



Happy Thought Student Kyrie is excited to be able to swing with her friends.

Community Report says ‘Belonging is Vital’, and it is!

We’ve just saluted Canada on our country’s 159th birthday, and we’re hoping to keep the party going with all the good news stories in the Selkirk & District Community Foundation’s June report, available now online at sdcf.ca.

With a theme of ‘Belonging is Vital’, the report celebrates the 142 projects, including individual scholarships and bursaries, that shared in \$798,267 in SDCF granting in 2025-26.

“The report’s theme of belonging really hit home for the Foundation board members,” says Chair Deborah Vitt.

“So many of the charitable and non-profit organizations the Foundation supports achieve that goal of making people feel like they belong. Our donors give generously and staff and volunteers at the organizations work so hard to make our communities the special places they are. We all belong here, and the Foundation is thrilled to share the stories of a few grant recipients, and the wonderful things they do. We hope you enjoy!”

Youth for Christ (YFC) Selkirk has spent almost 40 years providing a welcoming space for youth and in fall 2024 was dealt a setback when an electrical fire in the kitchen caused significant damage. That, along with foundation issues, necessitated a new building.

In the report, Teresa Galashan, YFC Director, says they wanted to remain in the original location because it’s central and next to beautiful greenspace. The Foundation granted \$10,000 to YFC to help with the rebuild. Fundraising started in January 2025 and to date, they are in the final stretch of reaching their goal.

“We’ve been actively (apply for grants and fundraising) for a year and a few months. It’s gone better than we could have hoped. We’re so thankful,” Galashan said.

“It means a lot to us that our community is standing behind what we’re doing and sees the importance of it and wants to come alongside us.”

For the hundreds, if not more, kids who have gravitated to YFC over the years and found a place where they were accepted and felt like they belonged, the new building will give them more space and an even better experience.

The new building will be 3,200 square feet, 900 square feet larger than the old building. And designing it themselves means it will suit their needs.

“We’re figuring we’ll be able to seat 48 kids in there for lunch and before that was not even close to possible,” Galashan said.

“With being able to plan exactly what we know we need, it’s really wonderful to be able to optimize every square foot of that building.”

The Vital Signs 2025 report says people want more indoor recreation facilities and they want more outdoor recreation as well.

At Happy Thought School a new piece of outdoor play equipment called a We Go Swing will let everyone, regardless of mobility, join in the fun. The Foundation granted \$15,000 towards the swing.

A story in the report tells how the school and its Parent Advisory Council (PAC) have been raising money for the swing with an eye towards access for everyone from everywhere.

Louise Caughell is the Vice Principal at the school, and she says in the past 10 years they’ve had six students who access wheelchairs for mobility.

“That means those six students still live in our community. Even if they’re not at Happy Thought, they move over to East Selkirk Middle School (ESMS) and still use our playground, so that’s K-8,” Caughell said.

“Beyond that, these families live in our community and what we’ve really been talking about lately is that Happy Thought and ESMS are the hub of East Selkirk. They always have been.”

Caughell says there is no accessible playground equipment in East Selkirk and the school’s goal is when replacing, make the new equipment accessible.

The We Go Swing takes accessibility to a new level. Those who use wheelchairs for mobility experience true independence on the swing, as they don’t require assistance to be moved from their chair to the swing.

With We Go, a ramp takes the person and their chair onto the swing and a bar secures them in place. Plus, their friends can be on the swing with them.

“That was the piece that really sold us on the swing, the independence and inclusiveness and our students can be together,” Caughell said.

“It’s an opportunity for those students to play, belong and thrive.”

The We Go Swing will be available to the community at large and beyond. Caughell envisions people from seniors’ homes in Selkirk and other communities coming to use the swing as well. Donations are still being accepted.

Another story details the importance of the Foundation's Vital Signs 2.0 report, which was released in 2025. The data and information contained within the report is invaluable when the Foundation is making granting decisions.

The report not only helps the Foundation with its decision making, it is a useful tool for organizations looking to make decisions based on current and accurate data.

The Selkirk Community Renewal Corporation uses Vital Signs to assist in its funding decisions and Executive Director Ashley Henry says they're following the same data collection process for the Corporation's five-year Neighbourhood Renewal Plan.

Check out 'Belonging is Vital' now online.