

**PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION CORPORATION**  
**QUARTERLY REPORT TO THE CITY OF PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE**  
**JANUARY – MARCH 2025**  
**(1<sup>ST</sup> QUARTER REPORT)**

**BUILDING ECONOMIC SECURITY**

**Local Immigration Partnership (LIP)**

**Program Continuity & Funding Update**

The first quarter of 2025 marked a significant milestone for the Portage Local Immigration Partnership (PLIP) as we successfully concluded our initial five-year contract with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Despite widespread funding reductions across the immigration and settlement sector, PLIP was awarded an additional three years of funding, allowing us to continue operations with no major reductions to programming or staffing.

We are grateful to IRCC for their renewed investment, and we extend our sincere appreciation to the City of Portage la Prairie for their consistent support and partnership, which has helped maintain stability during a period of uncertainty in the sector.

**Community Engagement & Education**

PLIP staff, alongside staff from the Portage Learning and Literacy Centre (PLLC), were invited to speak to the Grade 12 class at MacGregor High School. The session focused on realities of immigration, the intentions of nation-states in shaping immigration policy, and the impact of immigration on individuals and communities. The event promoted dialogue and awareness among youth on global and local dimensions of migration.

In collaboration with the Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO), PLIP was invited to co-present to a Political Science honours class. The presentation explored advanced themes such as immigration policy, labour migration, and the intersections of immigration and reconciliation, offering students a practical view of current policy challenges and community-level realities.

**Research & Development Initiatives**

With the City of Portage la Prairie's agreement to provide land, PLIP has initiated the next phase of work to secure additional funding for the development of a dedicated multicultural space. This future hub will serve as a gathering place for newcomers and long-time residents to connect, learn, and celebrate the cultural diversity of the region.

In partnership with the Portage Regional Economic Development (PRED) office, PLIP launched its 2025 research initiative focused on evaluating the community's readiness to welcome immigrants as a workforce development strategy. Key areas of inquiry include housing availability, childcare infrastructure, and transportation capacity—all essential for ensuring that immigration strategies are both sustainable and community-supported.

### Cultural Programming & Reconciliation



In partnership with the National Indigenous Residential School Museum, PLIP presented the completed documentary *All My Relations*. The film shares parallel stories of colonialism experienced by both Indigenous peoples and immigrants and highlights shared cultural values and community resilience. The premiere was held at a community feast and powwow hosted at the Keeshkeemaquah Conference Centre, providing a culturally rooted and emotionally resonant venue for

this important work.

### Youth Hub

For the first quarter of 2025 the Youth hub made strides in the community and connecting with our youth. We hosted two monthly advisory meetings to help guide and shape the way the Youth Hub is interacting with the community, as well as continue to address the guns & gangs' strategy for Portage la Prairie. We have consulted with Dr. Chad Nilson to move forward with this strategy. Youth hub hosted numerous tours including the School Division guidance counsellors, CFS agencies, Dakota Ojibway Health Services, TD bank, United Way, and many drop ins. Youth hub has run consistent skill building workshops such as clothing mending and designing skills, cooking classes in schools and after school, cultural programming, and harm reduction. This quarter also saw staff engaging in trainings such as cultural safety, ASSIST, food handlers' certificate, Mental health first aid, and role specific training. Youth hub has worked hard to ensure the space and programming are a safe all-inclusive space for youth to access. This quarter saw many partnerships with local organizations to create a proud place in our community. The Youth Hub actively engaged in community events such as the Harm reduction health fair, Winter fest, and Spring Equinox. Cultural programming has been our most requested and best attended we've seen this quarter. The Youth hub has offered multiple beading nights for lanyards, regular beading, and earring making.



Youth hub also hosted Fred Spencer for soap stone carving. The youth hub hosted snow shoeing with a great success of land-based learning. Wellness programming has also been a great way to connect with the youth. We hosted a self-care night

This quarter also saw the start and completion of the Youth hub logo done by Kae Maud with collaboration of Raine MacKay. Finally we also saw our new Youth Hub sign installed on the building, allowing the Youth hub to be more visible for the community:





## COMMUNITY PRIDE AND EVENTS

### Community Facilitator

Over the past quarter, the Community Facilitator provided support at the Youth Hub one day each week, ensuring consistent coverage and contributing to a safe, welcoming environment for youth. They also assisted the National Indigenous Residential School Museum with grant research and preparation for a proposal to secure funding for a new staircase, an important infrastructure upgrade to improve accessibility and preserve the site.

The Community Facilitator supported the Bear Clan with various Winterfest tasks, including coordinating the design and creation of a photo op board and outdoor sculpture projects to enhance community engagement during the event. They also completed key responsibilities for the Parks Committee, such as submitting the Cash Calendar lotto license application and advancing the Skate Park Lighting Project.

In preparation for the Entrepreneur Challenge, the program developed and delivered a presentation centered on the themes of Confidence and Positivity. Additionally, they completed and submitted the Ending Homelessness Grant, requesting \$98,760 to support the creation of a Cultural Space within the Warming/Cooling drop-in centre. The Community Facilitator also provided grant writing support to PRED and began identifying funding opportunities for a proposed Cultural Space at Prairie Fusion.

Rachel Templeton left her role as Community Facilitator in February and the position is in the process of being filled.

## AFFORDABLE RECREATION AND LEISURE

### Connecting Communities

Winterfest was held once again at La Verendrye School with excellent weather for the event. Outdoor activities included horse-drawn wagon rides, snowshoeing, and gathering around the fire. Indoors, the school gym held activities like inflatable axe-throwing, a magic show by Chris Kitchen and his assistant Cazden Momen and bouncy castles, while families enjoyed hot chocolate, cookies and bannock dogs. Winterfest, a well-loved annual event, was made possible through the efforts of several community partners, including the Portage Regional Library, Portage Bear Clan, and the Family Resource Centre. The event saw approximately 300 people throughout the afternoon. The event saw free *7 Sacred Teachings*, a new children's book about safety, written by Leah O'Leary and illustrated by local artist Annie Beach. The book was created as part of the Library's collaboration with other Winterfest partners.



Connecting communities supported the International Women's Day 2025 celebrations in partnership with Central Plains Cancer Service, Portage and District Chamber of Commerce and the Military Family Resource Centre. This was the 10 year anniversary of the event which was sold out and featured local speaker Sophia Smoke, and keynote speaker, Jessie Cruickshank.



## COMMUNITY BUILDING & SAFETY

### Wawokiya

Over the course of the past month, the Wawokiya program has remained actively engaged in both community outreach and professional development efforts. Staff attended several webinars hosted by the Manitoba Harm Reduction Network, which provided valuable information to support knowledge-sharing and strengthened our harm reduction approach. In addition to this, I participated in a one-week training in Winnipeg titled "*Giwiidosendamin – Responding to Addictions and Suicide with Decolonized Practices.*" This intensive session



deepened my understanding of culturally grounded responses to addiction and suicide and enhanced my ability to support clients through a decolonized lens.

Wawokiya was able to host a full-day LGBTQ2S+ training workshop, aimed at equipping our staff and community partners with tools to provide safe, affirming spaces for all individuals. I also hosted a one-day workshop on the *Ethics of Helping*, which reinforced the importance of ethical practice in front-line social support work. This was all made possible by a grant received through the RCMP called “The Family Violence Initiative Fund”.

In terms of community engagement, Wawokiya was invited to present to the Community Foundation, where I shared an overview of the program, the impact it has made, and the ongoing needs of the individuals we support. I was also pleased to introduce the program to staff and partners at the new Youth Hub, helping to build awareness and potential referral pathways for folks in need of wraparound supports.

Internally, we continued regular Wawokiya meetings to support strong team coordination and actively contributed to Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) planning efforts alongside other community stakeholders. Our collaboration with the Intensive Case Management (ICM) team remains ongoing, ensuring that clients with more complex needs are supported through integrated case planning.

At the beginning of the reporting period, the program had 18 participants. With a few files closing, and new ones opening, Wawokiya is currently sitting at 15 participants.

## Reaching Home

Reaching Home had a busy last quarter, with community presence, supporting folks into housing and much around food security. The Community Foundation awarded Reaching Home a sizeable grant aimed at tackling food insecurity in our community. This money will go towards keeping the community pantries stocked, providing snacks and small meals in office, and also emergency hamper money for folks in need.

There was a three-day workshop around advocacy called “People Power and Change” hosted by CDI in Winnipeg. This was 3 days packed full of fine tuning our message, and becoming the most effective we can when speaking about our program. We were also able to have part of the team attend the workshop hosted by Wawokiya around inclusion, safe spaces and supporting our LGBTQ2S+ community in our work to the best ability we can. There was also ethics training in house, and the Reaching Home team attended this together. During this last quarter, we were able to support 15 folks and their families to get or stay housed.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Indigenous Seniors Resource Coordinator

The end of the 2024-25 fiscal year was a busy one, as we wrapped up our Community Collaboration grant with the help of AgeFriendly Manitoba. Thanks to their funding, we were able to create 24 grieving bundles for participants of the program with the help of a local Elder. All contents for the bundles were sourced within Manitoba. With that grant, we were also able to tackle the issue of food insecurity. We will be working with several local grocery stores to help our Elders.



*Here are some of the items that will be included in each grieving bundle.*

From January to March, we clocked in over 850 kilometres transporting seniors around Portage la Prairie. This would include grocery runs, medical appointments and more. Although weather is warming up, we are still anticipating many more trips going into summer.

Snow continued to create some barriers as we helped 25 Elders deal with some sort of snow clearing or yard maintenance over that time frame. We held three Gatherings with a total of 31 participants including some first-time visitors. These gatherings featured some conversations about the city's Community Safety Well-Being survey and providing Emergency Response Information Kits. We continue to plan for extra socializing opportunities once the snow is gone.

We are working with some local agencies to gather some volunteers to assist with grass-cutting and other odd jobs as we continue our commitment of helping Elders maintain their independent living status as they get older.