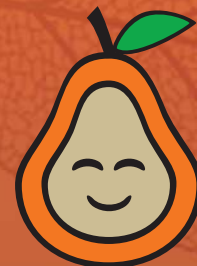


Annual Report **2024-2025**

HEALTHY START

Reaching out to expectant and
new families in big and
small ways



Healthy Start



Celebrating Growth

*From Small Beginnings to
Lasting Impact*

Land Acknowledgment

Healthy Start acknowledges that we are on Treaty #1 territory and that the land on which we gather is traditional territory of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Anisinew, Dakota and Dene Peoples, and the homeland of the Red River Métis Nation. We also acknowledge Shoal Lake First Nation #40 on Treaty #3 territory for the water we use.

We thank all Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island, offering gratitude for the sacred gifts the water and land give us to feed and nurture our children and ourselves.

We acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past. Healthy Start is committed to reconciliation by honouring, listening and learning from Indigenous peoples and by working in partnership to build a healthy future for all children and families.



Healthy Start's Mission, Vision and Values

MISSION

To empower and connect individuals and families in our community by offering pregnancy and parenting information and support.

VISION

Healthy Pregnancies, Nurtured Babies,
Thriving Individuals & Families

VALUES

WELCOMING: Community-based; Inclusive; Safe

SUPPORTIVE: Relationship-based; Connecting; Collaborative

EMPOWERING: Participant-centred; Respectful; Meaningful





Overview from the Board Chair & Executive Director

If we had to pick one word that represents the heart of Healthy Start in over 28 years of serving the community, it would be “growth”. We’ve witnessed the growth of countless babies and worked alongside incredibly resilient participants as they grew as parents. As one participant thoughtfully shared,

“The Healthy Start team gives me a boost, and everyone makes me feel good about myself. I always go home in a better mood than when I first arrived.”

This feeling of positive connection is what we strive to cultivate for every participant.

This year’s annual report theme of Celebrating Growth powerfully reflects the inspiring journeys undertaken by families we support and Healthy Start’s own continuous evolution. Just as participants flourish in their roles as parents, we too have adapted our services to meet their evolving needs, recognizing the profound impact of those early, formative years.

Participant feedback, coupled with valuable broader community input, informed our recently completed Community Needs Assessment. This valuable tool reinforced our core strengths and pinpointed opportunities for future growth, including facilitating stronger peer connections among participants, enriching our culturally safe programming and partnerships, and bolstering transition support for families as they progress beyond Healthy Start.

We remain dedicated to providing impactful pregnancy and infant health support, recognizing that a healthy start in life lays the groundwork for a healthy future. Our comprehensive Community Needs Assessment is available on our website at hsmm.ca.

We extend our profound gratitude to our dedicated staff, committed board members, invaluable team members and volunteers, and our generous funders and donors. Our collaborative spirit, consistent support, and commitment are essential to the ongoing success of our program and the well-being of the families and babies we serve.

Thank you all!



Tedda Sandercock,
Chair of the
Board of Directors



Davorka Monti,
Executive Director

REMEMBERING OUR PAST

This year marks Healthy Start’s 28th year of supporting families and babies across Winnipeg. Our journey began in 1995 with a community development initiative funded by the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program. This process led to our outreach model, utilizing neighbourhood sites and the valuable contributions of public health nurses and dietitians. The name “Healthy Start for Mom & Me” was thoughtfully chosen by mothers with lived experience of poverty who were integral to the planning. In 2020, we streamlined our operating name to Healthy Start.

A significant partnership with Red River College and Taking Charge in 1996-1997 developed a peer outreach training program, resulting in our first three outreach workers. Prenatal groups were gradually introduced at eight neighbourhood locations starting in January 1997. In 1999, Manitoba provincial funding allowed us to launch parent and baby groups, enabling us to offer both pregnancy and separate parent & baby programs. Dietitians of Canada provided early sponsorship. Healthy Start incorporated in 2004 and achieved registered charity status in 2005.

Highlights from our Community Needs Assessment

Our recent Community Needs Assessment surveyed both current participants in our program and community partners who support our program. Participants praised Healthy Start's comprehensive support and personalized care. Based on feedback, new initiatives include creating regular participant feedback mechanisms, further enhancing our cultural responsiveness and expanding outreach and community partnerships. Below are some highlights from our needs assessment. To view our complete Community Needs Assessment, visit our website hsmm.ca

Participant Survey

51%



Heard about Healthy Start from family & friends

98%



Felt more connected to others by attending Healthy Start

87%



Said new information & answers to their questions was the **#1** benefit of Healthy Start

59%



Identified as newcomers

24%



Identified as Indigenous

88%



Healthy Start was **#1** source for pregnancy & parenting info

#1

Participant need: affordable & nutritious food



59% of participants said they eat healthier

#1

Barrier to attending more often:

BUSY LIFE



62%



Said breastfeeding support was a **benefit** of attending Healthy Start

Community Partner Survey

89%



Identified food security as **#1** community need/ challenge

84%



Responded that Healthy Start is reaching the right population

96%



Said Healthy Start makes participants feel welcomed

52%



Identified as Healthy Start needing to improve visibility in the community



Our Community Impact

- 522 groups offered in the community
- 23 public health and community health nurses, 10 dietitians, 8 outreach staff make up 20 teams offering community support throughout Winnipeg
- Also offer Sing & Rhyme online, once per week
- Around 2,100 participants attended prenatal groups and over 300 supports
- Over 3,100 participants attended parent & baby groups and 450 supports
- Over 300 people attended who identified as father/male caregiver
- 1,068 individual participants attended pregnancy and parent & baby groups
- 1,000 individuals provided with one-on-one support

MEALS

- 7,000 meals/snacks served to participants
- 2,100 meal bags compiled (7 recipes)
- 72 volunteers assembled meal bags for a total of 315 hours

BIRTH OUTCOMES

- Average birthweight 7.3 lbs (average 7.5 lbs in Canada, 2022 STATS Canada)
- 94% delivered their baby at term (>37 weeks)
- 6.8% low birthweight rate (average 7% in Canada, 2022 STATS Canada)
- 88% took prenatal vitamins

BREASTFEEDING

- 93% of participants initiated breastfeeding

NEWCOMER TO CANADA GROUP

- 12 languages interpreted at our newcomer to Canada group: Arabic, Amharic, Dari, French, Hausa, Kinyarwanda, Mandarin, Rohingya, Somali, Swahili, Tigrinya and Ukrainian

VOLUNTEERS

- 40 volunteers provided 2,600 volunteer hours food prep, childminding and other drop-in support volunteers

Community Group Locations



Seven Oaks-Maples Community Centre
434 Adsum Drive R2P 1J1



Hope Centre
240 Powers Street R2W 5L1



Turtle Island Community Centre
510 King Street R2W 3Z5



St. John's Leisure Centre
601 Aikins Street R2W 0J9



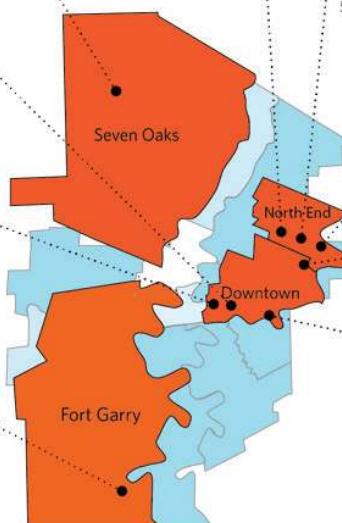
St. Boniface Access Centre
170 Goulet Ave R2H 0R7



St. Peter's Lutheran Church
65 Walnut Street R3G 1N9



Pembina-Trinity United Church
933 Summerside Avenue R3T 4Y1



Regular drop-in group & Classes for Newcomers to Canada
Freight House, Door 1
200 Isabel Street R3A 1G9



Magnus Eliason Rec Centre
430 Langside Street R3B 2T5

Drop-in groups (no waiting lists) start relationships that result in many connections with families. One-to-one visits supplement groups.



Nutrition, Nurturing and New Resources

NOURISHING BEGINNINGS

KAREN DEELEY, PRENATAL PROGRAM COORDINATOR/REGISTERED DIETITIAN

Healthy Start participants benefit from the expertise of our Registered Dietitians. Beyond providing crucial prenatal and infant feeding guidance, our dietitians offers dedicated support to families needing extra help.

We recently met a family with their 11-month-old who was relying heavily on formula with a limited solid intake of strawberries and yogurt; they connected with our dietitian after a session on introducing textured foods.

What followed was personalized support that went beyond general advice. Our dietitian conducted a home visit, and offered advice on the critical “window of opportunity” for new tastes and textures. They emphasized the power of family meals in shaping healthy eating habits, explained the importance of texture progression, offered practical tips for cup training, and suggested age-appropriate foods.

Crucially, our dietitian collaborated with the family’s public health nurse and doctor, facilitating a referral to a specialized feeding clinic. This comprehensive approach – education, practical strategies, and a strong support network – empowers families to nourish their babies by offering practical and supportive information and intervention.

NURTURING BEGINNINGS

VALERIA SANTERMER, PROGRAM COORDINATOR

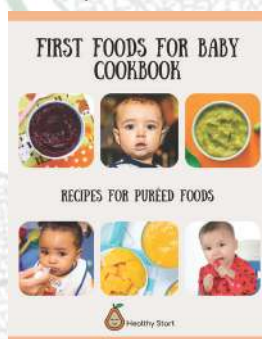
At our groups, we encourage parents to practice tummy time with their babies from day one, as this position helps build strength and supports healthy physical development. We know that many babies find tummy time challenging at first, so we love sharing different tips and strategies to help them gradually adjust and even enjoy it!

Our play mats are always set up with engaging books and toys, and it’s common to see parents lying down or sitting beside their babies, creating a calm and encouraging space. One family recently shared that the only time their baby enjoyed tummy time was during our Healthy Start group, surrounded by other babies!

During one session, our public health nurse led an exercise where moms and babies practiced “push-ups” on the mats. The goal was to help babies and parents engage with each other physically and emotionally through exercise. One mom, who had been struggling to express affection toward her baby, participated fully in the activity and, with each push-up, kissed her baby on the cheek over and over. It was a simple yet profound moment—a beautiful, small step toward fostering a deeper bond.

NEW RESOURCE HIGHLIGHTS

First Foods for Baby Cookbook



Self-Care Bingo



Homemade Toys Kit



Participants share insights on how they grew during their pregnancy or after becoming a parent

- I realized that I was a baby person after all...did not expect I would be.
- I developed a sense of gratitude...gratefulness comes more easily.
- My priorities got much clearer - all I care about is if baby is happy, not what other people think.
- I have learned to be an advocate for me and baby, stand up for myself, have better boundaries, speak out.
- I discovered I can hold two emotions within me at one time: rage and love.
- Not to lose myself.
- Becoming sober was important for me and I did it! Becoming more responsible for my children, looking after them, setting routines for us.
- During my own childhood, my family was not very expressive, but as a parent I built the habit to laugh more, hug each other and spend time with my children and family.
- I have more strength than I thought. I'm working very hard this year to reunite with my children in foster care and coming here keeps me strong and encourages me to keep going (this year, the participant reunited with her children).
- I realize that so many things in life are not in our control (like how my labour will turn out) and I'm learning to be OK with that.
- I have learned to be in better control of my own emotions now that I am a parent.
- I realize that I don't have to parent my children as how I was parented, and I've grown so much by learning this.
- I've learned to be OK with change. My baby is constantly changing, and I've learned to adapt a lot quicker than before I was a parent.
- I don't judge the way people parent their children like I use to before I had my own. I've grown to offer support rather than judgement.
- I've grown and now I have a better relationship with my own parents, and I've learned to appreciate that it wasn't always easy for them.
- I've learned so much this pregnancy and I've never taken better care of myself.



IT'S SUCH A GIFT WHEN PARTICIPANTS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH US. THANK YOU TO ALL PARTICIPANTS FOR SHARING THEIR THOUGHTS, VULNERABILITIES AND REALITIES.



Financial Report 2024-2025

These are excerpts from statements reviewed by Magnus Chartered Professional Accountants and cover the major operations of Healthy Start from April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025 (unaudited). The complete report is available upon request.

Statement of Operations

	2025	2024
Revenue:		
Public Health Agency of Canada - Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (Schedule 1)	\$ 490,377	\$ 490,377
Province of Manitoba, Department of Families - Healthy Baby Program (Schedule 2)	440,500	443,118
Donations (Schedule 3)	55,124	29,364
Other contributions (Schedule 4) 4,842 3,884		
	990,843	966,743
Expenses:		
Public Health Agency of Canada - Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (Schedule 1)	490,377	490,377
Province of Manitoba - Department of Families - Healthy Baby Program (Schedule 2)	440,500	443,118
Donations (Schedule 3)	43,553	14,953
Other contributions (Schedule 4)	8,090	15,686
	982,520	964,134
Excess of revenue over expenses for the year	\$ 8,323	\$ 2,609

Schedule 1 — Public Health Agency of Canada (Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program) Revenue and Expenses

	2025	2024
Revenue:		
Public Health Agency of Canada - Funding	\$ 490,377	\$ 490,377
Expenses:		
Equipment	456	568
Materials, food and supplies	95,826	95,324
Personnel	317,313	325,851
Rent and utilities	46,583	43,170
Travel - Mileage and participant bus tickets	13,546	6,790
Other - General and administrative	16,653	18,674
	490,377	490,377
Excess of revenue over expenses for the year	\$ -	\$ -

Schedule 2 — Province of Manitoba, Department of Families (Healthy Baby Program) Revenues and Expenses

	2025	2024
Revenues:		
Province of Manitoba - Funding	\$ 440,500	\$ 440,500
Province of Manitoba - Other funding - Resource development	-	2,618
	440,500	443,118
Expenses:		
Materials, food and supplies	36,190 3	9,010
Office and equipment	5,839	3,714
Personnel	339,474	342,154
Salaries and benefits - Resource development	-	2,618
Rent and utilities	34,928	35,686
Travel - Mileage and participant bus tickets	13,326	9,315
Other - General and administrative	8,793	8,938
Other - Interpreter fees	1,320	1,009
Other - Training and development	630	674
	440,500	443,118
Excess of revenue over expenses for the year	\$ -	\$ -

Statement of Changes in Net Assets	Unrestricted	Internally Restricted	2025	2024
Net assets, beginning of year	\$ 161,681	\$ 75,000	\$ 236,681	\$ 234,072
Excess of revenue over expenses for the year	8,323	-	8,323	2,609
Net assets, end of year	\$ 170,004	\$ 75,000	\$ 245,004	\$ 236,681

Moments in a Healthy Start Year



Newcomer group



Staff with layettes from Faith Lutheran Church



Meal bag assembly

You're going to love it here! The food is great, the staff are all great (overheard a regular participant talking with a new participant).



I have lots of struggles with anxiety, and you all made me feel special and comfortable to be here. I never knew that I could make food for my baby and feel completely relaxed doing this.



First of all, I want to thank you. I love the way you guys are helping others. The knowledge and ideas you gave us are fabulous. Millions of thanks and I really love you guys.

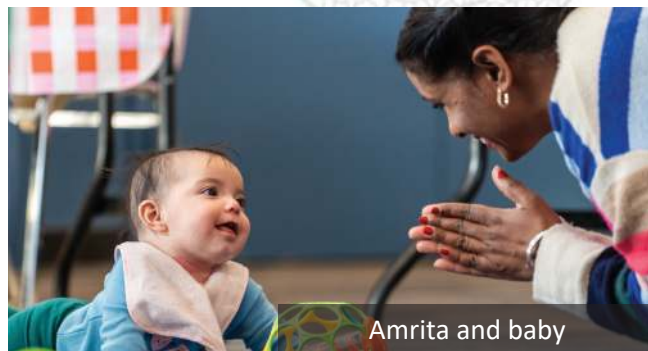
...the time I spent at Healthy Start will always remain a cherished memory.



Breastfeeding bracelets



We are so glad we found this program—it's exactly what we were looking for.



Amrita and baby



Outreach staff Diana



Minister Fontaine at our office



Investing in Our Community:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tedda Sandercock (Chairperson), Kendra Vanbeselaere (Treasurer), Coralee Hill (Secretary), Adam Prokopanko, Amanda Anderson, Darlene Girard, Justine Zidona, Linda Uhrich, Melanie Duncan and Davorka Monti (ex-officio).

HEALTHY START STAFF

Outreach staff (by years from longest serving to newest) Ashley Lofthouse, Noreen Janzen, Vivian Sawatzky, Amrita Sidhu, and Taylor Rae Kostiuik (on maternity leave). New this year: Diana Correa and Isabel Cisneros. Left this year: Rena Hansen.

Community Dietitians Tara Hawking-Kreller, Cheryl Oliveira, Lisa Skromeda and Jennifer Shearer. Left this year Maxine Chartier.

Celebrating 20 years of service

Cheryl Oliveira.

Program Coordinators Karen Deeley (Prenatal Program Coordinator & Registered Dietitian) and Valeria Santermer (Program Coordinator).

Sing & Rhyme online facilitator

Noreen Janzen.

Administrative Davorka Monti (Executive Director), Nancy Khrabchuk (Office & Data Manager), Kennedy Legault (Administrative Assistant) and Catalina Diaz Calderon (Data Assistant). Left this year: Angela Gonzales Alvarez.

Bookkeeper (fee for service) Maryon Grant (for 27 years and counting).

PARTNERS IN PROGRAM DELIVERY

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) Public Health Nurses Amrit Bharj, Brianna Mckimm, Dana Pickering, Hazel Rankovic, Isabella Berger, Jamila Rempel, Joelle Arcioni, Joleen Epps, Justine Zidona, Kaitlan Knowles, Karen Hall, Karen Strome, Karen Tran, Martha Mboya, Marusia Kachkowski, Melanie Penner, Rachel Axford, Rejean LaBelle, Tammy Robertson, Tracey Ramsay and Ulrike Bakaswa.

WRHA Public Health Dietitians

Chinweoke Asagwara, Ginette Le Gal, Louise Oakley and Michelle Molinski.

Mount Carmel Clinic staff Nurses: Chelsea McLeod and Shaylee Ducharme
Registered Dietitian: Nitzia Cruz

Interpreters Amina Montassif, Bieteliheem Teckle, Clarisse Bugera, Fadumo Warsame, Feven Luulay Gebretatios, Haben Yohannes, Habibah Mohammad, Hafsatu Abdul Aziz, Haoua Issa Gamreke, Kbrti Mehari, Kenza Djoudi, Laetitia Bahati, Lan Zhang, Mediatrice Umubyeyi, Merhawit Araya, Meriem Kaouah, Nafisa Pameri, Nathalie Goma Pambou, Oreofe Avamasse, Saido Warsame, Viktoriia Sen, Xiaowei Yu and Yvonne Chow.

VOLUNTEERS

Childminding volunteers Amaritpal Kaur Dhaliwal, Eunsung Kim, Eunmi Cho, Jaswinder Chahal, Katerine Barrios Miranda, Kathy Shurvell, Kirandeep Kaur Hehar, Kristy Wyndels, Lina Garcia, Lourdes Morales, Mayowa Oduwobi, Molok Al-Hebshi, Shahida Luman and Yeon Shin.

Food Preparation & other volunteers

Aimee Meunier, Alanna Funk Osland, An Huynh, Carla Plummer, Eisha Eisha, Elizabeth Adebajo, Emily Melnyk, Havilah Uswa, Heather Quinn, Josephine Jessica Silvana, Klara Weissmann, Laurel Gardiner, Leira Patio, Marcina Mickanec, Marley Uhryniuk, Mireille Noel, Nicole Gaitho, Panashe Rwezuya, Pat Lachance, Reylene Sangilan, Stephanie Friesen, Trish Le and Yuqi Sun.

2024 Meal Bag assembly 48 new and long-term community volunteers helped assemble thousands of ingredients for meal bags. Westgate Mennonite Collegiate students and teachers spent a day with us assembling the final meal bags.



Volunteer at group



Faith Lutheran Church
layette donations



Grace Lutheran Church donation



Prince of Peace Lutheran
Church baby shower



Goldeyes Field of Dreams Foundation
donation

Thank You for Your Support!

FUNDERS, DONORS & SUPPORTERS

GOVERNMENT FUNDERS

Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program,
Public Health Agency of Canada

Healthy Baby Program, Department of
Families, Government of Manitoba

We are deeply grateful for the support of every individual and corporate donor who contributed to our work this year. Your generosity, at all levels, is truly appreciated and makes a tangible difference.

CORPORATE & GROUP DONORS

CIBC
Wood Gundy Investment Advisors special mention: Hart Pollack & Martin Watts; Onyx Financial Group Ltd.; Sutton Group-Kilkenney Real Estate: Javier Alberto Carmona, Jeff Brown, Nicole Herrera, Ola Ogunniyi, Tara Bertholet and Warren Moran; Goldeyes Field of Dreams Foundation; PayPal Giving Fund Canada; Meyers Drug Store; Red River Messenger; CanadaHelps - Cause Fund by Unite for Change; South Osborne Xchange.

INDIVIDUAL DONORS We extend our sincere gratitude to 60 generous donors for their support this year. The following are donors who have donated \$200 or more: Penelope Scurfield, Gail Wylie & Dave Wright, Michelle & Rick Soenen, Lauranne Matheson, Ruth Diamant, Jean Dalman, Lynne-Anne McFeetors, Maryon Grant, Mireille & Jean-Pierre Noel, Marni Brownell & Stephen Sandstrom, Marlene Kendall, Celia Rodd, Celine Nadon, Linda Romphf, Sheelagh Smith, Virginia Stillwater, Robert Sanders, Maureen Perlmutter, David Christianson, Coralee Hill, Jean Skromeda, Gail Marchessault, Sheryl Bates Dancho, Mary Shum, Mirjana & Vladimir Kirasic, Sarah Krotz, Don & Carol Hawking and Shari Green (in memory of Lisa Green).

Donations were made in memory of lovely Oliver Bazylewski, program participant with his mom Jennifer Kitchen

COMPANIES, COMMUNITY GROUPS & INDIVIDUALS IN-KIND DONATIONS

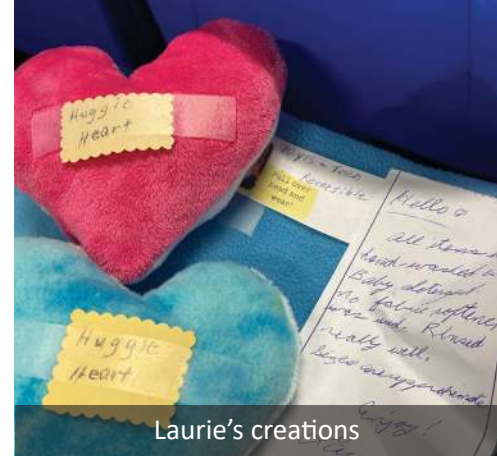
We extend our gratitude for all of the items we receive. Many of the following organizations have supported us for many years. Special mention to the following: ABC Quilting Group of Manitoba Prairie Quilters – 100s of handmade quilts; Faith Lutheran Church congregation 60 baby layettes; MAKEHEROES.CO – 100s of baby wraps and carriers; Thelma Wynne Project of St. Matthews Maryland – 100s of baby layettes; SERC – safe sex supplies; Blanketing Manitoba – handmade quilts; Koats for Kids; Manitoba Children's Museum passes; Assiniboine Zoo passes; Laurie Flaherty – homemade items; Julie Dixon – hundreds of knitted hats; Govinder Kaur Khosa – knitted items; Bev Lobay – handmade items; Dale Laite – homemade items; Anne Mulaire – clothing; Sagen (Susan Wasney) – baby items; Just Like New To You thrift store; Baby shower held anonymously for Healthy Start; Prince of Peace Lutheran Church – baby shower for Healthy Start; Grace Lutheran Church – baby items.

Thank you to all who donated baby clothes, strollers, children's books and toys - they are all greatly appreciated.

BUSINESSES & ORGANIZATIONS THAT OFFER IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS OR SUPPORT M.A.M. Distribution; Meyers Drugs; Red River Messenger; Russell Hendrix; McNally Robinson Booksellers; City of Winnipeg for use of four community centres; Hope Centre Healthcare; Maples Community Centre; St. Boniface Access Centre. Redeeming food coupons: Safeway/Sobeys/FreshCo, Zeid's Food Fare and IGA on Main Street.

CONTRACTORS Maria Lourdes Morales (cleaning) and Katie Anderson (newsletter).

MULTIMEDIA & DESIGN Small Creek Studio – Cyndi Wiebe (annual report and resource development); DCO Digital – Darnell Collins for photography (photos in this report and resource development) and Waterloo Design House (website).



Laurie's creations



Julie's hats



Dale's critters



Volunteer Pat preparing food



ABC Quilters

What we do

Pregnancy and parent & baby groups (up to 1 year) offered year-round at ten Winnipeg community facilities

Reaching resilient individuals & families seeking information on having and nurturing a healthy baby

Team includes outreach workers, dietitians, and nurses, supported by childminding, food prep, and other volunteers

Practical and concrete topics discussed

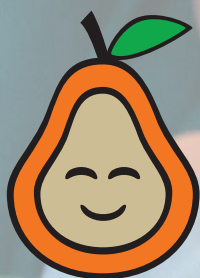
Nutritious and low-cost food demonstrations to build participants' cooking skills

Interpreters translate information for newcomers to Canada groups

Practical support offered at groups: milk & egg coupons, prenatal vitamins, and vitamin D drops for babies, food, meal bags, resources, handouts and so much more

One-on-one support for families needing connections to other services

Positive impact on the health and nutrition of individuals and families



Healthy Start

Healthy Start is a non-profit, charitable organization

Funded by the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (Public Health Agency of Canada) and Healthy Baby, Government of Manitoba and supported by grants and donations

Donations are appreciated and tax-receiptable

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hsmm.ca

Facebook & Instagram @healthystartwpg

