of a dietitian and the Food Security Committee's CDPI funding, the ingredients needed for a meal are placed in one bag and given with the groceries. "Everything you needed to make chili was in it, including the chili powder and beans," said Crites. "We try to be proactive and promote different things."

Crites said food donations come from the general public as well as businesses such as the local grocery store. The food bank can suggest people make healthy donations, but for the most part they are grateful for whatever comes their way. "When food is donated, you use what you have," he said. At certain times of the year the food bank provides lists of items they require to put in grocery bags. "We need food that helps counteract health issues," said Crites. "We do what we can to help out at this end."

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Take Note

**Canadian Eating Habits:**

- Canadians of all ages get more than one-fifth of their calories from “other foods,” which are food and beverages that are not part of the Four Food groups.
- For most Canadians, snacks account for more calories than breakfast, and about the same number of calories as lunch.
- More than one-quarter of Canadians ages 31 to 50 get more than 35% of their total calories from fat, the threshold beyond which health risks increase.
- Seven out of 10 children ages 4 to 8, and half of adults, do not eat the recommended daily minimum of five servings of vegetables and fruit.

<http://www.heartandstroke.mb.ca/site/c.lgLSIV0yGpF/b.3661109/>

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## Treherne

### Bringing Back Dancing Across the Generations

So, you think you can dance? Even if you know you *can't* dance, the Treherne inter-generational dance program might be for you. Dancers can teach and non-dancers can learn in a fun and healthy forum. The CDPI committee in that area has been encouraging increased physical activity by providing social dance instruction for local youth.

Holly Stanton, CDPI board member and Treherne recreation director, said the older generation felt the young people had “lost the skill” of dancing that used to be known in the area and decided they could bring back the basics. The local elementary schools in Treherne, Holland and Cypress River were approached and social dance instruction was incorporated into the school day. Local seniors volunteered to teach a variety of dancing skills over an eight-week period to the Grades 5 and 6 students. The program culminated with a Family Dance where program participants and volunteers, their

*Not only are people getting more active – there’s been good socialization between generations as well.*

families and community members were invited to attend. “It’s been great to see grandparents dancing with their grandkids and everybody having a great time,” said Stanton. As it turned out, the youngsters had their turn to teach the seniors a few modern dance steps. Not only are people getting more active – there’s been good socialization between generations as well. “It’s been very successful. We’ve had great comments from those involved,” said Stanton.

The CDPI committee also had good response to a walking challenge that took place between workplaces in the area. Pedometers were handed out and businesses challenged businesses in an effort that involved a lot of people in the community. Outdoor adventure workshops, including a paddling course, were also well-attended. “We want to introduce people to physical activity they can participate in locally,” said Stanton. “The idea is to get people more active and for them to realize physical activity doesn’t have to be done just in an organized program.”

Some people prefer a more organized activity and showed a lot of interest in “in motion – Let’s Try It” workshops. For those reluctant to make a commitment to an activity, free clinics were held to give them an idea of what was involved. Sessions offered have included golf lessons, aquasize, and fitness classes, including a 50-plus class.

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▼  
▼ *Take Note*

▼  
▼ **Did You Know?**

▼ Golf is the most popular sport in Canada, with more participants (about 1.5 million adults)  
▼ than the national sport of hockey (1.3 million). Swimming, soccer, and basketball round out  
▼ the top five.

▼  
▼ <http://www.statcan.ca/english/research/81-595-MIE/81-595-MIE2008060.pdf>

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## Wasagamack First Nation

### Where's the Dirt?

Seeds. Check. Hoe. Check. Wheelbarrow. Check. Dirt. Check. Wait a minute, did you say dirt?

In Wasagamack the dirt has to be hauled in from the bush before a garden can be planted and not just anybody knows where to find the good earth. Gary Knott, a pharmacy assistant who is on the CDPI committee for the Wasagamack First Nation, said when he needs dirt he asks an elder in the community where to find the best gardening soil. "He knows where to find the good stuff. You have to have the black stuff and it's in more of a swampy area," said Knott. With CDPI funding, large equipment was used to haul the soil from the bush to the road, where band members were free to pick it up to use for their personal gardens. Knott said there were 29 gardens this year.

Although gardening has been going on

in the community for decades, people are becoming more and more interested in growing things other than traditional items like potatoes and onions. "They want cucumbers and strawberries and peas and beans," said Knott. "There are a lot of people around and these things disappear as soon as they're ripe."

CDPI funding has been used to purchase seeds for distribution and Knott set up a small greenhouse near the nursing station. One year he managed to grow about 80 cucumbers in the greenhouse. This year he tried yellow wax beans, which flourished in that setting. He has yet to produce a good corn crop, but believes it's just a matter of time. "You have to work on it," he said, "Next year we'll bring in more soil. I have noticed that the older people that garden have nice, fine soil."

Knott said people are "not really" making the connection between chronic disease prevention and healthy eating. "But we are trying to teach them and we're trying to encourage them." In a community where children as young as 11 years old are insulin dependent, this education and encouragement can't come soon enough. He said during cultural week families go out to the trap lines to hunt and fish and "eat the wild stuff." Young people are interested in this pursuit, said Knott, but he has noticed a lot of junk food going out with the fishing and camping gear. "Some people are in denial, but if they have questions, we are here to help them. We can do a lot of teaching with kids."

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▼  
▼ *Take Note*

▼  
▼ **Diabetes and Manitoba First Nations**

▼ According to The Diabetes Integration Project, developed with the help of the Assembly of  
▼ Manitoba Chiefs and funded by Health Canada, most First Nations in the province now have  
▼ at least a 25% diabetes rate.

▼  
▼ <http://www.winnipegsun.com/News/Manitoba/2008/10/21/7150121-sun.html>

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## Waterhen

### Bringing People Together

Gym Night has been a big hit for kids in the Waterhen area. The ball really got rolling after a beach volleyball tournament at Manipogo Beach. A team from Rorketon, the Rockets, had a good showing at the high school level, and some serious sporting fever caught on. The CDPI advertised the Gym Night in Waterhen, Mallard, Rockridge, Rorketon and surrounding communities, and a surprising number of kids from various backgrounds got involved. Al Neath, CDPI project leader, bought all the equipment with CDPI funds – basketball, dodgeball, floor hockey, volleyball – and set up round robin tournaments. Lots of girls joined in too.

The action on the courts was intense, but the real success of Gym Night was in bringing together youth from different communities. “It’s not just about playing and working out,” said Neath, “but about developing bonds between the kids and the communities, some of which are pretty isolated.”

*“It’s not just about playing and working out, but about developing bonds between the kids and the communities, some of which are pretty isolated.”*

Smaller communities in Manitoba can often feel isolated from health and recreation services available in larger population centers. Sometimes people in rural areas feel neglected and have been wary of government programs. But the committee in the Waterhen area is working to change that perception. A CDPI group representing 11 communities in the area meets regularly and are a tremendous support for each other.

One of the focuses of the CDPI group is to get feedback from the community before putting programs in place. Increasingly, community members are getting together and expressing the issues that are important to them. In addition to working with the local health unit on issues like diabetes and smoking prevention, one of CDPI’s goals in Waterhen is to educate people about the risks of a lethargic lifestyle. As a long-time resident and former mayor of Waterhen, Neath is a steadfast believer in the benefits of physical activity. “Lethargy is a major killer in these little communities, both emotionally and physically,” he said. “I really believe that mental health is a major issue in the small community. You turn into a different being when you’re physically active.”

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## *Take Note*

In [Canadian] communities with a population over 300,000, some 37% of people are deemed active (defined as the equivalent of walking one hour daily), compared with 29% in communities with fewer than 1,000 residents.

<http://www.cfri.ca/pdf/e/rf0111.pdf>

Children and youth who engage in regular physical activity have increased bone mass; increased ability to fight infections; and improved motor skill development, cognitive and social functioning, and mental health.

<http://www.apcd.mb.ca/pdfs/physical-activity-action-plan.pdf>



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## Waywayseecappo First Nation Community Gardening Takes Root

The old rodeo grounds in Waywayseecappo had been overgrown for years, and the horse racing track hadn't seen any hooves in a while either.

But a different sort of foot traffic is descending on the area now that it's been rehabilitated into a community garden. And for those who haven't got green thumbs, a new walking trail around the gardens is open for all to enjoy.

CDPI committee member Glenda Cloud helped to get the project running, and it's now in its third year. The community garden is flourishing, but getting it off the ground presented some difficulties of the four-legged variety. "The first year was a real challenge," said Cloud. "It was new ground, and we had a lot of little friends – gophers, but they were friendly." Despite the gophers, around 200 hills of vegetables were planted. The initial crop of cucumbers, potatoes, and onions has been

*"It was new ground, and we had a lot of little friends – gophers, but they were friendly."*

expanded to include tomatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, peppers, and flowers.

A well-attended community planting workshop brought out all ages of Waywayseecappo residents this year, many of whom used seeds donated from local businesses. The local Food Mart chipped in with potatoes to plant, and numerous participants brought their own seeds as well. A special garden bed has been raised to accommodate daycare children, who planted flowers and tomatoes that produced delighted kids when they began to blossom. "Everyone who came to the workshop got a little plant, a tomato to nurture," said Cloud. "Everything really went well, and a lot of community members joined the garden."

Produce from the gardens is served at the annual Elders Gathering dinner. Along with the meal, a nutrition bingo is held that takes different food groups and puts them on the bingo cards. A CDPI booth at Waywayseecappo's annual Health Fair also promotes the community gardens by offering draw prizes of fresh vegetables grown in the garden. The booth includes a sign-up sheet for anyone interested in the garden project, and everyone who signs up will be reminded to join in the planting in the spring.

Some of the committee's \$3,000 in yearly CDPI funding went towards the purchase of a tiller for the gardens and a lawnmower to keep the walking trail trimmed, which a part-time gardener looks after in the summer. Waywayseecappo First Nation's

Band Office has also caught the gardening bug, offering to bring a tractor and tiller to each home that's interested in creating a new patch. "More people are starting to plant flowers, vegetables, and do rock gardens," Cloud said. "I did one this year and people were coming to ask how I did it – it's catching!"

Waywayseecappo is also excited about an upcoming project to "Take the Blue Outside." The "Blue" is tobacco smoke and it also refers to a blue light bulb homes will get for their main outside entrance if they have a smoke-free environment inside. The harm reduction approach focuses on protection from second-hand smoke. "Protect your family!" reads the advertising. The approach is based on

research that shows that restricting the areas where a person can smoke actually reduces the number of cigarettes smoked per day and this may make it easier to contemplate quitting.

To keep the community excited and motivated about the project, there will be a poster contest, incentive prizes, and recognition for homes that are successful in committing to being a smoke-free environment.

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Take Note

**Five Steps to Keep Gophers Out of Your Garden:**

- Encourage predatory birds such as owls and hawks to hunt in your garden. Set out bird baths or large shallow containers filled with water to encourage them.
- Clear away weeds and shrubs from around fence-lines so that predatory birds can easily spot gophers at work.
- Line raised vegetable beds with hardware cloth (heavy wire mesh) to prevent gophers from tunnelling in. The hardware cloth should be placed 18 to 24 inches below the surface of the soil
- Leave pets outside at dawn and dusk when gophers are most active. Dogs and cats will bother gophers while they are at work, if not control them.
- Dig around fence-lines and install hardware cloth vertically in the soil as a barrier for tunnelling gophers.

[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_155991\\_keep-gophers-garden.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_155991_keep-gophers-garden.html)

For more on gophers in Manitoba see:

<http://209.85.173.104/search?q=cache:Tr1bkCCFR3sJ:www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/forages/pdf/bjb05s09.pdf+gophers+Manitoba&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=ca>

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## Whitemouth

### Wellness Fair Creates a Buzz

K-12 students at the Whitemouth School have received some hands-on education thanks to a CDPI-sponsored Wellness Day. Students, parents, and community leaders all had input into the comprehensive fair, which featured over 100 active and informational sessions. In addition to more traditional seminars like healthy living and heart health, students were given a chance to participate in interactive demonstrations involving martial arts, yoga, snowshoeing, boxing, and even hip-hop dancing. Students were divided into three age groups and rotated between sessions that also included lessons in team building, relationships, drug awareness, stress relief, and body image.

The overall focus of Wellness Day was to expand the students' knowledge of what health means and what they can do to

maintain their long-term health. CDPI funds were used to bring in presenters, such as outdoor educators and hip-hop professionals, and the North Eastman Health Association provided several resource people. A Healthy Lung session was a big hit, with experiential activities that included the students working with actual cow's lungs – some found this engrossing, while others were a bit grossed out!

A nutrition display was the spot to find some healthy snacks. Some of the parents decided to use the new Canada Food Guide to design four tables stocked with food in relation to the recommended portion of food for each group. There were grains, meats, and dairy on hand, and of course far greater amounts of fruits and vegetables that included some varieties that many of the students had not tried before.

A number of other health initiatives in the area are on the go, including stealth nutrition<sup>1</sup> and grocery store nutrition promotions. CDPI funds were also used to purchase additional racquets and birdies for the badminton club in Whitemouth. In the nearby community of Reynolds, the K-6 school started a healthy lunch program using CDPI funds to buy pots, pans, salad bowls, and other supplies. The students enjoyed learning about healthy eating and helped make the lunches. The

<sup>1</sup> Stealth Nutrition: A way of getting finicky eaters, especially children, to eat healthier foods by changing popular foods ever so slightly to make them more nutritious. For example, putting spinach instead of iceberg lettuce into a salad or sandwich, or gradually reducing salt and sugar in a family's diet.

curling club featured fun spiels to increase participation in the life-long sport. Future plans include a pole-walking program, poster contests, and introducing the teen smoking cessation program, NOT on Tobacco, to Whitemouth School.

Wellness Facilitator Caroline McIntosh said the community support for the Wellness Fair was outstanding, and the event's success created momentum for a Community Wellness Day that may feature student leaders doing the teaching. A lot

of people in the Whitemouth area are community-minded, which helps to get new events running and puts the word out. "The more people you have helping out, the more people are talking about it," McIntosh said.

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Take Note

**Canadian Eating Habits:**

Almost half of Canadians (46%) say that their eating habits are "excellent" or "very good."

- 72% of Canadians who rate their eating habits as "excellent" or "very good" are concerned about the amount of fat in their food. Of these, 90% are taking steps to reduce the amount of fat in the food they eat.
- 59% of those who rate their eating habits as "fair" or "poor" are concerned about dietary fat, with 77% taking action to reduce fat consumption.

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/surveill/nutrition/population/national\\_health\\_survey-enquete\\_nationale\\_sante-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/surveill/nutrition/population/national_health_survey-enquete_nationale_sante-eng.php)

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## Winkler

### Living it Up! All Ages Benefit from Increased Physical Activity

The City of Winkler has taken a comprehensive approach to preventive health programs, offering a wide assortment of activities aimed at everyone from toddlers to seniors.

In “Shake, Rattle and Roll” toddlers learn running games and ball activities, work out with hula hoops, and march with instruments. Open to children ages two to four, the popular CDPI-funded, eight-week program has been a hit with participants and their parents.

“The moms made lots of comments about learning the importance of physical activity for their kids and got practical ideas they could take home,” said CDPI leader

Tricia Falk. “It was really neat to see how the kids interacted and the changes they

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Other exercise programs sponsored by the CDPI include “Time to Play,” which targets Winkler’s Low German population and immigrants with a weekly morning session of physical activities and nutrition education. “Adapt the Fun for Everyone” enables elementary and high school students with disabilities to work out in a gym setting every week from October to May. The action moves to an outdoor pool in the summer months, and all 22 students reported improvements in strength, flexibility, endurance, and balance. A “Girls Time Out” offered hip-hop classes for Grades 5 to 8 girls while the boys learned how to do a proper gym workout in the “Guys Gym” program. Many of the participants were “at risk” students recommended by the school psychologist, but the classes were open to all.

Seniors in the city are also targeted with “Livin’ It Up!” – a five-week wellness program taught by a registered dietitian at the Winkler Senior Centre. The nutrition and cooking workshops feature light exercise activities, cooking demonstrations, tasty food samples, and lessons on how to make healthy, cost-effective recipes at home. Last year, in-house exercise sessions were also provided by a local gym owner for two people with disabilities who were receiving home care.

*Walking Challenge Brings Community Together*

Adults and students alike got involved in Winkler's inaugural Walking Challenge this spring, in which six workplaces and 32 school classrooms competed by keeping track of their daily walking distances over a four-week period. Prizes were up for grabs to the winning classroom, business, and the top individuals from both. CDPI organizers made and distributed trail maps of the city's 10 kilometres of walking trails. "We were trying to promote the trails with this Challenge," Falk said. "We wanted to make the community aware of healthy living options and thought walking was the easiest thing for everyone to be able to do."

Participants used the maps and pedometers to track their progress and added their personal kilometres to the

cumulative total of their classroom or workplace. Student Heidi Pauls took the top individual prize, a scooter from Canadian Tire, by walking a whopping 425 kilometres. Fourteen employees from Eden Mental Health Services took the best business honours with 1,635 km, while 29 Grade 6 students from Emerado Centennial won a free lunch from Subway by marching a grand total of 5,369 km! "It's something they can all do together; they're working towards something," said Falk. "It's a nice community thing, and it sort of brought everyone together." Plans are already underway to expand the Challenge next year into a community-wide event.

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Take Note

**Benefits of Physical Activity in Young Children:**

- Movement is an important part of a child's physical, mental, and emotional development.
- Activity satisfies a child's curiosity about movement.
- Games and activities allow for interacting with other children and developing social play.
- Activity develops positive lifelong attitudes to physical activity.
- Young children solve problems and gain success through challenges and exploration.
- Children who are active perform better at mental tasks.

[http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content\\_storage\\_01/0000019b/80/16/6f/03.pdf](http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/16/6f/03.pdf)

<http://www.springerlink.com/content/5407222825m761v0/?p=15deb9ec022446d3a915a2c39d1cfb0d&pi=4>

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## Winkler

### Fitness Develops Confidence in Seniors and Students

Your granny might be doing more than simple stretching at her seniors' exercise class. She might be dribbling a basketball, shooting hoops, or learning how to throw a ball like she's never thrown before. The CDPI in Winkler has included group fitness classes for both seniors and mentally and physically challenged school students.

Instructor Cherrie Goertzen said it has been amazing to see both groups develop strength, confidence and pride as the program progressed.

"You should have seen the improvements from the beginning to the end of the program," she said. "It has renewed my love for group fitness. We had so much fun!"

Goertzen said the classes instilled fitness skills in the young students and helped seniors to reclaim similar skills.

The school system has good programming for physically and/or intellectually

impaired kids, but holding a class for skill development outside of the school setting allowed for a little extra attention to their needs. Because of the students' love for music, Goertzen – a Fitness Leader with the Manitoba Fitness Council – designed an exercise program that would incorporate all kinds of movement and make use of muscles in a new way. Balance work and agility work were combined with various patterns the students needed to remember. "Watching a kid advance in motor skills and memory is very rewarding," said Goertzen. In one case a little girl who had never moved on her own was placed on a scooter and to everyone's shock and delight she "recoiled her knees and moved on her own. It brought us all to tears."

The tears in the seniors' class were mostly from laughing so hard, they cried. "We laughed a lot," said Goertzen. The group worked on improving strength and balance using many of the same techniques that are effective with the children. The seniors, all women, used balance beams, scooters and basket balls to develop their skills. "Women were catching and throwing those balls like never before," said Goertzen. She added that feeling such freedom of movement will give the seniors better balance and confidence with simple tasks, such as walking outside on uneven surfaces.

The results of the fitness classes were similar and empowering for both groups. "They developed their strength and their memory and as they did that their confidence level came up as well as their sense of pride."

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*Take Note*

**Seniors, Exercise, and Cognitive Function:**

- Aerobic exercise appears to improve higher cognitive functions (planning, organization and working memory) in the elderly.
- One way physical training may help cognitive function in the elderly is by increasing their confidence in their abilities.
- A large-scale study of women aged 65 and older found that cognitive decline was least common in those who were most physically active.
- A large-scale study of men aged 71 and older found that those who walked less than a quarter of a mile a day were nearly twice as likely to develop dementia as those who walked more than two miles a day.

[http://www.memory-key.com/Seniors/senior\\_research\\_exercise.htm](http://www.memory-key.com/Seniors/senior_research_exercise.htm)



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## Wuskwi Sipihk First Nation

### First Nation Revives Past Practises for Future Health

Gardening and using tobacco for ceremonial purposes are two practises that used to come naturally to the people of the Wuskwi Sipihk First Nation. Today, with the help of CDPI funding, there is a revival of both.

Community nurse Wanda Beaudry said the work plan for the First Nation targeted all three of the CDPI objectives – smoking cessation, increased physical activity and improved nutrition, and also included a fourth emphasis on mental health.

*“Young people can learn how to use tobacco the way it was meant to be used, not the way it is used today.”*

According to aboriginal tradition, tobacco is a sacred plant symbolizing cleansing and communication with the spirit world. The smoke of tobacco in a pipe or a fire rises up and carries prayers to the Creator. The sharing of the pipe creates a spiritual connection within the group sharing it. Beaudry said CDPI funding assists with costs for sweat lodge ceremonies led by

traditional elders where “young people can learn how to use tobacco the way it was meant to be used, not the way it is used today.”

Another tradition, nearly forgotten, is the practise of gardening. Beaudry said there are people in their 30s and 40s that remember helping with their grandparents’ garden, but it has been many years since growing food was the norm. Beaudry said she got the idea of a garden after surveying children in the school about food in their households. She asked questions, not only about what kind of food was in the house, but about whether or not there was always food available and at what point in the month families were running out of food. “The results from that survey were amazing for this day and age. Kids don’t always have food at home,” she said.

Her own love of gardening, and the fact that community members would ask her for left-over produce from her garden, were the inspiration for a huge community garden in Wuskwi Sipihk. “I thought if I could get them to have gardens, they would have food when they couldn’t afford to buy it and it would be one step towards healthy eating,” said Beaudry. Along with children from the school and a few adults, she planted 32 rows of potatoes, eight rows of onions, 12 rows of carrots, 10 rows of corn as well as cucumbers, dill and garlic. The large garden was quite a distance from the main residential area of the community, so keeping it weed-free was a challenge. However, people did manage to harvest most of the vegetables. The size of the

potatoes and onions became the talk of the community and Beaudry is already getting requests for a similar project next year, perhaps putting gardens in back yards instead of so far away.

Using CDPI funding and working with the diabetes program and pre- and post-natal groups, the CDPI committee is hoping to get a cooking class started that will bring elders, children and young parents

together. They also want to organize a nature walk for children in the community which will incorporate physical activity and a healthy snack as well as cultural information.

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*Take Note*

Traditional tobacco has been used by many First Nations people to:

- Pray
- Give thanks to the Creator and Mother Earth
- Communicate with the spirits
- Purify the mind and heal the body

The First Nations and Inuit Health Branch of Health Canada reports the following facts on smoking rates in First Nations and Inuit communities:

- 60% of on-reserve First Nations people between the ages of 18 and 34 currently smoke;
- 70% of Inuit in the north between the ages of 18 and 45 currently smoke;
- Almost half of Inuit (46%) who smoke started smoking at age 14 or younger; and
- The majority of on-reserve First Nations people who smoke (52%) started smoking between the ages of 13 and 16.

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/substan/tobac-tabac/index-eng.php>

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