



## PORTAGE LEARNING & LITERACY CENTRE

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### Chairperson's Report for 2023 Annual General Meeting

***The Portage Learning and Literacy Centre (PLLC) is a not-for-profit, charitable organization providing individuals of the Central Plains region with opportunities to realize their education, employment, and immigration goals through a positive and supportive environment.***

The PLLC started at our current location as “Portage Plains Employment Programs Inc.” in 1991. Through collective efforts of many agencies, we officially became the Portage Learning Centre in 1995, and as a certified Adult Learning Centre, we offered Mature Grade 12 and programs for Adult Literacy, with on-site day care, TLC Day Care (which is a satellite of Portage Day Care). These founding programs – education, employment and the daycare – continue to this day.

We have been offering Employment Assistance Services for over 30 years. This program has been very busy this past year serving anyone needing help with finding employment. Our Portage Work Experience Program for youth (ages 15-30) started in Fall 2016, serving ten youth with one coordinator. We now have two full-time coordinators, one assistant, and serve 40-50 youth per year through paid skills training and work experience with local employers. We sincerely appreciate all the businesses and organizations in Portage area who have taken on so many young people for work experience and often hiring the participants. This program is changing lives and we could not succeed without the support and engagement of the participating businesses in our community.

Our Settlement Program, including ESL/language training has been extremely busy this past year. The PLLC started offering ESL classes over 20 years ago, mostly through volunteers, and our Settlement Program started in 2007. This immigrant services program has grown significantly over the past 16 years, from just two full-time staff to nine full-time staff and at least 10 part-time staff. With our increases in staff and programming, and the recent influx in arrivals from Ukraine and other countries, PLLC is now serving over 1300 newcomer clients per year, which is a 75% increase from last year. We also served a record number of 778 new arrivals to Canada. Today, May 17, 2023, Portage Online highlighted the increased funding to PLLC and it is very exciting and needed.

In April 2022, the PLLC was pleased to be able to nominate a past PLLC Board and executive member, Al Braun, to receive the Lieutenant Governor's Community Leadership Award that recognizes individuals from across Manitoba for their exceptional contributions to the community through leadership in volunteer service. Three awards are presented, one in each of the following categories: Rural/Northern, Urban, and Youth. Al was awarded the Rural/Northern award at the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Volunteer Awards. Al and his work with the PLLC was featured on a recorded broadcast on CTV and Volunteer Manitoba's website.

The Board appreciated the support from the Community Foundation of Portage and District to be able to create a new bursary fund for PLLC students/participants/clients to be able to pursue post-secondary education. The fund was created to honour long-standing Board and staff members of the PLLC, but we continue to fundraise to ensure we reach the required funds (\$5,000) to distribute the bursaries in the coming years.

Through our dedicated staff and volunteers, and our various partnerships in the community, we have continued to provide high quality programs and services helping even more individuals achieve their goals. This past year saw significant increases in clients accessing our programs, with our total clients served reaching over 2300 individuals. It is also encouraging that PLLC has been rebuilding the volunteer program which had decreased significantly during COVID-19. The PLLC Board of Directors want to thank all the staff for the outstanding and dedicated services provided to our clients. We are also grateful for the ongoing support provided by our funders and partners. I want to recognise and thank Cathy Dowd, Executive Director of PLLC who is excellent at identifying needs in the community and building a response. Our community and PLLC have benefitted from her work.

We look forward to many continued successes for our organization in the months and years to come.

Yvette Souque  
Board Chair

## PLLC Strategic Plan (2022-2025) Update

In early 2022, the Board hired a strategic planning consultant to take us through the process to develop a new Strategic Plan for the PLLC over the next three years. From this process, we identified key priorities:

1. Advocacy – Board, ED increase advocacy on behalf of PLLC; connected to areas below
2. Sponsorships and Funding – to maintain and expand programs and services to fill needs
3. Partnerships and Collaborations – identify more ways to come together in Portage
4. Communication – internal, but mostly external (more promotions, awareness)

Connected to the four areas above, we also identified these key areas for the PLLC:

- a. Space – we need more room for current programs and to expand our services
- b. Transportation – we need better options for clients and students to access our programs
- c. Mental health support – counselling and other services for students/clients/staff
- d. Consider name change to reflect all we do (education, employment, immigrant services)

This past year saw significant movement on these priorities.

**Advocacy:** The Board and Executive has done a lot of work advocating on behalf of PLLC through letters to government officials and to the newspapers. PLLC leadership also met with current City of Portage la Prairie Mayor, Deputy Minister and Assistant Deputy Minister for MB Education, the Assistant Deputy Minister for IRCC, and MB Minister for Immigration over the past year. We provided presentations about the PLLC in the community, including to the Portage Rotary Club, and hosted a Chamber of Commerce “Business After Hours” event at the PLLC in January. Throughout the year we also advocated for our clients to help with their needs, including in areas of transportation, housing, mental health, either to get the support they needed or to convince elected officials, funders, etc. to provide the services and support needed in our community.

**Sponsorships and Funding:** We have been able to maintain and expand our programs and services, including more funding for additional staff and programming for Immigrant Services, more funding to serve more youth (and now persons with disabilities of any age) to gain skills and work experience, new funding to provide ID services and passport photos, new funding and partnerships to help with food security for our clients, and more grants for additional activities, namely for newcomer youth. Related to additional funding to expand programs was the need for additional space. PLLC is excited to be able to work with Paramount to renovate the building next door for us to expand our employment programs into that space in the coming months.

**Partnerships:** PLLC has had an extremely busy year for our staff, but we wouldn't be able to do all that we do without the amazing partnerships and collaborations we continued to see over this past year. This includes working with all other community organizations as much as possible, adding another SWIS worker to help strengthen our partnership with the school division, and continuing to build on our partnership with MITT to offer the education programs at our centre. We know there is still more work to do, but we will continue to look for ways to strengthen our connections to benefit our community.

**Communication:** PLLC staff have done a lot of work to improve communications over the past year, including hiring someone to focus more on marketing and promotions of PLLC programs and services, creating new brochures, info sheets and posters, as well as actively posting on social media. We continue to use live chat through our website and monitor the live chat for the Immigrate Portage website created by the Portage Local Immigration Partnership. We undertook many brainstorming sessions and evaluations to potentially change our organization's name, but in the end, based on suggestions mostly from newcomers, we decided to just revamp our logo to include the three main program areas – Education, Employment, and Immigrant Services.

### **PLLC's Ongoing Actions for Reconciliation**

- Over the past few years, PLLC has been working on a variety of initiatives to ensure that we are doing more than just talking reconciliation, we are learning to practice reconciliation in our everyday activities and we remain committed to the ongoing work of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships. We created an official Land Acknowledgment for the PLLC, which is included in all email communications, in our newsletter and website, and at the start of many PLLC events.
- We prominently post the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action at our front reception area, displaying a poster for Every Child Matters Campaign in our front window, and participating in important campaigns such as Red Dress Day, Orange Shirt Day and activities in the community in partnership with the Portage Friendship Centre for National Indigenous Peoples Day.
- Outside of our settlement program, over 60 % of our students/clients are Indigenous. Our centre, especially our education and ESL classrooms, have incorporated more Indigenous content in lessons and give plenty of opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous, as well as ESL students to learn about Indigenous histories in Canada, discuss learning the materials, issues, and learn more about each others' perspectives.

- We have also been organizing many different activities, events and workshops to provide information and awareness to newcomers to Canada, including tours of the National Indigenous Residential Schools Museum, presentations about Land and Treaties, Orange Shirt Day, Indigenous Diversity, and experiential learning through participating in important Indigenous ceremonies. Staff also attended training using the Kairos Blanket Exercise, as well as through the First Nations University of Canada, University of Alberta, and Manitoba Teacher's Society.

## **Program Activity Highlights (April 2022 through March 2023)**

### **Newcomer Settlement Services**

The PLLC is funded by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the Province of Manitoba to offer a number of settlement services for newcomers to Canada, including Needs Assessment and Referrals, Information and Orientation, Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS), Employment Related Services, Community Connections, and Language Training (formal and informal). We also offer support services such as transportation, childminding, translation and interpretation, and we can provide Notary Services and Commissioner of Oaths.

### **Language Training**

With the influx of Ukrainians, many with low level English, we were able to get additional funding to offer an ESL Literacy/Stage 1 class (two 3-hour classes) over the summer, with 22 students who regularly attended. In the Fall, we were again approved funding to hire a third ESL instructor to be able to split the Stage 1 class into two classes – CLB 1-2 and CLB 3-4. Our class sizes have been at capacity (with a total of 55 students in three classes) for most of the year with more and more students registering and joining a wait list. Due to the class sizes, starting in September we had to change instruction days to Mondays and Wednesdays when classrooms were available at the PLLC. Thanks to donations from the community (through PCRC) for Ukrainians, we were also able to hire a Ukrainian teacher to offer an additional ESL class for Ukrainian learners. This has also been a well attended class, which takes place on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

### **Community Connections**

We were able to provide various community connection activities in-person as well as webinars and workshops. The activities included Conversation Circles, with regular sessions three times per week, and women's group sessions. In total we offered 189 sessions, which exceeded our target of 100. For our group-based information sessions, we offered 53 workshops/webinars on key settlement topics and services for all newcomer clients. These sessions included topics

about winter driving, healthy relationships, employment rights, taxes, benefits, housing, Orange Shirt Day, Treaties, water safety, policing in Canada, and many more. We also organized over 50 community integration events, many in partnership with community organizations, in addition to 7 larger events throughout the year. With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, we were happy to be back in person for our annual events of I Heart Heritage Festival, Winter Holiday Celebration, Jack-O-Lantern carving, Parade of Lights - pre-parade party, Peace by Chocolate showing at the theatre, Ukrainian Christmas, and a Trick-or-Treating event at the Portage Regional Library and Family Resource Centre. We went on 14 field trips to places such as Baker Hutterite Community, Nichol Honey Bee Farm, National Indigenous Residential School Museum Tour, Bombers Game, and more. Earlier this year, we formed a seniors group that meets once a week to visit, drink coffee and go for tours or walks. In partnership with other organizations, our I Love to Skate, Cricket, and Swimming programs offered unique opportunities for youth to learn new skills while being active. This year, in an effort to help build trust between police and newcomer youth we organized a sports day with the youth and local RCMP members. We felt this was important considering some negative experiences newcomer youth and/or their parents have faced with police prior to coming to Canada.

### **Settlement Worker in Schools**

Our Settlement Worker in Schools (SWIS) workers support newcomer students in eight schools of the Portage la Prairie School Division: Fort la Reine School, Ecole Crescentview School, Ecole Arthur Meighen School, Yellowquill School, Portage Collegiate Institute, North Memorial, La Verendrye, and Oakville. With the easing of public health regulations, we were able to offer a greater variety of activities and support for newcomer students and their families. This included school registrations, a lunch program, high school leadership training, informational webinars, mentorship, and coordinating youth to create presentations to promote cultural sharing, anti-bullying and anti-racism. Also, we were able to help a number of high school students develop their own resumes and practice interviews, which resulted in them securing part-time and summer jobs. In total, we supported over 200 newcomer youth and their families this past year.

One of our proudest achievement this past year was our newcomer youth film production. Our SWIS staff and Settlement Coordinator, in coordination with a professional photographer/videographer, worked with a group of youth to train and develop films that would show the youths' perspective of immigrating and settling in Canada. In February, we were able to show the film, "Envision Diversity: Migration Stories from a Youth Perspective", to the public at Prairie City Cinema and a second showing at PLLC in March. We had over 150 people view the film, plus many more have viewed the film now that it is on PLLC's YouTube Channel.

Another one of the many highlights from this past year was our SWIS staff nominating one of the peer leaders to attend a conference on anti-racism in Toronto over spring break, and she was selected and all costs for covered for her to attend. From that she was able to create a presentation and share this valuable information with other students, including for the Grade 7 and Grade 8 classes at Yellowquill school, to help bring awareness and show how everyone plays a part in ending racism.

### **Summer Youth Engagement Program**

In its 6<sup>th</sup> year, the Summer Youth Engagement Program was again successful with a total of 68 registered newcomer youth, ranging in age from 6 to 15 years. The younger group (ages 6-9) attended programming 12pm to 4pm, Tuesday to Friday, throughout July, with a designated theme each week. Throughout August, the ages 10+ group (36 participants) attended sessions similar to how the earlier group ran, but with activities geared toward older youth. Some of the highlights for the program included matinees in the movie theatre, swimming at the aquatic centre and Splash Island, bowling competitions at the Central Plains RecPlex in Southport, Go-Kart racing at Thunder Rapids in Headingley, and scavenger hunts and bannock making during visits to the Fort la Reine Museum. Throughout the summer, the program was facilitated by 9 staff who did an amazing job providing activities that engaged participants and provided them with new friendships and a sense of belonging.

### **Newcomer Clients Served**

As noted earlier, IRCC provides funding for our Settlement Program to support newcomers who are Permanent Residents (PRs), and over past few years, the Manitoba government has provided funding for an additional full-time Settlement Worker to support newcomers who are not Permanent Residents. From April 2022 through March 2023, we had over 6700 appointments and welcomed 778 new clients in to the program, which included 402 Permanent Residents and 376 Manitoba eligible clients (e.g. temporary residents holding a valid work permit or post-secondary study permit; refugee claimants; Canadian citizens who present as newcomers; spouses and dependents of newcomers). The total number of unique clients served (new and returning clients) from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023 was 1318, including 781 PRs and 537 MB eligible clients. Since the start of the war in Ukraine, our office has welcomed 124 Ukrainian arrivals and assisted them in finding employment, housing, household furnishings, food security, language supports, access to benefits and paperwork in relation to immigration and settlement.

## **Employment Assistance Services**

This program is funded by Manitoba Workforce Training and Employment. We annually apply for funding for this program, which has been in place at the PLLC in various capacities since 1991. This past year has seen some incredible increases in client intakes and services provided. The Employment Consultant was able to provide quality information to clients in all employment-related topics while also completing courses in Work Life Strategist and Career Coaching. Within the past year we were able to help over 375 clients with finding employment or furthering their career, with 205 individuals reporting they found employment within 90 days of service. This means within one year we saw an increase of 103% served and 181% reported employed. We have also offered several different workshops throughout the year. In total, 33 workshops were offered, including topics on: Outstanding Interviews; Resume Development; Conducting an Effective Job Search; How to Write a Cover Letter; Career Development, and more. Workshops were held at the PLLC with a few offered through ZOOM. We also provided workshops and one-on-one support for internal programs such as Portage Work Experience Program, Mature 12 and Adult Literacy program. We also provided workshops for the Indigenous Adult Health Internship Program (IAHIP) in Portage and Winkler.

## **Portage Work Experience Program**

The Portage Work Experience Program is funded by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and their YESS – Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS). This program supports youth (ages 15 to 30) to access training and work experience to assist in overcoming barriers to employment and to develop a broad range of skills that will help them participate in the current and future labour market.

Our original agreement was for three years ending May 5, 2023, and another project (through 2020 Fall Economic Statement – FES) was added for September 7, 2021 to the end of March 2023. Our FES and YESS projects include Employment Assistance and Employment Skills Training (2 or 4 weeks) and Quality Employment Opportunity (12 or 14 weeks), serving a total of 132 participants.

In late 2022, we received an extension in our YESS agreement to now end on March 29, 2024. This amended agreement will add more funds to serve 28 additional participants, with 4 weeks of skills training and ten weeks of work experience. This brings the new total for participants served by YESS to 113 youth, plus the 47 youth served through FES, which means we will have served 160 youth by end of the entire project in 2024.



From the start of the project to the end of March 2023, we have served a total of 138 youth (91 from YESS and 47 from FES funding). For 2022-23, 51 youth were served (41 YESS, 10 FES). Of those served, 25 are employed with 17 in active work placements (82% success rate) and 5 returned to school. 71% are Indigenous youth; 24% are persons with disabilities and over half struggle with mental health. This past year, McMunn and Yates was the most active employer with 7 youth participants, and of these, 4 were hired on permanently with 2 finding employment elsewhere and 1 returned to school, which is a 100% success rate. Sobeys employed 3 with all 3 continuing there after their placement, which is also 100% success rate.

**Employers Participating in PWEF (May 2020 – April 2023):**

ACL-Portage la Prairie; Ag World; Armwood Windows and Doors; Avena Foods; Boston Pizza; Chicken Chef; Circle Square Ranch; CMHA Central; Douglas Campbell Lodge; Dufferin Villa; Family Resource Centre; Fehr Automotive; genAG Portage la Prairie; Hi-Tec Industries; Homestead Co-op; Hope Arising (Countess Place); LA Quality; Laws Automotive; Lions Prairie Manor; Long Plain First Nation Band Office; McMunn and Yates Building Supplies; Midtown Motor Inn; Panko's Food Centre; Portage & District Recycling; Portage Bear Clan; Portage Daycare; Portage Friendship Centre; Portage Golf Club; Portage la Prairie Community Revitalization Corporation; Portage Learning and Literacy Centre; Portage MCC Thrift Store; Portage Regional Library; Prairie Fusion Art Centre; RHCS I.T. Services, ROK Central; Salvation Army; Shoppers Drug Mart; Simplot Foods; Sirius Protection Services; Sobeys; Southern Health-Santé Sud; Styled by Meraki; Tornados Restaurant; United Way Central Plains; Visions of Independence; Watson's Roofing; West End Daycare; Youth for Christ.

**Central Manitoba Adult Literacy Program**

The Adult Literacy program, funded by the Province of Manitoba, Adult Learning and Literacy branch, is a self-paced program that assists individuals to improve their numeracy, writing/reading and computer skills. Each topic is divided into three different stages.

During 2021-22, Literacy had a total of 100 students participate in the program. Of those students, 46 were Literacy students, 31 were Numeracy students and 23 were both. The Literacy program once again ran over the summer months. The average attendance was 15 students.

Professional development for Literacy focused on working with EAL learners. The Literacy Coordinator completed a course specifically designed for Literacy Instructors working with EAL learners. The Coordinator, one Instructor and the Lead Teacher completed training in how to prepare students to take an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam, a

widely used English language competency test. Literacy Instructors also completed their Manitoba Adult Literacy Learner Assessment (MALLA) and Stages training.

The Literacy program hosted many workshops on post-secondary education opportunities, employment, nutrition, and health as well as Money Management Training. They also held an End of Year Celebration in June for students, which included pizza and board games.

## **Portage Adult Learning Centre Program**

This program is a structured classroom credit program for individuals who would like to obtain their Mature Grade 12 Diploma or require specific courses to apply to a post-secondary institution. During the 2021-22 year, the Portage Adult Learning Centre provided instruction to 76 students resulting in 93 credits and 11 graduates. The program's partnership with the Women's Correctional Centre in Headingley came to an end in March 2023.

We were honoured by a visit from the Deputy and Assistant Deputy Minister of Advanced Education at the end of January. The Acting President, Director of Pathways Programs, and Education Director from MITT joined us for the discussion and tour. We received very positive feedback from both the Deputy and Assistant Deputy Minister and they were very impressed with our HUB model (Mature Student Diploma, Literacy, and Daycare programs in one building) as well as our wrap around services and the "synergy" of our programming. This event provided an opportunity to discuss funding and possible additional partnerships with MITT.

The PLLC Graduation Ceremonies were held at Stride Centre. It was good to be able to honour our grads in a group, and in-person after two years of having individual ceremonies. Plans for education programming next year include improving the access and quality of evening classes and expanding our Mathematics programming.

## **TLC Daycare**

TLC Daycare provides fully subsidized daycare to children of students enrolled in both the Adult Literacy and Adult Learning Centre programs. Portage Daycare operates this program. Children ages 12 weeks to 6 years old are eligible to attend. In addition to the Daycare Supervisor (ECE II), there is one full-time Child Care Assistant that works in this program. The number of spots varies depending on the age of the children attending the program. The support offered through this program is invaluable to student success. It not only allows parents to have their children cared for onsite while they complete their studies, but also provides parents with resources to help them navigate the parenting process.

In September 2022, Priscilla Waldner took over the role of TLC Daycare Supervisor. In the Fall, the daycare took over running the evening daycare for newcomer parents attending ESL classes. The daycare is also now accepting community children along with the children of students and clients. The daycare is consistently full and has made a recovery from the last two years when the COVID-19 pandemic impacted its numbers.

## **Money Management Training Program**

Through a partnership with SEED Winnipeg, the PLLC has five trained facilitators on staff to offer a variety of Manage Your Money workshops to anyone in the Central Plains region. The different topics include: Community Economic Development; Building Assets; Setting Goals and Solving Problems; Money Choices; Gathering Information; Budgeting; Basics of Banking; Introduction to Credit; Managing Credit and Debt; and Savings and Investments.

Throughout 2022, we offered 27 workshops, mostly in-person and a few online over Zoom. We had a total of 125 participants for all the sessions, which included 77 unique clients, with 69% identifying as Indigenous, and 17% identified as a newcomer to Canada. Each year, we are able to receive up to \$5,000 from SEED Winnipeg through this partnership.

On September 14, 2022, the PLLC was presented with a “Community Building Award” from SEED Winnipeg at their Annual Report to the Community (their AGM) located at their office in Winnipeg. It was a huge honour to be presented this award for our work expanding our services and offering many successful programs over the years, including Manage Your Money workshops in our region for the past 13 years (since 2009).

## **Volunteer Program**

The PLLC is grateful for the annual funding from United Way Central Plains, which has been vital to our Volunteer Program. With these funds, we have been able to cover costs for a Volunteer Coordinator for one day a week to help recruit, manage, and appreciate our volunteers.

Our Volunteer Program remains essential to our programming, and despite the many challenges with retention during the pandemic, we continue to rebuild our volunteer lists and we currently have 48 active volunteers. We were happy to finally be able to organize an in-person Volunteer Appreciation Event on November 28 at Om Indian Cuisine. This was a successful event with over 20 volunteers attending, along with prizes, games and delicious food.

We rely on our committed volunteers to help meet the diverse needs of newcomers in our community, including mentorship, ESL classroom and event assistance, tutoring, and more. Over the past year volunteers were crucial in helping newcomers feel connected to the community through online and in-person activities, such as conversation circles, special events such as the I Heart Heritage Festival and Winter Holiday Celebration, and the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program.

## **Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP)**

Every year PLLC participates in the CVITP through Canada Revenue Agency. Our tax clinic and services run for the months of March and April. We usually have 5-6 volunteers trained to help provide free tax filing services to individuals and families with modest income. New this year, the federal government is providing grants to organizations who participate in this program, which includes a \$500 grant, plus \$250 for serving Indigenous communities, plus \$5 per return filed. In 2022, we filed 185 tax returns and in 2023, we filed over 200 returns.

## **Identification Services**

This past year, through some funding shared by the Family Resource Centre, we have been able to provide a new service at the PLLC. This program provides assistance to individuals applying to receive original government issued IDs for those in need. We have also started offering official passport photos and residency photos for just \$10 per person.

## **Major Partnerships:**

### ***Manitoba Institute of Trade and Technology (MITT)***

MITT oversees and operates six Adult Learning Centres (ALCs) in Manitoba. Through this partnership, MITT is the direct operator of the education programs, but these programs continue to be a part of PLLC's core programming and we are able to provide graduates with a Mature Student High School Diploma certified by MITT.

### ***Portage la Prairie School Division***

This partnership to offer the Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program within the Portage la Prairie School Division started in 2018. Currently, we have two SWIS Workers who provide settlement services to over 200 newcomer students and their families. They work closely with an EAL Consultant with the Portage la Prairie School Division, and this past year, they helped register 71 new students, arriving from countries such as Ukraine, Philippines, Nicaragua, India, France, Nigeria, and Bangladesh.

### ***Community Partnerships to Support Ukrainian Newcomers***

One aspect of the PLLC that is essential to our work is collaboration with other local organizations. Organizations with different services have come together to support the integration of newcomers, especially for the newly arriving Ukrainians. It is rewarding to see how everyone works together for this common purpose. We have established great relationships with businesses and organizations such as Hi-Tec Industries, McDonald's Restaurant, Paramount Investment Corporation, Portage Evangelical Church, Salvation Army, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Thrift Store, First Baptist Church, Prairie Alliance Church, and many essential community volunteers in order to address newcomer needs such as housing, food, employment, transportation, and household needs. This collaborative work has allowed the Ukrainian arrivals to feel supported as they adjust to living in Portage la Prairie.

### **Additional Funding Grants:**

#### ***Community Foundation of Portage and District Inc.***

We applied for a grant in March 2022 to help us organize and create the new "Envision Diversity: Newcomer Youth Film Workshop and Festival". We were happy to receive \$5,000 toward this project, which also received \$5,000 from Telus Friendly Future Foundation.

#### ***Canada Summer Jobs and MB Green Team***

In 2022, we were pleased to receive funding for eight summer student staff, four from Canada Summer Jobs and four from MB Green Team. This funding goes a long way to help run our Summer Youth Engagement Program and to give local youth valuable work experience, often as their first job, and many of the hired staff are past participants in the program.

#### ***Second Harvest Food Rescue***

Second Harvest is Canada's largest food rescue charity with a dual mission of environmental protection and hunger relief. Along with redistributing nutritious, unsold food to charities and non-profits, they also offer food security funding. In recent years, we have received emergency food grants through this agency, and this past year we were approved to be an organization that can rescue food on the Second Harvest Food Rescue App. We receive notifications by text and e-mail when donations are posted in our pick-up area, which is within 100km from Portage. This past year, we made 9 rescues from 5 different businesses/restaurants, which equates to 378 meals rescued and valued at \$814 in food that we distributed to our students and clients.

#### ***Manitoba Government Food Security Fund***

We applied for funding to implement a Food Security Initiative for all students and clients of the PLLC. Unfortunately, we weren't successful, but PCRC got approved for funding to distribute

funds to local organizations who need it for their food security initiatives. We requested funds to be able to offer our healthy snack program for registered students (education and ESL) and they kindly provided us with \$2,500 in early January 2023.

### ***Arts, Culture and Sport in Community Fund***

In December 2022, we applied for a Community Celebrations Grant of \$5,000 to go toward running our 5th annual “I Heart Heritage & Culture Festival”, and we were happy to receive notification that we were awarded the full grant of \$5,000. Together with the Fort la Reine Museum, we decided to host the event indoors at the Glesby Centre this year; however, with the summer being so busy with other events, we are moving the event to November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

### ***Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities Program***

In February 2023, we were notified that our application submitted to the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities was approved for a three-year project for \$600,000, to support persons with disabilities to prepare for, find and keep good jobs or become self-employed through skills training and work experience, as well as enhanced employment assistance services and enhanced employer support. This program will be called Portage Accessible Careers and Employment (PACE), and will work closely with PWEF. The project is expected to start in May 2023.

### ***JumpStart Community Development Grant***

We applied for a grant to run an I Love to Skate Program in partnership with ROK Central (now under Family Resource Centre). In September 2022, we were approved for \$9,000 to run this program. This program provided skates, helmet, and skating instruction for children with their families who are from a low income household and/or who are recently newcomers to Canada. We started the sessions outdoors on Crescent Lake and moved into Stride Place for the last several weeks. We were grateful to have members of Portage Terriers and Portage Figure Skating Club join our group during those last few weeks. We also partnered with the Portage la Prairie Community Revitalization Corporation and the Family Resource Centre for a Learn How to Play Cricket program that ran last Fall through another JumpStart grant.

### ***ParticipACTION Community Challenge***

In January 2023, we applied and recently received notice that our request to run a swimming instruction program for newcomer youth was approved. This grant is for \$5,000 and we will offer at least two hours of instruction and pool time per week for six weeks in May and June. Transportation and healthy snacks are also included in the program to reduce barriers.