



**ELDER  
RUTH  
CHRISTIE**

**39<sup>th</sup> Citizen of the Year**

**Elder Ruth Christie is the 2024 Citizen of the Year, and deservedly so.**

Her lifelong commitment to education and Aboriginal truths is legendary and her nominators, Shirley Muir and Jacqueline Bercier, were thrilled with her selection.

"It seems like Elder Ruth Christie has been a part of my life for years," Muir said.

**Story continues on back page...**

*ABOVE: Elder Ruth Christie with nominators Shirley Muir and Jacquie Bercier*



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**Selkirk+District  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

*HERE FOR GOOD*



**Chair's Message: Our Community is always vital**

*ABOVE: Selkirk & District Community Foundation board members and staff once again 'Treeed it Themselves' as part of Selkirk's winter festival 'Holiday Alley'. The tree was located on the corner of Main Street and Manitoba Avenue.*

# COMMUNITY is Vital

**With 2024 wrapping up I feel that as an organization, we must look back before we can move forward.** Certainly, there are lessons to be learned, new pressures to be cognizant of, but most importantly, we need to recognize all the good our donors and recipients do each and every year. At the Foundation we know the importance of working diligently with one another and how it takes all of us to make our community complete.

Our donors play a vital role in building our community in the places where it needs the most help. Their commitment to a strong and healthy community runs deep and they show up over and over again. Our grant recipients are experts in our community, who repeatedly do the heavy lifting which is vital in making our little piece of the world better for all citizens.

Elder Ruth Christie got a big community-wide hug when we honoured her as the 2024 Citizen of the Year. Ruth's dedication to history and its preservation have kept our community vital for years and will continue to well into the future.

We're also engaging the community in our data collection for Vital Signs 2.0. Our Town Hall in October brought together passionate community members who were enthusiastic in their commitment to our community. We look forward to more collaborations as we move forward.

On behalf of the Selkirk & District Community Foundation Board of Directors, and our staff team, I wish you all a happy holiday season.

*– SDCF Chair David Thorne*



*The Selkirk & District Community Foundation supports and serves on Treaty One Land and the home of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, OjiCree, Dakota, Dene and Metis peoples. We acknowledge that our Indigenous peoples are the stewards and guardians of this land. As a community and workplace that embraces the values of diversity and inclusion, we honour and celebrate our Indigenous nations, their traditional knowledge and their contributions to all our communities. We acknowledge the harms of our shared history on Indigenous people, and that we pursue a path forward that is inclusive and supportive of reconciliation within all our communities.*



## Horse therapy 101

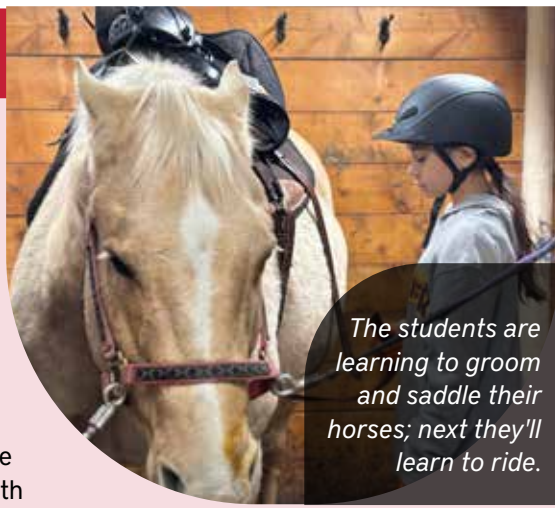
Horses are beautiful and powerful animals and for centuries they've done the hard work that helped humans thrive, from working fields to offering a mode of transportation.

Today, they're helping us learn about ourselves.

A Selkirk & District Community Foundation grant has connected three Ecole Selkirk Junior High students with their new teachers – three therapy horses from Urban Stables.

Urban Stables delivers hands-on programs with horses that teach youth vital social, emotional, and physical skills and support them in transferring this learning to their school, home, and community.

During three five-week sessions spread throughout the school year, the students will learn how to groom their horse, put a saddle on, approach them in the barn and eventually ride.



The students are learning to groom and saddle their horses; next they'll learn to ride.

Kat Marsch, vice principal at ESJH, says none of the girls knew how to ride before the pilot program began, but all were excited, albeit nervous, to giddy up and go.

"It's just their third week and they're really enjoying it, really looking forward to getting on the horses and learning more about them," Marsch said.

"All of their parents have given us incredible feedback that their child is super excited about this and they can

Robert Smith School students are glad the snow arrived and when their snowshoes do, they'll be outside making tracks!

Erin Kennedy, a teacher at Robert Smith, said they started a walking club at the school last year to get kids outside where they can exercise their bodies and their minds. The Friday afternoon walks have been a success and the grant will allow them to purchase about 23 pairs of snowshoes to keep the outdoor experience going year-round.

"I think my favourite part I've witnessed in the kids we work with is they're typically students who may struggle in a school classroom setting and then you take them out in nature and it just makes me cheery-eyed, there's a complete 180 turnaround," Kennedy said.

"It's so cool to see them in a different element that is still so very beneficial

came from the Kirstin's Walk for Kids Fund. Both are donor-advised funds.

# Kind and caring donors

already see a change in them based on their interest and less anxiety about trying new things.

"There's one mom that says she's probably going to have to pursue riding lessons after this is over because her daughter is really interested, and they're excited to see her have that kind of passion towards something new."

Urban Stables runs the program out of Stone Hurst Stables in the Interlake, and though it's subsidized, Marsch said the school wouldn't have been able to attend without the Foundation grant.

"We're grateful to be able to apply to the Selkirk & District Community Foundation because that was really the only way we were going to be able to make this happen," Marsch said.

"We're really grateful that they saw the value in this program."

## are the key to making our community vital!

Thanks to your donations, the SDCF was able to connect 33 organizations with grants from the fall intake totalling **\$201,295**

Some of this year's grants will support students' physical and mental health and provide transitional housing for families in crisis.



Viktoria Westgate with board member Doug Simister inside Nova House's new transitional house.

## Nova House adding more transitional housing

The role Nova House plays in our community is vital to women and children in crisis.

In 2023, Nova House purchased its first home to provide long term transitional housing to clients and in 2024 purchased a second home that is now being renovated.

A Foundation grant to Nova House's transition housing renovation program will help with Phase 1 renovations, which include turning the main floor into a two-bedroom unit. Phase 2 will transform the basement into a one-bedroom unit.

Viktoria Westgate, Executive Director, says families stay in Nova House's emergency shelter only until safe housing can be found, which traditionally is through Manitoba Housing. Wait times can be long and the transitional housing program helps get families settled quicker.

Allison Savoie, Tope Omoniyi and Barbara Pasaur participated in the Vital Signs 2.0 town hall meeting.

There was a strong sense of community on Oct. 5 when 110 people came together at Memorial Hall to take part in the Selkirk & District Community Foundation's Vital Signs 2.0 Town Hall.

Vital Signs is a community check-up that measures the vitality of the community, identifies significant trends and comes up with ideas on how to move that knowledge into action. The original, called Mind the Gap, was released in 2018.

For the new report to be a success, community input is truly vital. SDCF Chair and Vital Signs Committee Co-Chair David Thorne said people who came out to Memorial Hall that Saturday were engaged, enthusiastic and committed to putting in the hard work necessary to complete the report. "The town hall was successful," Thorne said, noting during the original Vital Signs' town hall held in 2016, 70 people came out.

"It was a lot bigger group than last time, so we were quite happy with that. And it was a very diverse group. I think we're on the right path." Co-Chair Brandon Sutherland said the participation level was impressive and the day overall even more so.



## Community is vital to success of Vital Signs 2.0

"It's not I think, it's I know the day was remarkable," Sutherland said.

"It was an extremely diverse group of people from our community and it was really neat to hear the great ideas to connect the people of the Tri S area. My biggest take away was that a lot of the positive ideas, the positive changes that people want to see are going to connect the people of St. Clements, St. Andrews and Selkirk on a much more in-touch point of view."

Data collection for the report is ongoing and the committee is meeting with community groups to listen and learn. The second Vital Signs is expected to be released next year.

## Foundation grants get kids outside in the snow

There will be plenty of tracks in the snow this year made by students from Robert Smith School and Selkirk Friendship Centre Day Care.

Both received Selkirk & District Community Foundation grants to purchase snowshoes. Robert Smith School received the first ever grant from the Michele and Gary Polinuk Promoting Health Fund, and the Friendship Centre Day Care's grant

COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM AND WESTERN CANADA LEGACY PROGRAM  
Spring Intake, deadline: Friday, February 28, 2025



Donate Today!  
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OR

with a cheque addressed to  
Selkirk & District Community Foundation  
200 Eaton Ave., Selkirk, MB R1A 0W6

call us at 1.204.785.9755 or email  
[selkirkfoundation@shaw.ca](mailto:selkirkfoundation@shaw.ca)





Elder Ruth Christie with David Thorne

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... her wisdom and stories have helped us progress on an intentional and positive path in our commitment to reconciliation

"It's been so long I frankly can't remember how I even got introduced to her. It was likely something like this, "You want to understand Indigenous history and culture in this community? You need to talk to Ruth Christie."

Bercier, a teacher in the Lord Selkirk School Division, said Christie has been a mentor to herself and many of her peers.

"She has mentored many teachers, and her wisdom and stories have helped us progress on an intentional and positive path in our commitment to reconciliation," Bercier said.

"Ruth has also been an esteemed Elder for Promoting Aboriginal Student Success (PASS) since its inception in 2000. She has worked with our young people in various workshops, lending her knowledge to the next generation"

SDCF Chair David Thorne said Christie is a most deserving recipient of the Citizen of the Year Award.

"Ruth's infectious laughter, smile and kindness brightens every room she enters," he said.

"Her wisdom and strength make her truly deserving of the 2024 Citizen of the Year Award."

For Christie, she was humbled and 'totally surprised', by the honour.

"It makes me feel good that what I do, this is just what I like doing, but the community seems to think that's very important. I'm learning, I have to accept that some people don't know the

# 2024's Vital Numbers

6 Days of Giving

170 Smart & Caring Donations

\$91,346 Total donated to SDCF

November 2024 – Endow Manitoba Giving Challenge

Being 'Here for Good' Priceless

Heinz and Christa Richter made their annual trip to the Endow Manitoba Giving Challenge to donate to a cause near to their hearts.



## Congratulations to Aaron's No Frills – Business Philanthropist of the Year



Always smart and caring, Aaron and Reed Hoium, of Aaron's No Frills, deservedly were named the Business Philanthropist of the Year at the Selkirk Biz Awards this fall. Aaron, wife Cheryl and family are long-time supporters of SDCF and our communities. Congratulations to all of them!

Indigenous history or their own culture sometimes and it's neat to get to share," Christie said.

"I was so pleased that Jacquie and Shirley did that for me. It really makes me feel like I'm getting a big hug from my community."

## Foundation Facts



\$5.2 million Dollars granted to the community since 1997



75 Funds that strengthen our community



130+ Community organizations funded