

# Re-imagine, Re-set and Celebrate!

*\*Safely, as public health orders permit*

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## Active Aging Week October 4-11, 2021

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*Part of Senior's and Elder's Month*



# Re-imagine, Re-set, Celebrate

Active Aging in Manitoba (AAIM) is once again joining the International Council on Active Aging (ICAA) in promoting Active Aging Week, October 4—October 11, 2021. Active Aging Week will be during Seniors' and Elders' Month held throughout the entire month of October, starting with Seniors' and Elders' Day, which is celebrated annually across Canada on October 1st.

The 2021 theme is, **Re-imagine, Re-set, Celebrate Active Aging Week**, which truly resonates after the challenges Manitobans have faced during the Covid-19 pandemic. We're excited to re-connect and re-engage with people as public health orders allow. The pandemic has made us think about how we can do things differently and creatively. Many Manitobans, particularly older adults, have been lacking social connections, experiencing solitude as their new baseline. Social connection for older adults is critical, playing an essential role in mental, emotional and physical health. Older adults with a strong social network have improved quality of life and overall health. This is why it is so important that we '**Re-imagine, Re-set and Celebrate**' living an active and healthy lifestyle.

We are encouraging every community in Manitoba to take part and celebrate healthy, active aging, safely, as public health orders permit, sharing their experience of being an active living community in Manitoba.

With this theme in mind, we are encouraging people to reflect and reconnect (safely) with activities that may have been put on pause during the last year. Stop and smell the roses, try your hand at gardening, birdwatching or photography, take a walk with friends, try yoga, tai chi or take up a new hobby like crafting or try a new sport. The possibilities are endless and AAIM truly believes you are never too old to try something new!

AAIM is encouraging every community in Manitoba to celebrate healthy, active aging and share their experience of being the best active aging community in Manitoba. A calendar of registered Active Aging Week events will be posted on the AAIM website at [www.activeagingmb.ca](http://www.activeagingmb.ca) starting in September 2021. ***Don't be left out – get involved!***

The guidelines are simple; events should be planned with older adult participants as the focus. Community organizers can take the lead by exploring creative (and safe) ways to invite, introduce and involve older adults in age friendly events and activities. Take this opportunity to encourage older adults to join in on the fun and experience with what your group has to offer!

This Active Aging Resource Package is dedicated to all older Manitobans with our most profound respect and sincere hope for the best life offers.



# Active Aging in Manitoba

**“Active aging:** the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age”

Active aging can vary from individual to individual; however, taking a life-course approach, the common element includes older people continuing to be active throughout their life. Within a re-framed context of aging, “active” refers to older people continuing in social, economic, cultural, spiritual and civic affairs, not just the ability to be physically active or to participate in the labour force.

“Active” also means older people remaining to be active contributors and resources to their families, peers, communities and country throughout their entire lifetime.

## Who we are:

Active Aging in Manitoba (AAIM) is a non-profit organization, dedicated to the promotion of active aging opportunities for all older Manitobans to enhance their health, mobility and continuing participation in their community. AAIM strives for the lifelong engagement of older Manitobans in healthy choices that contribute to physical, social and mental wellness, independence and quality of life. AAIM promotes programs that enable older Manitobans to stay socially connected, participate in regular physical activity, eat healthy foods and reduce risk for falls and injury

## What we do:

Active Aging in Manitoba encourages all older Manitobans to move more and sit less; to continue to connect with and contribute their time, knowledge and skills to their community; and, to strive toward optimal health for life. AAIM promotes and provides programs and services that encourage older Manitoban participation through peer volunteer leadership development, awareness and education on healthy active aging topics, and management of the annual Manitoba 55 Plus Games sport for life program.

*Toward optimal health for life.*



### For more information contact us:

**Phone:** 204-632-3947 or **toll free:** 1-866-202-6663

**Email:** [info@activeagingmb.ca](mailto:info@activeagingmb.ca)

**Website:** [www.activeagingmb.ca](http://www.activeagingmb.ca)



# How to Plan an Event

Organizers and groups can plan ahead for their special take on Active Aging Week to showcase the opportunities in their community for older adult participation and to celebrate growing older.

Community events can be so much fun and a great way to bring people together to reconnect, whether your event is to be held virtually or in person. Also, believe it or not, planning a successful community event can be fun if you take it a step at a time. Here are a few helpful tips to consider:

## Establish the Basics

Consider your goal and the type of event you want to (are able to safely) hold, then:

- Give your event a name.
- Decide on a date(s) and time(s) to hold it.
- Estimate the expected number of guests.
- Project your costs so you can create a budget
- Come up with a communication strategy using your community newsletter and website, emails, flyers, signage, social media and good fashioned word of mouth.

Once you've nailed down the basics be sure to contact the AAIM office, informing them of your event.

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## Enlist help

You can't do it all yourself, so put out the call for volunteers as early as possible. Ideally, you can create a pool of volunteers by continuously recruiting. Use their time productively by assigning specific tasks to each person or group of people.

## Make a list of everything you will need

Make a list of your set-up needs, whether your event is virtual, or in person. This is the best way to find if there is anything you have overlooked.

## Do as much as you can beforehand

You can relieve a lot of pressure by taking care of some of your tasks several days or even a week ahead. There will already be enough to do for your final prep, so don't wait until the day of the event to take care of everything.

## When it's finally here, make sure to have fun!

You've worked hard for this very moment, so enjoy it. All too often, the event planner is the one who has the hardest time enjoying it. Mingle with your neighbors, and take pride in what you've created.

## Follow up with a survey

Yes, the hard part is over, but you aren't quite done yet. You can learn a lot about what everyone liked best and what you might want to do differently next time by sending out surveys to attendees and vendors.

***Planning a community event can be a bit of work, but that doesn't mean it can't be an enjoyable experience. By managing it in small bites and sharing the load, you'll not only make it a fun and memorable event for your attendees, but for you as well.***



# Promoting your Event

Whether you are a motivated individual or part of a group or organization looking to inspire older adults to get active, special events and activities are a great way to inspire older adults to get connected with their peers and stay involved within their local communities. The event or activity doesn't have to be huge or complicated either. It could be something as simple as offering a craft workshop at a local community hall, arranging a community card tournament, facilitating age friendly cooking classes, technology sessions at the local library, organizing walking or birdwatching outings - the possibilities are endless!

However you decide to organize your event, promotion is a key factor in the overall success, no matter how large or small the event or activity may be.

The main purpose that promotion serves is to attract participants, spectators or both to the event. However, promotion is also important to the organization for reasons other than attracting a crowd on the day. A well promoted event increases public awareness of the organization. Besides the main goal of engaging older adults, this is one of main reasons special events are important. It really is a win-win situation.

Before you start promoting your event, it's important to make sure you are organized, be sure you know what your goals are and that you know who you are targeting in your promotion efforts. Older adults might be a bit more of a challenge to reach, if for example, they don't have do not have access to a computer or the internet. However, there are many ways to reach them. Here are some other fun and friendly promotional tips if you are planning an event or activity for your organization:

## There are many ways to get people interested!

- Local newspaper ads or radio announcements
- Local community newsletters, TV channel or local news networks
- Website promotion, through your own organization and/or local business sites
- Create and share a Youtube video or share a video on Facebook
- Create a Facebook page for your event for free
- Create or utilize a Twitter, Instagram or Youtube account
- Engage people on social media by asking them to vote on an event aspect
- Personal invitation, whether it be digital or sent in the mail
- The good old fashioned way - word of mouth around your community
- Circulate a promotional poster - digitally as well as utilizing community bulletin boards



# What does it Mean to be Age Friendly?

'Age-friendly' is the idea of making structures and services more accessible and inclusive for seniors with varying needs and capacities.

This means looking at how we build infrastructure, the way we get around, and even the way we shop for goods and services. Age-friendly communities promote healthy and active aging. People in age-friendly communities are supported in maintaining their independence and have access to the community supports and services they need.

An age-friendly world enables people of all ages to actively participate in community activities and treats everyone with respect, regardless of their age. It is a place that makes it easy for older people to stay connected to people that are important to them. And it helps people stay healthy and active and provides appropriate support to those who can no longer look after themselves.

## Key features of an age-friendly community:

- well-situated public benches
- clean, secure, and accessible public toilets
- maintained and well-lit sidewalks
- fully accessible public buildings
- housing in the community that accommodates changing needs and abilities as people grow older
- friendly, personalized service and information instead of automated answering services
- public and commercial services and stores in neighbourhoods close to where people live



# Lifelong Engagement

More than combating the negative effects of isolation, an active social life allows older adults to experience an array of benefits that help to enhance their overall well-being. Some of the main benefits include:

## Enhanced Mental Health

Isolation is one of the leading causes of depression in older adults. Loneliness can easily turn to feelings of worthlessness and despair. On the other hand, socializing can help older adults feel loved and needed as their lives are affirmed by the activities they do and by those with whom they interact. Being around other people, especially if you're doing something fun or rewarding, helps us keep a positive outlook on life.

## Sense of Belonging

Enjoying the company of others who have similar personalities or interests helps us feel like we belong somewhere. For those who may have lost a spouse, family member or friend, the need to belong may be more intense. Engaging with others can cultivate new friendships and can create lasting bonds.

## Better Self-Esteem

Self-esteem can plummet for those who have trouble doing as much as they used to or are alone too often. The more people socialize or participate in activities with others, the more they benefit by feeling like they contribute to their community. Any kind of positive interaction with friends, family or neighbors can help us feel confident in ourselves and our abilities.

## Improved Physical Health

When we have good conversations or do things we love with others, our bodies release health-promoting chemicals that boost the immune system and make us feel physically well. Also, socializing promotes an active lifestyle and better nutritional intake. Older adults who are isolated are more likely to skip meals, whereas those who are socially active often share meals with friends and family.



## Increased Cognitive Functioning

Socializing is also key to keeping the brain sharp as we age. Having an active social life encourages us to continue learning, observing and responding to the world around us. Conversation and activity are great for exercising the mind and can potentially lower the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

## Purposeful Living

Having somewhere to go, something meaningful to do or people to see helps us get excited for the day. When we build strong relationships with others, we gain a sense of fulfillment, and spending quality time with those we love reminds us that life is worthwhile.

