

PAL (55+) moved into **Whyte Ridge Community Centre** on September 7, 2021, and we look forward to many more years of serving the seniors of south Winnipeg and providing opportunities for active living, social engagement, and community involvement.

The idea for a formal seniors' serving organization in Fort Garry (now South Winnipeg) surfaced in 2009 when two community seniors recognized a lack of such an organization in the area.

In the spring of that year Lynn Arnott and Lois Abraham approached the Manitoba Association of Senior Centres (MASC) to pursue the matter and see what could be done to bring seniors programming to Fort Garry. A result of that initial meeting with MASC, was a few small group meetings to determine interest and viability for the development of a seniors' centre. At a meeting in August there was agreement that Fort Garry did indeed need a seniors' centre and it was at that meeting that the pioneers of PAL (55+), a group of twelve persons decided to name the organization the "Fort Garry Centre for Active Living".

A community meeting was held at the Richmond Kings Community Centre on October 6, 2009, with almost 100 people in attendance. Attendees were divided into groups to discuss the needs of a new seniors' centre for Fort Garry.

A second meeting was held at the end of October that year and committees were formed to begin the work of developing the structures, systems and policies that were needed to get the organization off the ground and formalized as a non-profit entity in the community. The first four committees to be developed were: Programming, Communications, Governance and Social and many of the people who volunteered at that meeting are still with us today in one capacity or another. The group also elected an interim President, Secretary and Treasurer.

At a meeting in November, surveys were conducted to determine community interest for programs and activities.

In December 2009 the Fort Garry Centre for Active Living held its first social event – a pot luck lunch which had an attendance of approximately 50 people.

After Christmas it was back to work with the Governance Committee who worked on the by-laws and policy development for the organization. It was agreed that the Executive and Committees would meet monthly to move forward with the plans. It was determined that one of the priorities should be planning programs and activities, and to this end we referred to the surveys to determine what programs to offer.

At the Christmas event, Professor Uma Parameswaram offered her services to facilitate a creative writing group.

The first program of the Fort Garry Centre for Active Living was a Drop-in Program where tabletop games were played, and light refreshments served.

The second program was the Garden Club which met for the first time in January 2010. Two conveners were elected, Dorothy Lachance and Lois Abraham, and the members voted to name

the club the Still Bloomin' Gardening Club. It was decided that the club would meet on the last Thursday of every month and would include presentations, refreshments and an opportunity for socialization. The Gardening Club is still going strong with over thirty people in attendance each month.

Other programs that were initiated during that first year were, the cards and games drop-in program, which grew to include a knitting/crocheting group and a computer assistance program.

The writing group started in March 2010 and has since published two collections of short autobiographical stories titled, "Vignettes from the Vineyards of Memory I" and "Vignettes from the Vineyards of Memory II". In the fall of 2010, Yoga, Tai Chi and Drop-in Art and Beginners Water Colour classes were begun.

In April 2010, the group voted to have the name changed to Pembina Active Living (55+).

The first AGM was held in May 2010 and members voted on the adoption of PAL (55+) By-laws and elected the first Board of Directors.

On October 5, 2010, a forum on healthy aging entitled, "Passport to Healthy Aging: A Forum for Living Well" was held at the Canad Inns and was very successful with over 200 participants.

2011 saw the development of a formalized membership structure, the inaugural "Zing into Spring" and "Membership Drive & Picnic", a Christmas gathering, the expansion into the St. Norbert Community Centre to accommodate our rapid growth and demand in that area, as well as several new programs.

In 2012 we moved from our original programming facility to Grace Christian Church which allowed us to continue to grow our programming to keep up with the needs of our membership.