



Portage la Prairie
Community
Revitalization
Corporation

PCRC Annual Report 2014-15



Our Vision:

A vibrant community working together.



Message from the Chair

I want to start by sharing with you the following quote: “The early bird gets the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese”. Author Unknown

Looking at years past I am thankful to the previous Boards of Directors, for their hard work and perseverance and taking us to where PCRC is today. Those were the early birds. Today’s Board members enjoy many of the successes that result from this early work. I feel like the second mouse.

PCRC works with the community to create community. We believe that regardless of the issue, community is the answer. Working together with the community of Portage la Prairie we empower citizens, enhance neighbourhoods, foster community spirit and build the capacity of community organizations.

We follow a Community Plan that has been created together with the community, based on Portage residents’ priorities. We work together with a variety of organizations and residents toward our common goals. I would like to thank to everyone who participated in the Momentum Project, which ended this year. I invite you to visit our website www.portagecrc.com and read a little more about:

- Child Care in Portage la Prairie- Fact Sheet
- Economic Security in Portage la Prairie - Fact Sheet
- Public Transportation in Portage la Prairie- Fact Sheet

Have you taken the opportunity to watch the Living on the Edge Poverty Simulation Video?

PCRC has started the conversation, the facts are before our eyes. We truly believe that Community is the answer. We are committed to continuing to work with the community on these issues.

We are very excited to announce that recently the Province of Manitoba, through the Neighbourhoods Alive! initiative has signed a multi-year agreement with us, providing us with funding commitment for the next four years. We have also signed a four-year agreement with the City of Portage la Prairie. We thank both these partners for believing in us. This commitment provides the stability to allow PCRC to continue to work on important community issues.

We know there is a lot of work to be done yet, we have just started. Seven wonderful years in the making and we have just touched the surface. At PCRC we are thankful for the wonderful staff that we have and all of their work done in the community. We value the partnerships that we have built over the years. It is our wish to continue working with you. You make Portage la Prairie a vibrant community!

Best regards,

Luis Luna

Community Building

Goal: To foster a welcoming community for all, with residents of all ages, cultures, income levels and backgrounds engaged and taking ownership of their neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood Activities

Neighbourhoods in which residents know one another have been shown to have greater feelings of safety and well-being. PCRC encourages activities that allow residents of all ages and backgrounds to participate together.

This year a Community Engagement Committee was formed to help plan neighbourhood activities. The eight activities engaged almost 400 residents. All ages participated in neighbourhood baseball and soccer games, families came out for some board game fun, and our community got a little greener as we learned how to plant herb gardens. Neighbours also had some friendly competition with a Minute to Win It evening and some friendly Dodge Ball. A big thank you to the volunteers who made these events happen!

Revitalize Portage! Grants

One of the best ways of building community is to turn the decision making over to the community. Our Revitalize Portage! Grants programs lets us support great ideas in the community.

This year 19 grants were awarded worth \$33,805. These 19 projects involved over 11,700 participants and over 400 volunteers. Funded projects addressed all areas of the Community Plan, showing the large impact small grants can have in addressing community issues. An emphasis was placed this year on projects for youth, and 9 projects specifically targeted youth, with 5 more which were family oriented.

2014 Revitalize Portage! Grants

Portage Potato Festival

Concerts in the Park Series

L'il Gym Playgroup Equipment

Summer Activities - Big Brothers Big Sisters

National Family Day – Recreation Opportunities for Children

Aboriginal Empowerment through Traditional Creations – Portage Friendship Centre

Louis Riel Day – Manitoba Metis Federation

Supported Employment Workshop – Sam Inc.

Little Mermaid Junior Production - Glesby Centre

Soup for Learning – North Memorial School

Summer Programming - Portage Regional Library

Kids Cooking Club – Southern Health

Portage Disc Golf Course – Portage Regional Recreation Authority

Youth Cooperative Summer Program - Community Futures Heartland

Cultural Inclusion Workshop – Big Brothers Big Sisters

Drama Room - Glesby Centre

High on Life Community Variety Concert

Mission Possibilities

We had some fun this year partnering with the Portage Chamber of Commerce for “Mission Possibilities.” Nine community members were chosen as Agents of Change and given \$100 and 30 days to make a difference in our community. They each rose to the challenge and accomplished some amazing results.

Mission results included:

- Encouraging kindness and building self-confidence by setting up a compliment booth at PCI. 85 students exchanged compliments and received a flower and a photograph memento.
- Encouraging \$225 in donations toward parks and pathways, while growing support for a bike co-op program.
- Hosting a community clean-up and food drive, improving the appearance of the neighbourhood while collecting 105 lbs. of food for the Salvation Army.
- Launching a “trade-up” campaign turning \$100 into \$500 worth of grocery certificates which provided 400 nutritious school snacks, 30 meals for seniors and food for 15-20 families that use the food bank.
- 88 costumes, plus accessories distributed to children in Portage through the Costumes for a Cause Halloween costume drive, organized by a local high school student.
- Two \$1000 awards for graduating students who embodying the spirit of the word Shalom; “The way things ought to be.”
- Baking of cookies by a local Cubs group to sell to raise more money for their projects. The Cubs built two benches that were donated, painted playground equipment, and purchased food for the Salvation Army food bank while learning how to give back to their community.
- A social media campaign to promote positive attitudes by challenging residents to share their best “My Portage” message.
- The first ever “Proud to be a Portager” Colour Run which raised \$1040 for Big Brothers Big Sisters, while highlighting why Portage is a great place to live.

Thank you to our Agents of Change: Jeff Dubois, Tyler Dunn, Lindsey Jordan, Guy Moffat, Ember Rodgers, Kirsten Trimble, Stacy Turner and Nathan Weselake. This small project showed what a large difference one person can make!

Mission Accomplished

Beautification & Community Pride

Goal: To build citizen responsibility for beautification by engaging citizens, businesses and organizations in beautifying properties, greenspaces, and streets.

Beautification Days

PCRC held a city-wide Beautification Day May 23- 24, 2014 as a way to get community involved in Community Pride and Beautification. The community responded and 520 volunteers helped to clean-up the City of Portage la Prairie over those two days. Over 100 bags of trash were removed from our neighbourhoods. Not only did our streets get spiffier, but neighbours had the chance to work together to show off their community pride.



Graffiti Removal Program

This was the third year for the free Graffiti Removal Program, funded in part by the City of Portage la Prairie and the Province of Manitoba Green Team summer youth employment program. Through the program, 145 property owners were contacted to alert them about graffiti on their property and 19 incidences were painted over. Since the beginning of this program over 90 incidents of graffiti and vandalism have been removed. The importance of removing graffiti promptly has also been raised, with some property owners choosing to do their own removal. In 2012, Portage had over 300 graffiti tags, and this was reduced to 124 by the end of 2014. We are working hard to accomplish a graffiti free community!

Home Beautification Grants

The Home Beautification Grant program is the longest running program of the PCRC. Through funding from the Province of Manitoba - Community Housing Improvement Initiative, property owners can apply for grants toward exterior home improvements. This year, fourteen properties were improved with the Home Beautification Grants. By offering grants of up to \$2,500 to eligible home owners, and matching grants of up to \$1000 towards exterior improvements of lower cost rental units, this program is visibly enhancing Portage la Prairie neighbourhoods and improving the quality of Portage la Prairie housing stock.

	Homeowner Grants	Rental Grants	Grant Amount	Owner Contribution	Total
2008	13	--	\$28,850	\$6,949	\$35,799
2009	14	9	\$37,555	\$50,060	\$87,615
2010	16	7	\$36,607	\$12,812	\$49,419
2011	16	3	\$36,825	\$48,175	\$85,000
2012	12	4	\$29,255	\$47,211	\$76,467
2013	15	1	\$27,986	\$30,527	\$58,513
2014	11	3	\$27,700	\$30,406	\$58,106
Total	97	27	\$224,778	\$226,140	\$450,918

Affordable Recreation & Leisure

Goal: To increase the affordability, accessibility and awareness of recreation and leisure opportunities, with an emphasis on families, children and youth; pathway and park development.

Affordable Recreation and Leisure has consistently been shown as a priority for community members. While PCRC does not offer recreation programs ourselves, affordable recreation and leisure is a funding priority. We encourage groups with projects that fit this criteria to apply for Revitalize Portage! Grants or to the Neighbourhoods Alive! Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF). In the past year, Recreational Opportunities for Children (ROC) received Neighbourhoods Alive! NRF funding for their program which provides neighbourhood based recreational programming for children in three school areas. We also work with local committees including the North End Parks Committee and Active Transportation Committee on park and pathway improvements.

Parks, Playgrounds and Pathways

Parks, playgrounds and pathways have been identified as key priority areas, providing not only affordable recreation options for children, families and residents of all ages but also building a sense of community. The North End Parks Committee presented recommendations for improvements to parks north of Saskatchewan Avenue and the creation of a parks development plan to City Council for their consideration. This year, the basketball court at the North East Park was turned into a skating rink for the residents in the area. As well, through a grant from the Community Foundation of Portage and District six playgrounds had toddler equipment added.

The Active Transportation Committee has been working on expansion of pathways in the community and is working toward a plan to eventually connect all pathways so residents have access to all areas of the City. The City's latest pathway expansion is along the newly developed Park Drive.

Jail and Bail

As part of our commitment to parks and pathway expansion, the PCRC partnered for the second time with Portage Rotary Club to host a Jail & Bail. Thank you to the good sports who played the role of villains being apprehended by our super heroes and thrown into jail for their crimes. The villains proved they were actually the super heroes as they raised over \$21,000 to go toward community projects!

Building Economic Security

Goal: To reduce barriers to economic security for lower-income individuals, by reducing barriers to education and employment such as lack of childcare, transportation, limited employability skills, awareness of existing supports and meeting basic needs.

Momentum: Building Economic Security for Women

This was the final year for the Momentum: Building Economic Security for Women project, funded by Status of Women Canada. The Momentum Project supported a collaborative community effort to address barriers to economic security for women aged 18 to 35. Through a community-led process, the issues of child care, transportation and public awareness were chosen as priority areas for the project.

Considerable effort was contributed to the project by community partners, including those who sat on the Advisory Committee and Working Groups to provide direction and resources to the project. Over 30 stakeholders participated on these committees over the past year.

Child Care

The Child Care focus of the Momentum project built partnerships and collaboration between community stakeholders to increase understanding about the important role child care plays in children's overall healthy development, in women's economic well-being, and in a community's economic growth. A twelve member child care working group of local child care organizations and community stakeholders provided input, guidance and support to the child care initiative.

The **State of Child Care in Portage la Prairie Discussion Paper** explored the state of child care locally and the barriers to expansion of child care services. The discussion paper outlines seven recommendations to expand and strengthen Portage la Prairie's child care system. Of these recommendations, two key models for increasing child care spaces were explored in more depth: an integrated hub model for child care, including family resource supports and a skills development and mentoring programs for family home child care.

The potential for an Integrated Hub child care centre including family resource supports located near a local school to provide easy access for parents was explored. A local child care centre is pursuing this opportunity and has applied for funding for a potential 72 space new build. No decision has been received on this application, however, a number of partners are committed to working together for better early learning outcomes if the application is approved.

The Skills-Up Family Home Child Care training program was designed to help potential child care providers build the skills required to become self-employed as licensed family child care providers or child care assistants. A proposal has been submitted for funding and we are hopeful that funds will be received for this program in 2015. The proposal addresses existing systemic barriers in the licensing process and was designed to pilot test a new model that would meet the needs of a rural community.

Transportation

The **State of Public Transportation in Portage la Prairie: A Discussion Paper** was completed to explore the need and possibilities for a public transportation in Portage la Prairie. The discussion paper compiled data from local studies and reports over the past 5 years, business interview results, anecdotal stories, as well as examples of public transportation systems in other jurisdictions similar to Portage. The paper challenges the assumption that public transportation is only for large cities.

Through sharing of information gathered in the discussion paper and presentations on public transportation at the Building Momentum Symposium, the community has become more aware of the impacts of the lack of public transportation on women's economic security and is poised to work together to secure a public transportation system suitable to a small rural city. Many participants indicated that they were shocked by how affordable public transportation can be when given examples of similar sized cities. Next steps will be to form a partnership with the City of Portage and other stakeholders to work together to explore a suitable public transportation model for Portage la Prairie.

Women's Leadership Group / PhotoVoice

The Momentum Women's Leadership Group provided women with opportunities to increase their skills and knowledge to take on leadership roles in their communities. The group was facilitated in partnership with the Tupper Street Family Resource Centre. Eight women participated in the group, which included twice monthly workshops and discussion on leadership topics over five months. The Women's Leadership Group participants all reported that the group built their confidence as well as support systems, and for several assisted them in pursuing employment and education opportunities.

Six of the participants also participated in an optional second phase by completing an independent project. These projects included:

- A study group for women having difficulty obtaining their driver's licence. The group ran for six weeks and had six women participate. The group has since been taken over by one of the participants and is continuing.
- Pay It Forward Portage encouraged community members to do kind deeds for one another. Random kind acts were accompanied by cards encouraging people to pay it forward and report their kind deed on social media. The project demonstrated that everyone can be a part of positive community change.
- Creating a business plan for self-employment through growing herbs and selling the produce or creating products using the herbs.
- Developing a plan for a community garden and hosting workshops on how to plant a garden and how to use the produce in cooking or canning.
- Creating a business plan for starting a shuttle service for women focusing on transportation to family resource programming.

Three women from the Momentum Women's Leadership Group participated in a PhotoVoice project. The PhotoVoice project was a way to visibly represent what economic security looks like through the participant's eyes. A series of workshops were held to build skills in photography, storyboarding and

presenting. Each participant chose a selection of their photos for presentation and captioned them to show what each photo signified to them.

The PhotoVoice project was presented by members of the Women's Leadership Group at the International Women's Day 2015 UnGala to over 100 attendees, Building Momentum Symposium to 135 attendees and the Momentum Wrap-up Lunch to 35 attendees. PCRC will continue to use the PhotoVoice project to raise awareness of the barriers to economic security for women as well as share what is working to increase their economic security.

Building Momentum Symposium

The major awareness raising initiative undertaken during the project was the Building Momentum: Creating a Vibrant Portage Together symposium held on March 12, 2015, with a pre-event *Living on the Edge: Taking a Look at Poverty (LOTE)* simulation hosted in partnership with Portage Plains United Way on March 11th. The symposium brought to Portage la Prairie speakers from as far away as Toronto to talk about how we could build a vibrant and economically secure community through collaboration and building on our strengths. The turnout for both events was fabulous with 88 people attending the poverty simulation and 150 people participating in the symposium.

The symposium started with a presentation based on Momentum project data by Elicia Funk, Executive Director of PCRC. The presentation highlighted the barriers that stand in the way of economic success by using the analogy of The Game of Life. The keynote was followed by local women sharing their experiences related to economic security via their PhotoVoice presentation. These real life experiences, backed up by the research set the tone for the day.

Workshop sessions were held on topics of poverty, child care, transportation, workforce development and economic development. The day ended with the participants gathering together in one room to reflect on their learnings and discuss potential plans of action to utilize these learnings. The symposium served as a transition event as the Momentum Project ends, to share information from the project and encourage local stakeholders to continue to take leadership roles on reducing barriers to economic security. Evaluation showed the event raised awareness of barriers to economic security and that the community is committed to continuing to work on these barriers.

Portage Resource Guide / Network of Non-Profits and Social Services

One of the barriers facing women and service providers is the lack of awareness of what supports and services are available. To help address this, an online resource guide is being created. The guide is currently being tested and is set to be launched in the Fall of 2015. Partners are being identified who will take responsibility for helping to ensure the resource guide remains updated. We anticipate this guide will be a valuable asset for our community.

The PCRC also continues to provide administrative support for the Network of Non-Profits and Social Services. The Network provides a mechanism for local organizations to share information and identify opportunities for collaboration. This year two luncheons were held, as well as the administration of an e-mail information distribution list.

PCRC Board of Directors 2014-15

Brad Poole, Chair

Luis Luna, Vice Chair

Scott Lawrence, Treasurer

Cathy Thomas Lobreau, Secretary

Paulyn Appah

Hazen Barrett

Doretta Harris

Wayne Kelly

Cassandra Pehura

Thank you to Brad Poole, Cathy Thomas Lobreau and Wayne Kelly who are stepping down from our Board this year. We appreciate the time and commitment you gave to us!

PCRC Staff

Elicia Funk, Executive Director

Mary Lynn Moffat, Community Facilitator

Heather Patterson, Administrative Assistant

Sara Herrebut, Community Engagement Coordinator

Jennifer Campbell, Stephanie Roy, Sheri Blaylock,
Momentum Project Coordinators

Betty Kelly, Momentum Childcare Team Lead

Thank you to the summer students who were part of the PCRC team in this past year: Keanna Rellinger, Katarina Boychuk and Janelle Lachapelle

Plan for Community and Social Development

In 2013 & 2014 the PCRC engaged residents and partners in consultations about what they saw as revitalization priorities for Portage la Prairie. The consultations formed the basis of a 5 Year Community Plan for Community and Social Development that guides the work and funding priorities of the PCRC. The five key themes are Community Building, Safety and Crime Prevention, Affordable Recreation and Leisure, Beautification and Community Pride and Building Economic Security.

While the Community Plan will guide the work of the PCRC, building a Vibrant Portage la Prairie requires the entire community to become involved. Together with our community partners, PCRC will be encouraging all of Portage la Prairie to come together to do their part to collectively achieve this community vision.



Community Plan Priority Areas

Community Building: Foster a welcoming community for all, with residents of all ages, cultures, income levels and backgrounds engaged and taking ownership of their neighbourhoods.

- Neighbourhood Activities
- Youth Engagement and Leadership
- Awareness of Portage's Cultural and Social Diversity
- Community Events & Gatherings
- Promotion of Portage Stories & Successes

Affordable Recreation and Leisure: Increase the affordability, accessibility and awareness of recreation and leisure opportunities, with an emphasis on families, children and youth; pathway and park development.

- Affordable and Accessible Child and Family Recreation & Leisure Programs
- Vibrant Spaces & Leisure Opportunities for Youth and Young Adults
- Awareness of Existing Recreation and Leisure Programs
- Parks Development Plan & Development of North East Park
- Pathway / Active Transportation Route Development

Beautification & Community Pride: Build citizen responsibility for beautification by engaging citizens, businesses and organizations in beautifying properties, greenspaces, and streets.

- Community Clean-Ups
- Public Art
- Property Improvements (Residential and Business)
- Downtown & Saskatchewan Avenue Beautification
- Crescent Lake Revitalization

Building Economic Security: Reduce barriers to economic security for lower-income individuals, by reducing barriers to education and employment such as lack of childcare, transportation, limited employability skills, awareness of existing supports and meeting basic needs.

- Increasing Childcare Capacity
- Building a Skilled Workforce through Strengthening Employability Skills
- Raising Awareness of Barriers to Economic Security
- Social Supports and Life Skills to Meet Basic Needs
- Affordable Transportation Options
- Increasing Awareness of Existing Services

Safety and Crime Prevention: Increase perceptions of safety through community engagement, using the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

- Graffiti Removal
- Engaging Residents in Identifying and Addressing Safety Concerns
- Safety & Crime Prevention Strategy