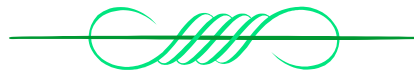




Portage la Prairie
Community
Revitalization
Corporation

PCRC Annual Report

April 2012 - March 2013



Our Vision:

A vibrant community working together.

Our Mission:

PCRC works with the community to create community.

We believe that regardless of the issue, community is the answer.

Therefore we work together with the community of Portage la Prairie to empower citizens, enhance neighbourhoods, foster community spirit and build the capacity of community organizations.

Our Values:

We value open and effective collaboration that reflects sharing, caring, honesty and trust while demonstrating respect for diversity.

Report from the Chair

It is a pleasure and an honour to provide this 2012-2013 Report from the Chair as Portage Community Revitalization Corporation prepares to celebrate its fifth anniversary. It is hard to believe - July 24, 2013 will mark the 5th anniversary of PCRC's incorporation as a Not-for-Profit organization and October 21, 2013 will be the fifth anniversary of the inaugural meeting of our organization.

It is once again appropriate to recognize the provincial government for its 2007 approval of Portage la Prairie as a Neighbourhoods Alive! Community, the early work of the Portage Community Network including both strong support for the developing PCRC and funding for a Social Planning Report to guide planning, and the Interim Advisory Committee –and PCRC Founding Members- Guy Moffat, Glen Carlson, Janet Shindle, Hazen Barrett, Owen McKenzie, Don Boddy, Allison Briggs, Kerri Vandenberg, Sherri Morgan and Stuart Alcorn – who crafted and signed our Constitutional By-Laws. Recognition also goes to Elicia Funk who at that early stage was already part of the team, and while preparing for the birth of her daughter helped to guide the developmental work.

With the assistance of our funders, the community and the many volunteers, PCRC has had a successful and rewarding year. On behalf of PCRC, sincere thanks go to Neighbourhoods Alive! for its funding of our five year Agreement for core services, as well as the additional funds that were provided to assist with our next Community Plan, to the City of Portage la Prairie for the three year agreement which provides \$10,000 in base funding and in-kind services, as well as an additional \$5,000 this upcoming year specifically dedicated to the Graffiti Removal program, and to the federal government which is funding the three-year Momentum: Reducing Barriers to Economic Security for Women project. We are aware of financial stresses that have affected all levels of government and deeply appreciate the stability of longer term funding in these difficult times.

Executive Director Elicia Funk will be reporting on PCRC's programs and projects. I will focus on some key areas of Board activity:

- In May 2012, Sharing Our World took place in a new larger location and Board members had the opportunity to work with staff to plan and “staff” the event for the largest number of participants ever;
- In June 2012, PCRC partnered with the City of Portage to conduct community consultations about “North End Parks.” The Community Engagement Committee took the lead in PCRC's part of this initiative and it was gratifying to see the number of community residents that participated to bring their opinions and their energy to that work;
- From May through August 2012, Board and staff participated in review of our Vision and Mission statements with the sessions facilitated through support from

Neighbourhoods Alive!. That process resulted in updated Vision and Mission Statements which are reflective of the ever-changing partnerships and work of PCRC;

- Once again, Community Clean-Ups were held in the summer months. Thanks to all of the citizens who gave their time to clean up their neighbourhoods and relax with a barbecue and social time once the work was done;
- In December 2012, PCRC embarked on a new adventure – building and staffing a float for the annual Santa Claus Parade. Board and staff members skilled in carpentry, lighting and sound stepped up to share their skills and were joined by family and friends to ride or walk in the parade. We hope that this can be an annual event for PCRC.
- In January 2012, Board and staff spent a day reviewing and revising our Strategic Plan and identifying priority work for the next year. In preparation for that day, the Board completed a self-evaluation and a request went out to our members and volunteers to identify priority activity from a community perspective;
- Work was started on the priorities identified during the Strategic Planning day including financial sustainability (explore charitable status options, updated fundraising plan, and financial contingency plans), increased participation of community members in PCRC initiatives and committees, and upgrading of PCRC technology equipment and website. We look forward to further work in 2013-14.

Two members of our board are leaving us this year – Bill Ghostkeeper and Karly Friesen. Good luck to you Bill in both your retirement and your new home and community. Karly, while we will miss your board presence we are pleased that you still will be part of the North End Parks Committee. Jean Marc Nadeau left us earlier this year when he began his position with the City of Portage and we thank him for his time on the Board as well.

Once again, a heartfelt thank you to our staff who as always have provided well beyond expectation and have still found time to support the board in its activity. Thanks to Elicia Funk, Mary Lynn Moffat, Heather Patterson, and Jennifer Campbell for another great year. Both your energy and your patience are endless. Welcome to Sara Herrebut who is our new Community Engagement Coordinator, and to Alex Belanger, CreateAction Intern who will be with us until September. And thank you to the members of the Board of Directors who have given so many volunteer hours this year – board meetings are only a small part of their contributions.

After three years, I will be stepping down from chairing PCRC at the first meeting in July. Thanks to everyone that helped me through my term - it has been both enjoyable and rewarding!

Dale Brownlee, Chair

Background

In 2007, Neighbourhoods Alive!, a department of Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs (now Manitoba Housing and Community Development), announced an expansion to their program to five new communities, including Portage la Prairie. Neighbourhoods Alive! (NA!) is a program of the Manitoba Government that provides support to urban neighbourhoods through community-driven revitalization efforts. It was this expansion that led to the development of the Portage la Prairie Community Revitalization Corporation.

In July 2008, the Portage la Prairie Community Revitalization Corporation (PCRC) was incorporated. Prior to incorporation, an Interim Advisory Committee partnered with the Portage Community Network to engage the community in determining social needs and community revitalization priorities. Based on the priority areas and recommendations resulting from these consultations and documented in *the Social Planning Initiative Phase I Report (2009)*, the PCRC Board of Directors developed priority areas and goals to guide the activities of the PCRC over the next five years. The action plan for each priority area is outlined within the **PCRC Community Plan 2009-2014**.

The priority areas identified by our community were:

1. Housing
2. Poverty Reduction
3. Community Engagement
4. Neighbourhood Safety
5. Social and Cultural Diversity Awareness
6. Affordable Recreation and Leisure
7. Capacity Building

Significant progress has been made towards the goals and objectives listed in the Five Year Community Plan. This Annual Report highlights some of the progress made by PCRC in Year 4 of the Community Plan. We are excited to be entering the last year of this Community Plan and look forward to engaging the community once again in determining priorities for PCRC and the community for the upcoming years.

Thank you to our many volunteers, community partners and funders for working together with us!

Community Engagement

Goal: To engage citizens and organizations within Portage la Prairie in community initiatives to foster participation and a strong sense of community pride.

Four community clean-up days were held during the summer of 2012. Over 100 volunteers of all ages took part in the community clean-ups, covering the central area of Portage la Prairie. The volunteers, as well as our summer Green Team, picked up 55 bags of garbage and 20 bags of recycling. PCRC hosted a BBQ after each of these events, which provided an excellent opportunity for neighbours to get together. The clean-ups not only made the area look better and safer, but also strengthened connections within the neighbourhoods. Aaron & Katarina, our summer youth employees funded by Manitoba Green Team, continued cleaning up litter through the summer, including daily clean up of the block around our office.

The Keep It Clean program, which encourages residents to take responsibility for the appearance of our neighbourhoods by adopting an area of Portage, whether it be a block or ten blocks was launched. Eight areas were adopted by individuals or community groups and this program will be continued.

Community engagement continued to be a key value of PCRC shown through community consultations on issues including North End Parks and Economic Security. We also encouraged all organizations granted funds through Revitalize Portage Grants to engage community members, and these projects involved over 165 volunteers and over 4000 community members. Internally, PCRC sought to engage more community members on our various committees.

In the upcoming year Community Engagement will continue to be a top priority of the PCRC. A Community Engagement Committee is being formed to assist the PCRC staff in planning and implementing innovative community engagement activities. This Committee will also help guide the community consultation process to create a new Community Plan for community revitalization in Portage la Prairie.



Social and Cultural Diversity

Goal: To build awareness of social and cultural diversity within the community to reduce discrimination and racism.

On May 12, 2012, PCRC hosted the 3rd Annual Sharing Our World Event to highlight cultural diversity. The goal of the event was to raise the awareness of cultural diversity in Portage la Prairie and foster pride in the community. Over 700 people enjoyed the event throughout the day. Over 100 volunteers were involved in planning and hosting the event, further building a feeling of belonging in the community and cultural pride.

The event grew so much over the first two years that we had to move to a larger facility to hold the event. We took over the Curling Rink at the Canad Inns which allowed lots of room for people to visit the displays and activities. This year we had 16 cultural group displays, 9 groups providing samplings of traditional foods and 9 different acts providing entertainment throughout the day.

New to the event this year was the Showcase of Traditional Dress, where we got to see and hear about the different styles of clothing and the traditions and occasions they represent. Also this year we added free transportation from North Memorial School, LaVerendrye School and Portage Collegiate Institute allowing individuals that didn't have access to transportation to get to the Canad Inn to enjoy the event.

Thank you to Citizenship & Immigration Canada, Neighbourhoods Alive!, City of Portage la Prairie, Immigrant Resource Program & Settlement Services at the Portage Learning & Literacy Centre, Portage Friendship Centre, Dakota Ojibway Child & Family Services, Portage School Division, and the Portage & District Public Library for their support of this great event. Thank you also to a number of local businesses for their sponsorship towards Sharing Our World. With everyone working together we can continue to provide an opportunity to celebrate the diversity of our community.

Plans are underway for another great event in May of 2013.



Neighbourhood Safety

Goal: To promote initiatives that enhance feelings of safety and wellbeing.

The PCRC approaches Neighbourhood Safety through the concepts of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) and Community Engagement. Two core principles of our safety program are 1) improving the look and design of an area can discourage crime and increase feelings of safety and 2) building connections in neighbourhoods and increasing feelings of community ownership is a key to increasing neighbourhood safety.

Our Community Engagement Coordinator links activities such as community clean-ups and block parties together with safety. Community clean-ups not only bring the community together to pick up litter, but volunteers also help to identify safety issues and vandalism. The RCMP, EMS and Fire Department attend the community clean-ups and both children and adults have the opportunity to make connections with these public safety groups. Neighbourhoods applying for grants for block parties include a presentation on Neighbourhood Watch or Citizens on Patrol.

This year we introduced a free graffiti removal program for homeowners. Through the Province of Manitoba Green Team program we were able to hire two summer students to conduct a graffiti audit and paint over existing graffiti. The audit covered over 90% of Portage la Prairie and identified over 300 incidences of graffiti, 150 of which were on residential property and 60 of which were on businesses. Twenty homeowners used the program to remove graffiti from their property. Each residential property with graffiti identified received information about the program and information on the importance of removing graffiti and how to prevent it from reoccurring.

Public education was a focus of efforts this year, with a theme of personal responsibility for community safety. Ads in the paper, newsletter and on the radio promoted the principles of crime prevention through environmental design and encouraged citizens to take action by maintaining their own properties and their neighbourhoods.

The City of Portage's Public Safety Task Force also continued to work with the PCRC to respond to identified issues identified through safety audits. Issues identified by the public in safety audits that were the responsibility of an existing organization such as the RCMP, Fire Department, City of Portage, By-Law Officers or Health Inspector were shared with the Task Force and resulted in actions including removal of derelict vehicles, filling sinkholes, patching sidewalks, replacing street signs and trimming trees and bushes.



Affordable Housing

Goal: To improve the quality of existing housing stock while encouraging the creation of additional safe, affordable and appropriate housing.

Home Beautification Grants

For the fifth year, PCRC offered Home Beautification Grants for exterior home improvements in the summer of 2012. 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. Funding for this program was provided by the Province of Manitoba - Community Housing Improvement Initiative.

In 2012, 12 owned homes and 4 rental properties received grants, contributing to \$76,467 in renovations to local properties including owner contributions. To date, a total of 71 owned homes and 23 rental units have been enhanced through Home Beautification grants. This has resulted in \$334,299 in exterior housing improvements, not including the many hours of labour contributed by our property owners who have done much of the work themselves.

Grant recipients have reported that the improvements to their properties may be providing a ripple effect with neighbours inspired by the changes to plan renovations to their own homes.

Thank you to our local partners, Gallons Galore and More, McMunn & Yates Building Supplies and RONA Building Centre for their support by offering discounts on materials to our grant recipients.

	# of Homeowner Grants	# of Rental Grants	Home Beautification Grant Amount	Owners 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
Total	71	23	\$169,092	\$165,207	\$334,299



Poverty Reduction

Goal: To facilitate opportunities that link lower income residents with activities to improve their well-being and economic situation, and to address barriers to economic security.

We were pleased and excited this year to kick off the three-year Momentum: Economic Security for Women project. This project brings together community partners and young women in Portage to create and implement a community plan to increase economic security of women. This year the focus of efforts was on gathering information to create the community plan.

A primary goal of our research phase was to empower women to share their stories, successes and challenges as they worked toward economic security and prosperity for themselves and their families. An asset based approach was used to keep the project focused on what was working well in our community and how to remove barriers to these assets, as opposed to focusing primarily on what was not working. The study examined the following:



1. What economic security looks and feels like for women in Portage la Prairie and area
2. What is currently working for women to achieve economic security
3. What barriers women face when trying to achieve economic security
4. Recommendations to reduce the barriers women face

The community response to the initiative was very positive. One the greatest accomplishments was the open and honest discussion held with women in our community who are experiencing struggles with economic security. The context they gave to the discussion helped the project stay focussed on the fact that economic security is not about issues such as poverty, childcare, employment and education, as much as is it about real women and families trying to get ahead.

In total, 47 women, 11 men and 22 key informants shared their stories and expertise through the research. The 47 women who participated in 8 focus groups represented a variety of women in our community. Key informants included staff, management, and leaders from the areas of education, housing, employment, justice, health care, and various levels of government.

The report on the first phase of the project is anticipated to be released in June 2013. This will be followed by a community forum including participation from women and stakeholders to discuss the research findings and recommendations in the report. The Community Plan will identify and focus on one key priority that will be addressed over the next two years with the funds from Status of Women Canada. At the same time, other community resources and funders will be engaged to implement and address additional priority areas.

Capacity Building

Goal: To provide resources to build the capacity of neighbourhood groups and social service organizations to together develop sustainable solutions to community issues.

PCRC works to build the capacity of local groups and organizations through providing grants and proposal development assistance as well as coordination and communication between groups on issues identified in the Community Plan. We also provided strategic planning as a fee for service, with sponsorships available for groups unable to afford the service.

With assistance of a planning committee of non-profit representatives, PCRC has continued to arrange quarterly Network of Non-Profit lunches. The Network of Non-Profits provides opportunities for non-profit and social service groups to network and develop partnerships. PCRC also administers an e-mail listing through which network members can share information about their programs and activities. Through communication and coordination, groups are better able to meet social needs identified in the community.

The Revitalize Portage! Grant program was offered for the fourth year. Revitalize Portage! Grants provide up to \$5,000 to neighbourhood groups and organizations to support projects that connect the community and address the priority areas of the Community Plan. This program allows community groups and organizations to address community needs, engage community members, build local capacity and increase community pride. Projects this year covered a wide variety of community building and connecting activities.

2012 Revitalize Portage! Grant Receipts

Portage Potato Festival – Children’s Activities
Quite Likely-Concert in the Park Series
Southern Regional Health Authority/Tupper Street Family Resource Centre /Portage School Division-Parent Adolescents Continuing Education
Portage and District Arts Council-Meshing Creative Diversity
William Glesby Centre-Royal Winnipeg Ballet School Concert Hour Dance Performance
Big Brothers Big Sisters-Summer Activities
La Pan’cirr-Awakening the Artist
Portage Learning and Literacy Centre-Student Breakfast Program
SAM Inc.-Lunch Program
La Verendrye Parent Council-Basketball Nets
Portage Friendship Centre-Hand Drumming Workshop
Portage Library-Memorable Magic
Ukrainian Nursery School-Constructing Learning with Unit Blocks
Portage Collegiate Institute-Activities to Stimulate the Senses
Senior Life Skills-Coffee on the Go
Women in Business & the Harmony Project - International Women's Day Celebrations

Affordable Recreation and Leisure

Goal: To encourage the creation of affordable recreational opportunities and the development of physical spaces with a focus on the needs of families and youth

Affordable Recreation and Leisure is a funding priority of the PCRC. We encourage groups with projects that fit this criteria to apply for Revitalize Portage! Grants or to the Neighbourhoods Alive! Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

This year the PCRC assisted the Portage Active Transportation Committee through Portage and the Rotary Club to apply to the Neighbourhoods Alive! Neighbourhood Renewal Fund for an expansion of pathways in the north end of Portage. PCRC representatives participate as a part of this Committee which is developing a plan for additional pathways to connect all areas of Portage la Prairie, with a first priority of the north end.

A highlight of this year was partnering with the City of Portage to conduct community consultations on the topic of North End Parks. Approximately 135 people attended the public community consultations held at North Memorial School and the BDO Centre for the Community. In addition, Grade 7 and 8 students at LaVerendrye School provided their feedback. In total 229 people provided input through the consultations.

We found parks are seen as more than just recreation, they are seen as a tool in building the sense of community. Residents talked about the importance of parks in getting to know people in the area, building positive relationships with your own children and how having more people outside contributes to safer neighbourhoods. Residents also noted that having nice facilities could contribute to improving the perception of the north end neighbourhoods.

Based on the results a 3 phase plan has been designed. The City of Portage la Prairie has included these recommendations in their budget and are working with a community-based North End Parks Committee to implement the activities.

- **Phase 1:** Upgrading Existing North End City Parks with mature trees, benches and picnic tables.
- **Phase 2:** Development of City Property adjacent to North Memorial School with a multipurpose pad that will allow for basketball, ball hockey and a winter skating rink, as well as creating park atmosphere with trees and benches.
- **Phase 3:** Creation of a Spray Park



Organizational Development

Goal: To operate an effective community revitalization organization that meets the goals in the Community Plan while remaining accountable to the community, funders and government.

The PCRC continued to work on the organizational development required to maintain a strong organization with qualified and committed Board members, volunteers and staff. The Board of Directors and staff together crafted a vision and values statement for the PCRC, and reworked the mandate to better clarify the role of our organization.

To maintain our communication with the community, PCRC newsletters were delivered quarterly to each household in Portage. Newsletters have proven to be very effective in reaching a wide segment of our community. We continued monthly appearances on the Mix 96 Morning Show and bi-monthly spots on CFRY radio, and had regular articles in the Portage Daily Graphic. We are thankful to the excellent response we receive for all of our activities by local media. This year we began to build our social media presence through Facebook and will continue to work on this over the next year. We value the feedback we receive from the community!

Our Policy Committee continued to meet regularly to ensure the PCRC has the policy and structure in place to be transparent and accountable to the community and our funders. Additional members were added to PCRC Committees to engage a wider variety of community members.

The PCRC is committed to a community-led planning model. As we enter into the last year of our 5 Year Community Plan we are looking forward to hearing from the community about what they see as emerging priorities for our city. This will result in a new plan to guide the PCRC after the end of the next fiscal year.

In this year's strategy planning the PCRC Board of Directors identified enhancing the financial sustainability of the PCRC and further engaging community members as our organizational development priorities for the upcoming year. Upgrading our technology and website was also identified as a need to keep our organization up to date and increase productivity.

The PCRC is very grateful to all of the community partners who make it possible for us to meet our vision of a vibrant community working together. Thank you as well to our funders for your support and contribution to the well-being of Portage la Prairie!

PCRC Board of Directors 2012 - 13



Dale Brownlee
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Lori Judson
Vice Chair



Karly Friessen
Secretary



Scott Lawrence
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Lori Grenkow



Ryan Muirhead



Brad Poole



Holly Leost



Guy Moffat



Bill Ghostkeeper



Luis Luna



Jean Marc Nadeau

Thank you to Jean-Marc Nadeau, Bill Ghostkeeper and Karly Friesen for your time on the PCRC Board of Directors this year. Your participation has been greatly appreciated and we wish you the best of luck in your future endeavours!

PCRC Staff

Elicia Funk, Executive Director

Mary Lynn Moffat, Community Facilitator

Heather Patterson, Administrative Assistant

Jennifer Campbell, Momentum Project Coordinator

Sara Herrebout, Community Engagement Coordinator



Thank you to the staff and students who were part of the PCRC team in this past year. Carrie-Ann Lander served as our term Neighbourhood Safety Coordinator over the summer of 2012 and Katarina Boychuk and Aaron Hourie were our Green Team summer students this year. We enjoyed working with you!