

Volunteers make the difference

Volunteer leadership is at the centre of everything United Way of Winnipeg is and does, and Urban Exchange is no exception.

For the past two years, Regina Ramos-Urbano and Markus Chambers have Co-chaired the Urban Exchange



Regina Ramos-Urbano and Markus Chambers at the official launch of Urban Exchange

Working Group—a group of committed volunteers who are responsible for the surveys and other activities in which Winnipeggers have so enthusiastically participated. Regina and Markus are both long-time residents of Winnipeg, raising young families and contributing to our community in a variety of ways.

Regina, a United Way Board member who also volunteers extensively in Winnipeg's Filipino community, is passionate about Urban Exchange because it's a way for all people—regardless of education or income—to

have their voices heard. "Urban Exchange is a great way for people to get involved and share their opinions," she says.

Markus is also on the Board at United Way and has been involved with Urban Exchange for more than four years. Although he is stepping down from the Urban Exchange Working Group this year, his enthusiasm for the initiative will not end anytime soon. He's become known among group members for his consistent push to reach out to 100% of Winnipeg's population. Cumulatively, we're close to reaching that goal but there is still more work to do.

When asked what he'll miss most about his role as working group Co-chair, Markus says "the lively discussions during Working Group meetings."

The Working Group appreciates Markus's contribution to Urban Exchange and will miss him when it reconvenes in September. Regina will continue her leadership and is looking forward to working with a group of new and returning volunteers. There are several new ideas in the works and we hope you will stay connected with Urban Exchange in the coming months.



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Diversity on the menu

A new United Way partnership is a recipe for success

For the past several years, United Way has been increasing efforts to reduce poverty in Winnipeg—a top concern for Urban Exchange participants and many others throughout the city. Every day, an average of 730 people access United Way supported education, training and pre-employment programs proven to build self-reliance and financial independence.

Building on those efforts, United Way is extremely proud to be partnering on a new project that will serve up education, training and employment opportunities along with nutritious meals to students and staff at the University of Winnipeg and people in the surrounding community.

Opening in late August—just in time for the new school year—**Diversity Food Services** will feature affordable flavours from around the world,

says operational manager Kristen Godbout. When possible, ingredients will be local and organic, adds head chef Ben Kramer.

Diversity will operate from three locations on campus, including a coffee shop and small restaurant on the university's upper floors. The main cafeteria in Riddell Hall will be called Pangea's Kitchen—a name that embraces a connection to the global community.

As well, Diversity will provide meal plans for three squares a day for more than 170 residents set to occupy McFeetors Hall—the university's new student and community residence.

Wholly embodying its name, Diversity provides job opportunities for New Canadians, Aboriginal people and others who are in need of training and experience. The staff comes from all over the world:

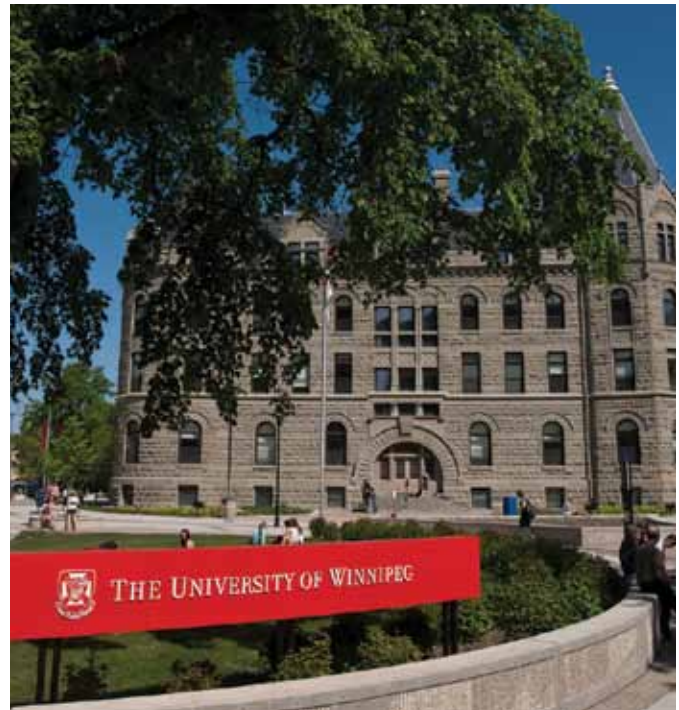


PHOTO: Kelly Morton

Sudan, Moldova, Burma, Nigeria, the Philippines, Cuba and right here in Canada.

Godbout says Diversity is a project for everyone, with managers learning from staff just as much as staff is learn-

ing from managers.

United Way of Winnipeg is excited to be partnering with SEED Winnipeg and the University of Winnipeg's Community Renewal Corporation on this tasty endeavour!

Check out MyCityMySay.ca!



Please check out MyCityMySay.ca for more about Urban Exchange, including a profile of participant **Brian MacKinnon**. A retired high school teacher who spent 25 years working at R.B. Russell School on Dufferin Avenue, he's learned about poverty from hundreds of students over the years.

Here are some of your responses from our latest survey

“You could be well off and still be living in poverty. I believe that every level of or “class” of people if you will say faces some sort of poverty, [whether] it be food, clothing, debt, employment..etc.”

“ Poverty is going to bed hungry. Poverty is not even having a bed to go to. Poverty is **feeling shame**, like [a] disrespected “person” of society. Poverty is an issue that is close to my heart. ”

We asked: **“In your opinion, what is poverty?”**

“Poverty is not having access to opportunities for education and employment, and lacking those opportunities, it’s the inability to provide the basic necessities of life for oneself and one’s family.”

“ Poverty includes lacking - good, nutritional food - safe, comfortable housing - seasonally appropriate clothing - access to recreational and cultural activities. ”

“ It is people living in substandard housing or no housing. Children who are receiving [inadequate] food, clothing, housing and protection. Its **a chronic cycle of unemployment, lack of education, and a mistrust of the social systems** that is passed from one generation to another. It is also, the working poor. People with jobs making less than a living wage who must rely on foodbanks and other social services just to provide for their basic needs. It’s senior citizens (mostly women) forced to live in substandard housing and poor health because the cost of medication and coverage makes them have to choose between food and medicine. ”

“It’s complex—it’s the feeling of being excluded from one’s community because of what you can and can’t afford.”

“ Poverty is an **inability to live a life of dignity** with adequate and safe housing, food and other needs... ”

“The inability to have a quality life.”

“ Where limited access to resources [fundamentally] changes the quality of life you live and your expectations for your future. ”

“When citizen’s don’t feel as though there is a way rise above their current situation because of [oppression] seen or unseen”

“The inability to provide the basic [necessities] (food, shelter, clothing & personal needs) and the lack of opportunity for future improvement. Loss of hope will have a far greater longterm effect than a temporary economic downturn.”

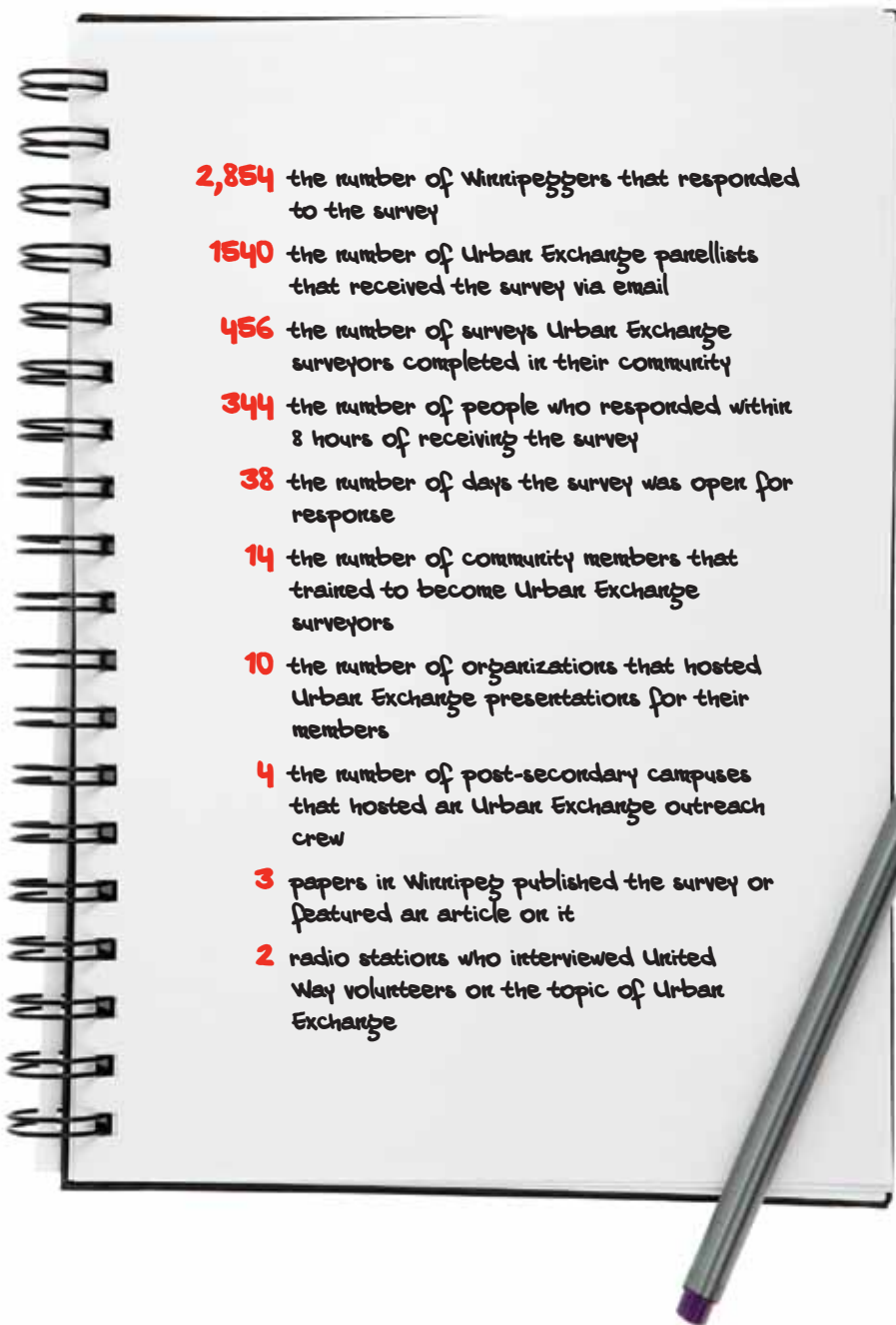
★ The Manitoba government recently unveiled *ALL Aboard: Manitoba’s Poverty Reduction Strategy*.

The strategy is built on the following pillars:

- Safe, affordable housing in supportive communities
- Education, jobs and income support
- Strong, healthy families
- Accessible, co-ordinated services

Find out more about the report on the Manitoba Family Services and Housing website: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs>

The community responded enthusiastically to Urban Exchange's latest survey *Poverty: Insight and Ideas*.



- 2,854** the number of Winnipeggers that responded to the survey
- 1540** the number of Urban Exchange parcellists that received the survey via email
- 456** the number of surveys Urban Exchange surveyors completed in their community
- 344** the number of people who responded within 8 hours of receiving the survey
- 38** the number of days the survey was open for response
- 14** the number of community members that trained to become Urban Exchange surveyors
- 10** the number of organizations that hosted Urban Exchange presentations for their members
- 4** the number of post-secondary campuses that hosted an Urban Exchange outreach crew
- 3** papers in Winnipeg published the survey or featured an article on it
- 2** radio stations who interviewed United Way volunteers on the topic of Urban Exchange

Thank You!



Urban Exchange would like to thank the following organizations for contributing to the success of the survey:

Age and Opportunity
Cambrian Credit Union
Canstar
CBC Radio Canada
CBC television (French)
CCPA
CJOB
Ellice Cafe and Theatre
Family Centre of Winnipeg
Independent Living Resource Centre
Institute of Urban Studies
Plessis Road Resource Centre
Red River Community College
SEED Winnipeg
SMD
Taking Charge of Opportunities
The Aboriginal Centre
The Government of Manitoba
The Winnipeg Free Press
The Winnipeg Sun
University of Manitoba
University of Winnipeg
West Central Women's Resource Centre
Winnipeg Labour Council

★ "Reduce food bank use by 50% in 10 years and set a date for the elimination of food bank [use] in Manitoba"

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and Make Poverty History Manitoba recommend this, and seven other indicators be used as benchmarks to monitor poverty reduction in Manitoba.

Want to learn more? Check out the report entitled *The View From Here* online: <http://www.policyalternatives.ca>