



November 2007



# Interlake Communities In Action.....



## Community Gardening

Most of us can gain important health benefits from eating more fruits and vegetables every day. Community gardening is a great way to increase the accessibility of fresh vegetables. It also has valuable spin-offs as these Interlake communities have already noticed.

### •Lake Manitoba First Nation

Lake Manitoba First Nation Health Centre provided leadership in developing a community garden in their community this past spring. With support from Chief, Council and Community Elders they prepared a site and planted a garden in front of the Health Centre. It has been a positive experience and the community is hoping to build on this next year. The community celebrated the garden successes with a feast featuring the vegetables grown in their garden.

### •Little Saskatchewan First Nation

The Little Saskatchewan Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative project is getting their garden growing and noting the benefits of not only the vegetables but also the social interaction. A lot of age groups are involved. Students in Little Saskatchewan started some seeds for early planting. Elders taught expectant parents how to conserve vegetables from the garden.

### •Selkirk

The Selkirk Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative community garden is getting off the ground with Rene Gauthier's help. St. Margaret's Church has offered the community garden group a piece of property and is assisting in preparing the ground for next spring. The group is starting out with a garden plot that is 100'X60' in size. All involved in the project are really excited with the progress in the project. Some of the members of the congregation want to help mentor new families with their gardening experience. Supplies are being gathered and plans are forming for the upcoming planting season.



**Congratulations to everyone involved in these worthy projects!**

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## 'Food for Thought' Healthy Eating Workshops..... Working on making the healthy choice the easy choice

The communities of Eriksdale, Little Saskatchewan First Nation, Selkirk, and Arborg recently hosted Healthy Eating Workshops to increase healthy choices in community recreation centres. Pat McCarthy-Briggs (Dairy Farmers of Manitoba) and Leana Smith (Interlake RHA) facilitated the sessions. Sessions were interactive and participants reviewed the new Canada Food Guide to guide their planning for healthier choices. They chose better products from a number of samples by reading the nutrition labels.

Some of the great ideas that participants brainstormed for their canteens included:

- whole wheat hamburger and hot dog buns
- whole fruit - apples and bananas
- pre-packaged mini-carrots and dip
- taco salad in a bag
- frozen yogurt tubes and Milk 2 Go

Participants also learned about marketing their canteen menus. Tips included:

- keep the price lower on healthy foods
- phase in new choices
- place the healthy products where they are very visible
- name the healthy meal selections after the local team
- celebrate change

Each participant received a package of resources including a Canada Food Guide, a Sport Nutrition Package, and a Food Record and Analysis information. The sessions were fun, practical, and informative! For further information on Healthy Eating workshops, please call Leana Smith at 739-6362.

**Working in partnership with Interlake communities**

## Have you heard about what Arborg and Riverton are doing to promote healthy eating?

Local committees in our region are planning for healthy living and disease prevention. This is part of the Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative (CDPI) in the Interlake Region. We are using evidence to guide our action plans. It helps us to know how we are doing when we look at what is done over a period of time.

The work of the Arborg Riverton Committee over the last 2 years is a great example of this. The Arborg Riverton Committee decided to work on increasing healthy eating, especially for middle years' students. The Interlake Youth Health Survey, on average, showed that 9 out of 10 students do not eat enough fruits and vegetables for good health.

The Arborg Riverton Committee set a goal to increase the percentage of Grades 5-8 students who eat fruit and vegetables 5 or more times per day from 2% to 4% by 2008. The committee members have taken many steps towards this goal.

Their activities are supported by learning from the Knowledge Exchange Network of the Canadian Cancer Society ([www.cancer.ca/ken](http://www.cancer.ca/ken)) and Health-Evidence.ca ([www.health-evidence.ca](http://www.health-evidence.ca)). When we think about changing our eating habits it's not surprising that research tells us that multiple strategies are needed to support change.

Here is a list of activities related to their healthy eating goal.

- Teachers, students and committee members attended the Nutrition Forum in Winnipeg.
- Presentations about the youth health surveys and healthy eating were made to Evergreen School Division, Parent Advisory Councils, and teaching staff.
- Nutrition articles shared survey results and nutrition tips in the school newsletters.
- A brochure with survey results and school community actions was circulated to the community.
- Special presentations on healthy eating were made to Grade 7 and 8 students.
- Committee members helped develop school division nutrition policy guidelines.
- Healthy lunches are prepared and marketed by high school students.
- Breakfast programs are getting started in the schools.
- Healthy recreation centre canteen choices are increasing.
- Taste testing opportunities with fruits and vegetables are offered.
- Community gardening is 'growing'.
- A Farmers' Market was organized this summer.
- A Food for Thought Nutrition Workshop on community recreation centre canteen healthy choices was held this fall.

The Committee is continuing to work in partnership on these activities making healthy choices the easy choices.

### Health Promotion Awards presented at Interlake RHA Annual General Meeting

The Interlake Regional Health Authority recently celebrated the efforts of groups and/or projects that do outstanding work in enriching their community's health. The Interlake Health Promotion Working Group award program is pleased to present Health Promotion Awards that demonstrate:

- Working in partnership
- Community participation
- Leadership
- A significant contribution to the health of the community

The Interlake Health Promotion Working Group and the Interlake RHA presented the Healthy School Award to the Ecole Selkirk Junior High. Healthy Community Awards were presented to the Town of Arborg and to the Stonewall Argus and Teulon Times newspaper.

### Interlake Community Health Survey Results Announced

The Interlake RHA, the Interlake's Health Promotion Working Group and Cancer Care Manitoba have conducted and analyzed almost 2,400 surveys to support the Interlake RHA's role in Manitoba's Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative (CDPI), a community-led approach to improving our population's health.

This survey was conducted within three communities who are actively involved in the initiative (Arborg / Riverton / Bifrost, Eriksdale / Lundar and Selkirk) and three comparison communities within the region (Gimli, Ashern and Stonewall).

The reports have been distributed to the CDPI and various community committees where the surveys were conducted.

For more information please contact Judy McKinnon, Health Promotion Coordinator at 886-4316, Leana Smith, Health Promotion Coordinator at 739-6362 or Tannis Erickson, Health Systems Analysis Manager at 642-4522.



**Interlake Communities in Action** is a publication of the Interlake Regional Health Authority.

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