

# Centennial Neighbourhood Project



The Winnipeg Foundation has undertaken an in-depth, five-year initiative to build a collaborative network aimed at helping one of Winnipeg's most challenged neighbourhoods. The Centennial Neighbourhood is bound by Sherbrook Street to the west, Princess Street to the east, William Avenue to the south and the CPR tracks on the north. It has long been identified by the Foundation as an area in need of support.

The goal of the Centennial Neighbourhood Project is to work with local residents and community organizations to encourage a sufficiently large number of coordinated interventions that will significantly shift Dufferin School in its relative rating amongst inner city schools. What is learned can be transferred to other areas through changes in public policy.

## Vision

The aim of the Centennial Neighbourhood Project is to demonstrate that with appropriate school and community supports, the prospects of students in one of Winnipeg's least advantaged neighbourhoods can be significantly improved.

The Centennial Neighbourhood Project is based on the premise that "education is the ticket out of poverty" and strategy must address the underlying inequities in social and economic conditions. This innovative initiative attempts to address root causes of poverty through a neighbourhood renewal project based in the Centennial Neighbourhood with a focus on Dufferin School.

## Our strategy is to:

- Stabilize the population (relatively speaking) by making attendance at a selected school far more appealing by of enhancing in-school programs and systems for family and neighbourhood support.
- Focus on coordinating, integrating and augmenting existing and/or proven programs (best practices) rather than inventing new ones.
- Support the neighbourhood surrounding the school, in recognition that social and economic conditions impact academic success.
- Engage the widest possible range of partners who bring diverse strengths and contributions to the overall effort.



## Objectives

This project has 4 objectives:

1. To improve the prospects of students living in Centennial Neighbourhood through a family literacy initiative, pre-school or in-school programming and broader community supports.
2. To assist Dufferin School, where appropriate, to develop enhanced programming for its students and families.
3. To support local residents and community service agencies with their efforts to influence the quality of life in Centennial Neighbourhood.
4. To identify the most effective practices that might be extended, through public policy, to other inner city neighbourhoods.

## Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles for the Centennial Neighbourhood Project form the basis for project planning, collaboration, development and implementation:

- Focus on education as a critical element of a poverty reduction strategy - "education is the ticket out of poverty."
- Focus on prevention-orientated poverty reduction strategies, with a particular emphasis on pre-school children and their families.
- Build on existing resources, activities and initiatives to address the root causes of poverty in the local community.
- Support a capacity-building, strength-based development approach that is resident-driven and builds community from the inside out.
- Have an Aboriginal focus and involvement with regard to community participation, planning and service delivery of the project.
- Promote inclusiveness.
- Commit to hiring locally as much as possible through the development of an internship-based human resource development strategy.
- Promote collaboration and partnerships within the community, among local service agencies, service providers and funders within the voluntary, public and private sectors.
- To be an incubator of public policy by developing sustainable funding models for the best practice initiatives that are established by the project and to scale up and extend these initiatives to other inner city neighbourhoods and schools.



## Partners

From the outset, The Winnipeg Foundation believed that a collaborative approach would be needed for the initiative to be successful. The Foundation itself does not have sufficient resources, nor does anyone else, to address the areas of need. It is obvious that success can only be realized by building on community assets that already exist and by

augmenting them through every possible means to create a truly concentrated effort. Partners include the Government of Canada, Province of Manitoba, City of Winnipeg, Winnipeg School Division #1, United Way, private sector, and other foundations.

Each funding or program delivery partner has its own decision-making process.

Collaboration is not always easy. The model we are following in this project should facilitate common aspirations while respecting independent decisions. By working together, the likelihood of delivering a successful result is unquestionably enhanced.

## Project Governance

The governance of the Centennial Neighbourhood Project involves three inter-related components, including a resident participation structure, an inter-agency support structure and a funding partners structure.

A key characteristic of the governance model has been to ensure that the approach is resident-driven. The people living in the neighbourhood have played a key role in identifying the priorities to improve the quality of life in the Centennial neighbourhood.

This governance model

reflects the commitment to build the community from the inside out. It has required initiatives to support the residents to build their capacity in order to engage in the process of community renewal in a way that has been meaningful and not a token approach. The theme of the project governance approach has been to support the development of greater community self reliance and to help communities to help themselves.

The funding partners have agreed to support the guiding principles and

objectives of the project. They have agreed to provide funding to support the priorities identified in the strategic community plan developed by the residents of the Centennial Neighbourhood. As well, the funding partners have agreed to work in collaboration to develop sustainable funding models to extend best practice initiatives that are identified in the project to other inner city neighbourhoods and schools.

### 1. Residents Committee

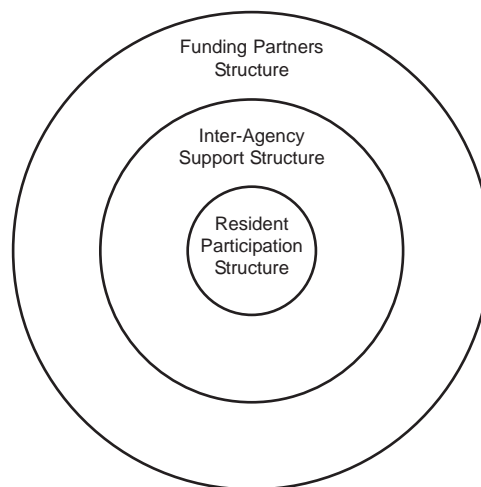
The Residents Committee, called the Centennial Community Improvement Association, consists of people who live within the boundaries of the Centennial Neighbourhood. The organization is governed by a constitution and by-laws developed by local residents. An elected Board of Directors oversees the operation of the organization. A key responsibility of the residents committee has been to develop a community plan for the neighbourhood that identifies priorities and strategies for the renewal of the community. The community plan would be reviewed on an annual basis.

### 2. Inter-Agency Support Committee

The Inter-Agency Support Committee consists of local community service organizations and agencies that provide services within the Centennial Neighbourhood. The purpose of the Inter-Agency Support Committee is to support the implementation of the community plan developed by local residents. The community organizations are also developing a common strategic community agenda that focuses on enhancing the coordination of services that are provided to the Centennial Neighbourhood.

### 3. Funders Coordinating Committee

The Funders Coordinating Committee consists of funding partners from the voluntary, public and private sectors. The Executive Director of the Winnipeg Foundation chairs the committee. The purpose of the Coordinating Committee is to provide a context for focusing effort to support poverty reduction strategies in the Centennial neighbourhood. It acts as a vehicle to promote planning and collaboration for the funding partners. It is not a mechanism for joint decision making. Each funding partner has its own decision making process. This governance model would facilitate common aspirations while respecting independent decisions.



## Conclusion

The Centennial Neighbourhood Project is based on the premise that "education is the ticket out of poverty." This innovative initiative seeks to demonstrate that with appropriate school and community supports, the prospects of students in one of the least advantaged neighbourhoods can be significantly improved. The project will serve to

further develop the local knowledge base about the potential impact of involving community residents and a range of public, private and voluntary sector partners in comprehensive community initiatives to address the root causes of poverty in our city. It is anticipated that the compelling evidence documenting the educational, social, health and

fiscal benefits of the best practice components of the Centennial Neighbourhood Project will form the basis for scaling up and replicating these type of programs in other inner city schools and neighbourhoods.



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Established in 1921



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