How Winnipeggers are supporting strong, stable families through family resource centres.

2016 / 2017
When roots are deep, there’s no reason to fear the wind.
— UNKNOWN
Many families in Winnipeg are under significant stress — and it’s showing.

As a community, we need to do more to protect and nurture our most precious resource and the most vulnerable among us. There is perhaps no greater challenge facing our city.

As United Way volunteers and donors, we believe it’s time for our community to come together to offer more support for families who are struggling.

Through a special partnership involving the philanthropic and community sector, Government of Manitoba and United Way, we can help more families stay together, more children start school ready to learn, and more families living in poverty find opportunities to thrive.

How? By enhancing the preventative, family-centred and proven approaches offered through Family Resource Centres in neighbourhoods throughout Winnipeg.

Strengthening families today will have a positive impact on our community for generations to come: kids succeeding in school; a stronger, diversified workforce and reduced health, justice and social service costs.

We’ve created a plan to start this important work, called For Every Family. Together with you, we can make a big difference for a lot of vulnerable families and children. This could be our game changer.
For thousands of kids and families every day, Winnipeggers’ support for United Way looks like hope, opportunity and potential. Yet, many still face tough challenges.

- **11,000** kids in care in Manitoba.
- **24%** of kids in Winnipeg were living in poverty in 2013, the third highest rate among large urban areas in Canada.
- **87%** of Manitoba kids in care are First Nations, Metis or Inuit.
- **Nearly 1/3** of kids enter into care before age one.\(^1\)
- Only **33%** of kids in care graduate high school, compared to **89%** for kids NOT in care.
- **25%** of kids who enter into care before age one remain in care more than **12 years**.
- **Less than 1/2** of kids in care are ready to start school, compared to **76%** of kids NOT in care.

Family resource centres (FRCs) are neighbourhood-based, community-driven, independent organizations where ordinary magic happens every day. FRCs provide culturally relevant, strength-based programs and services focused on early childhood education, health, youth, literacy, employment support, community economic development and much more.

The atmosphere is more home-like than clinical. In the beginning, FRCs are often described as a safe, welcoming space for warm coffee and conversation. In time, as relationships and trust grow, participants may also grow comfortable accessing programs/services specific to their needs, and become more active and involved in the community.

In Winnipeg, United Way donors support a network of 24 family resource centres. Located in 11 neighbourhoods across Winnipeg, including several Manitoba Housing clusters, these resource centres are positioned to reach almost 290,000 Winnipeggers.²

The reality is there are pockets in our city where families have fewer opportunities and more challenges. In these communities, more families are living in poverty, more kids are in care, and fewer kids start school ready to learn.

² [http://now.winnipeg.ca/census/total-population-census-year](http://now.winnipeg.ca/census/total-population-census-year)
Andrews Street Family Centre
220 Andrews St

Canadian Muslim Women’s Institute
61 Juno St

Elmwood Community Resource Centre
545 Watt St

Family Dynamics (Elwick Village)
1417 Fife St

Family Dynamics (Keenleyside)
394 Keenleyside St

Family Dynamics (Plessis)
1190 Plessis Road

Family Dynamics (Tuxedo)
225 Doncaster St

Family Dynamics (Westgrove)
76 Westgrove Way

Family Dynamics (Woodydell)
625 St. Anne’s Road

Fort Garry Women’s Resource Centre
1150 Waverley St

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre (Anderson)
318 Anderson Ave

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre (McGregor)
363 McGregor St

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre (Spence)
443 Spence St

Marlene Street Community Resource Centre
27 Marlene St

North End Women’s Centre
394 Selkirk Ave

North Point Douglas Women’s Centre
221 Austin St N

NorWest Co-Op Community Health (Alexander)
1880 Alexander Ave

NorWest Co-Op Community Health (Blake Gardens)
312 Blake St

NorWest Co-Op Community Health (Gilbert Park)
35 Gilbert Ave

South Winnipeg Family Information Centre
800 Point Road

Thrive Community Support Circle
555 Spence St

West Central Women’s Resource Centre
640 Ellice Ave

Winnipeg Central Park Women’s Resource Centre
400 Edmonton St

Wolseley Family Place
691 Wolseley Ave

For Every Family
The For Every Family initiative consists of three components:

1. Create a formal network of FRCs to share effective practices, build capacity, and potentially share specialized resources and programs, including counselling and financial literacy and administrative supports.

2. Enhance access to FRCs through increased hours of operations.

3. Enhance programs and services available through FRCs.

In 2017, the Government of Manitoba recommitted to matching donations raised by vision philanthropists and generous friends of United Way — up to $7.5 million over six years ending March 31, 2022.

In March 2017, with donations raised to date, For Every Family made an initial investment of over $5.5 million in the network of 24 FRCs over the next three years. The impact of this investment includes:

- Family Resource Centres are meeting as a network, sharing knowledge, sharing resources, and developing a common evaluation framework.

- The centres will be open an additional 394 hours per week — a total of more than 20,000 additional hours each year for families to access vital resources.

- Programs and services related to counselling, job skills training, parenting, youth and health will increase by 136 hours per week or 7,062 hours per year.
A sample of what Winnipeggers made possible together through FRCs in 2015/16 and 2016/17

67,000+ hours open to the community.

25,600 bus tickets provided to transport Winnipeggers to appointments, job interviews, school and other destinations.

65,000+ people accessed computers and other technology that made it possible to do homework, apply for jobs, look for housing and much more.

181,000+ healthy meals and snacks fueled good nutrition.

WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Based on responses from over 1,400 participants, in 2016/2017 FRCs collectively reported the following impacts:

1. Enhanced feeling of safety and belonging

96% felt less isolated as a result of their involvement at FRCs.

94% felt welcome at the agency

“In a short period of time I have felt welcomed and feel I know where to go for help, you guys have supported me and my kids.” — FRC PARTICIPANT

2. Opportunities to be a voice and active contributor in our community

1,000+ were more involved as volunteers, mentors, board and tenant advisory members and more.

90% felt more connected to the community as a result of their involvement at FRCs.

86% said programs respond to their needs.

“A committee has formed to address community safety. Residents are actively leading the community clean up and garden committees.” — FRC STAFF

96% felt less isolated as a result of their involvement at FRCs.

94% felt welcome at the agency

“A committee has formed to address community safety. Residents are actively leading the community clean up and garden committees.” — FRC STAFF

86% said programs respond to their needs.
3. Opportunities for improved health and wellness

83% said FRCs helped meet their family’s basic needs for things like food, clothing, technology, hygiene products and baby supplies.

86% reported improved well-being as a result of programs and services that teach skills for life, coping and setting goals.

78% reported improved relationships with family, children, friends and others.

“We have access to swimming, computers, we can do our work here, we have a chance to send email, and we can get food and clothes. We get everything we need.”
— FRC PARTICIPANT

“We work with others from other cultures on our relationships. We learn to be cordial, respectful. We learn how to talk to others, appropriate language and office behaviours. We learn how to talk respectfully to Canadians. We are now better able to integrate into Canadian life. We learn how what we used to do is different here. We learn to be with people here and understand our past behaviours.”
— FRC PARTICIPANT

4. Better access to critical programs and services

80% said FRCs provided access to services and supports that were previously unavailable.

87% said FRCs are accessible. However, the percentage varied widely between locations. At some locations, only 30% said that FRCs are accessible.

“If I am sad, going to the centre makes me feel happy. I feel more safe when I am at the centre.”
— YOUTH FRC PARTICIPANT

28,100 personal and group counselling sessions provided a voice, support and new hope for people and families living with trauma, conflict, addictions and other challenges.

3,000 parents participated in programs designed to build stronger, stable, more resilient families.

229 people secured jobs as a result of opportunities to enhance skills, experience and confidence.

Nearly 12,500 Winnipeggers participated in over 2,600 workshops on safety, nutrition, health, employment and many other topics.
It’s clear from these results that FRCs are doing important work, critical to the lives of Winnipeggers everywhere. But it’s also clear there’s more work to be done.

With FRCs open longer hours and meeting as a network, we need to turn our attention to enhancing programs. More dollars need to be raised so that we can explore areas for enhancement as recommended by community members, including:

- Financial empowerment
- Early childhood programs
- More programs and education focused on food
- Increased cultural space and teachings
- Programming for men

“Community members would appreciate open hours such as evenings and weekends. Further research shows, along with Monday to Friday access, there are high demands in the area of children’s, youth, and cultural programs as well as activities.”
— FRC STAFF

“It was a busy day yesterday at both McGregor and Spence sites, community are very excited with the knowledge that we are now open longer hours and on Saturdays. We are anticipating many benefits for community through this new opportunity.”
— MAWI WI CHI ITATA CENTRE
WHAT’S NEXT FOR EVERY FAMILY?

To continue building on the effectiveness and impact of FRCs, it is imperative that we continue growing relationships and support. This will take time, dedication and money. We must continue to evaluate results and focus more on what works, and changing what doesn’t.

We will continue to work with key stakeholders to explore opportunities for:

1. Sustainability
2. An improved network
3. Enhanced support and services
4. Robust evaluation to inspire policy makers

The network will continue to explore ways to further enhance specific programs to strengthen families and help them stay together, achieve financial stability and ensure kids start school ready to learn.
Let's change the game.