

# **Artists in Healthcare Manitoba**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

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April 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022

**Artists in Healthcare Manitoba 2001–2022**

**Two Decades of Care**

**Artists in Healthcare acknowledges that we are on Treaty 1 territory,  
the traditional gathering place of the Anishinaabe, Cree,  
Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene people and the traditional homeland  
of the Métis people.**

# Music and the arts are essential for a healthy life



## George Bajer-Koulack

*"The music program at Misericordia Place is a very important part of my week and of the residents. Every time I arrive on one of the floors people look up and shout George is here! I was away for a few weeks; when I returned a resident took my hand and tearfully said 'we missed you so much'. Another person who barely speaks in any context, lights up when I begin to play music; she shouts, 'everyone loves you' or 'you make everyone happy'. Another always has a hand drawn picture to offer when I'm about to leave. One woman doesn't speak, but her eyes always light up when I play her special song. She is always sleeping but when I play her song her eyes widen, and she stares at me until it's finished. It's been terribly hard for these people for such a long time, restricted visits, limited recreational activities and understaffing issues. These music programs really help break up the week and give people something to look forward to, as well as build a sense of community. I am very grateful for all the contributions made to keeping these programs going because I believe that they are essential for the well-being of most of the residents. For elderly people it is not enough to simply provide them with the medical support to keep them alive, people need a reason to live and for many, recreation activities, especially music, provide that reason."*

*"Music is the divine way to tell beautiful, poetic things to the heart."*  
– Pablo Casals

# A message from our Board Chair



Artists in Healthcare's 2021 – 2022 year was one of endurance and resoluteness. I believe that we all learned how dependent we are on the arts to bring meaning to our lives, whether by thousands of virtual musical performances, or small, live outdoor concerts that took place outside of many Manitoba healthcare facilities.

For a second year, we experienced continued, cautious growth. Instead of finding ourselves lacking in ability to deliver programs, staff became more receptive and more willing to facilitate anything safely possible, to bring music or visual art to their patients. If anything, everyone worked harder together.

The phrase "now more than ever" was heard often in the contexts of: we need music in our healthcare facilities now more than ever; we need art kits for patients in chemotherapy, now more than ever; we need the arts, now more than ever.

With gratitude to all our funders and partners,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Carson".

Tom Carson,  
Board Chair, Artists in Healthcare Manitoba Inc.

*It is with great sadness that we let you know that Tom Carson passed away November 16, 2022. Tom led Artists in Healthcare Manitoba with integrity, intelligence, and care. He is dearly missed by all who knew him and will never be forgotten.*



## **WE BELIEVE:**

Music and the arts transform patient, family, and staff experiences in healthcare. They facilitate communication, hope, and healing, and can inspire compassion and resilience.

## **OUR VISION:**

Artists in Healthcare Manitoba envisions a future where music and art are part of one's natural experience in healthcare.

## **OUR MISSION:**

Our mission is to incorporate musicians and artists into those circumstances that will enrich the patient experience and nurture health and wellness through the arts.



*“Music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy. Music is the electrical soil in which the spirit lives, thinks, and invents.”*  
— Ludwig van Beethoven

# Executive Overview 2021–2022

Artists in Healthcare Manitoba (AIHM) was established in 2001, with a vision is to improve the patient, family, and staff experience in healthcare and to address the needs of the whole person through meaningful engagement with the arts. In the years since AIHM first offered music and art programming in a Winnipeg hospital, AIHM has spread to other health facilities and agencies across Winnipeg and rural Manitoba thanks to the engagement and support of health care leaders, musicians, artists, committed donors, and public funders.

The 2021–2022 year signalled a slow return to regular music and other programming throughout many of AIHM's partner facilities with the gradual loosening of COVID-related restrictions, after more than a year of offering programs through Zoom.

New in the 2021–2022 fiscal year, a "Stay Safe Manitoba" grant facilitated the development of 18 Stay Safe Manitoba recordings in collaboration with the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra. These recorded series of video concerts were shared via email links throughout healthcare in Manitoba. By the end of the summer 2022 there were over 14,000 hits. This concert series featured artists Sierra Noble, Jocelyn Gould, Raine Hamilton, and the Papa Mambo Trio, among others. This free series showcases beautifully captured concerts recorded at No Fun Club and other select Winnipeg locations.

AIHM was pleased to resume offering its outdoor concert series collaboration with the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra in May 2021 and through the summer months. While art programs did not resume in person, AIHM offered art kits to patients at CancerCare and St. Boniface Hospital. AIHM was also able to offer one Culture Days event in September 2021 before restrictions resumed.

Since April 2021, and with the return of the Service Canada program AIHM was able to bring musicians back to play indoors, live, masked, and distanced with no singing, and offer live music, yoga, and mindfulness programs outside at some of its partner facilities.

This grant and other funding enabled AIHM to resume offering its key programs in most urban and rural centres (virtually); the Music to my Ears program; CancerCare's Art at the Big Blue Chair providing art kits for patients undergoing chemotherapy;

Selkirk Mental Health Center's Rejuvenation, Resilience and Recovery through the Arts program providing live music, mindfulness, yoga, and music to residents; and the Manitoba Adolescent Youth Treatment Centre's song-writing program.

Judging by the many stories shared by our musicians, staffs, patients, residents and clients of our partner facilities and their visitors, people were grateful for the return of live music, outdoor concerts, and the flexibility of enjoying online concerts at their leisure. Their experiences are heart warming and speak to the vital role music plays in the lives of those we serve.

The Art in Hospital donation program continued to move art into health facilities this year. The initiative was the brainchild of Gary Scherbain, whose vision it was to bring donated art into health facilities. AIHM is considering how best to pursue Gary's vision following his death in August 2021. We mourn his loss and are grateful for the legacy he has left. The Art in Hospital donation program has been much appreciated and there is interest on the part of donors and facilities to continue bringing art into hospitals and health facilities in the Winnipeg Health Region and elsewhere.

While some of our funding was suspended during the first year of the pandemic, we are grateful to the many private donors and public funders whose continued support and trust enabled AIHM to provide a variety of in-person and online programs to people served by Manitoba's health and social service facilities.

We are thankful so many in government, in health care leadership, and those at the bedside see the benefit to patients, residents and clients, of bringing art and music into facilities via Zoom or in person.

Sincerely,



**Shirley Grierson**

Executive Director,  
Executive Director, Artists in Healthcare Manitoba Inc.

# IN MEMORY OF GARY SCHERBAIN

During COVID-related isolation, the Art in Hospital program was suspended. It will resume, but will never be quite the same, as we lost the heart of it with Gary Scherbain's death August 6, 2021.

In 2018, Gary—co-owner of Wah-Sa Gallery—approached Artists in Healthcare Manitoba with a plan to place more art in hospitals and other healthcare facilities, leading to the development of our highly successful Art in Hospital donation program.

Gary had co-owned the Wah-Sa Gallery having taken it over with two partners in 1976 from Daphne Odjig, who opened it in the early '70's. In conversation, Daphne noted that running the Gallery meant that she didn't have enough time to be an artist, so Gary became a gallery owner. He developed lasting relationships with artists over the Gallery's 46 years, and loved the Woodland style of Indigenous art. The Wah-Sa Gallery was one of a few Indigenous Woodland Art Galleries in Canada.

Over time, many clients approached Gary about what to do with their art when downsizing. It seemed they had more pieces than they or their children wanted.

Gary always believed there could be more art in hospitals and other healthcare facilities, so he approached Artists in Healthcare Manitoba with the idea of a donation process.

Gary designed and printed a brochure distributed to galleries throughout the city, and wrote the guidelines for the program. He personally appraised the donations, facilitated meetings and spent many hours with healthcare staff, inviting them to choose art for their facilities. Over the years, he facilitated donations valued at more than \$400,000 to the Grace Hospital, St. Boniface Hospital, to a new Cancer Care Manitoba radiation treatment suite at Health Sciences Centre, to McEwen Psych Health, and many others. A personal favourite was the donation of close to 100 pieces of Indigenous Woodland Art to the Selkirk Mental Health Centre, transforming some old units with beauty and respect

What began with conversations to start a "program" led to a most valued friendship as I came to know this wonderful mystery of a person: a delightful contrarian in thinking, able to make you see the other side of an argument with ease. A gruff and yet caring man who supported many artists over the years, he was loved and respected by many artists who became his good friends.

I could go on about art committee meetings over fish and chips or hearing great stories from artists about interactions dating back decades; lots of laughter and lots of compassion, guffaws over his Ojibway or Cree phrases, or his attempts to disguise his compassion with a bit of gruffness. My heart warms reflecting on how much he gave and how grateful I am to have known him.

Thousands of patients in hospitals and long-term care facilities throughout Winnipeg and in Selkirk today sit in waiting rooms or treatment units enhanced by beautiful pieces of art, brought there thanks to Gary Scherbain's vision and dedication to the arts.

*Shirley Grierson  
Executive Director, Artists in Healthcare Manitoba Inc.*



# Highlights of 2021/2022

## EXCEPTIONAL INTEREST THIS YEAR

- With the return of the Service Canada program in April 2021, AIHM was able to hire 10 musicians to play six hours daily, with eight playing live indoors inside, masked and distanced with no singing. Live music and our yoga, mindfulness, and music programs returned outside.
- Based on the success of Art by the Big Blue Chair's infection-controlled art kits for their patients, the CancerCare Manitoba Foundation offered to give \$6,000 yearly for materials for the kits.
- The first of 18 Stay Safe Manitoba recordings produced with the help of a Stay Safe Manitoba grant are edited and released, posted on the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra website, on AIHM's website and Facebook page, and emailed to over 130 healthcare contacts throughout Manitoba. This collaboration with the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra features Sierra Noble, Jocelyn Gould, Raine Hamilton, the Papa Mambo Trio, among others; and showcases beautifully captured concerts recorded at No Fun Club and other select Winnipeg locations, and available free to all.
- By the end of the year there are over 15,500 hits on the MCO's website related to these concerts. The MCO continues to send invitations to healthcare staffs to attend the concerts free, virtually, and eventually in person. Staff response is enthusiastic and immediate: "Thank you for sharing these wonderful songs and music!"



<https://1drv.ms/u/s!ArJUpYvg4Z9zgrdV8G4piHVH3aBcVg?e=4AZvwj>

# Highlights of 2021/2022

(continued)

- With the arrival of warmer weather, AIHM organizes outdoor concerts, typically at staff changeover times in the afternoon, to positive response from staff and visitors.



After 27 months of virtual music; Lois Gillespie's first day inside at St. Boniface Hospital!

- The Art in Hospital donation program continues with a new unit opening at Centre de Santé Saint-Boniface, a walk-in connected care clinic.



- CancerCare Manitoba's music program returned in August 2021. CancerCare staffs walking through Health Sciences Centre hear AIHM's Service Canada musician, Sam Singer playing inside the hospital and ask whether their program can start up again. Within a month there are four musicians playing weekly; vaccinated, masked, distanced and no singing but they are back! Staff are so delighted AIHM begins scheduling two three-hour music visits daily, four days a week. We document QR codes and vaccination status for all our healthcare musicians.
- Sam Singer strikes up a wonderful friendship with a patient who writes a poem which Sam sets to music. This is recorded and shared along with our MCO virtual concert series links. The story is published in the Health Sciences newsletter and the Gendis Inc. Artists in Healthcare Endowment Fund supported by James Cohen and the Prairie Roots Rockers, is established with a \$50,000 donation.
- We celebrated Culture Days at St. Boniface Hospital with the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra musicians and the Landscape Dancers
- Misericordia Health Centre's music program extended through the winter thanks to ongoing support from a private donor.
- The second \$10,000 Telus grant funding for the Manitoba Adolescent Youth Treatment Centre's song writing program started up November 2021
- The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba grant to Artists in Healthcare is extended to December 2023. The Winnipeg Foundation also responds with major support to complete the McEwen Tunnel of Beauty by that date.

## **Lyrics to Rehab Report**

*There are hospital patients galore / Spread out over more than one floor.  
Some are here after limbs have been lost / At for them an increasing great cost.  
Another group has damaged their spines / They spend hours rehabbing through time  
Patients are both women and men / Who are working to regain their Zen / In rehab, in rehab, in rehab.*

*In rehab we work through the pain / To strengthen what muscles remain.  
You'll see patients in wheelchairs abound / It's the way many must get 'round.  
They range from the young to the old / And some are the meek and some bold.  
All work to get out of this place / And we're thankful when we win this race / In rehab, in rehab, in rehab.*

*You'll not find a gal nor a dude / Who appreciate this hospital food.  
For it is bland – has no taste / Which is why so much goes to waste.  
They serve eggs — shaped like pucks / And the flax oatmeal just sucks.  
Some salad is fine but the kale — not divine/ For some real food we all really pine /  
In rehab, in rehab, in rehab.*

*Great nurses with pills and their scopes / Can raise and or dash patients' hopes.  
The patients are served by the aides / Who work hard though some face tirades.  
Housekeepers keep the place clean / With a broom, and a mop and machine.  
We know music is food for the soul / And to rehab for all is the goal / In rehab, in rehab,  
in rehab.*

*Many patients have been here and gone / The idea is to make them strong.  
The issue is their injury / And rehab folks have set them free.  
Free to do the things they want / And things they were told that they can't.  
Their future goals are up to them / So we'll finish this with a strong AMEN!*

*Sung by the 5th floor rehabbers*

*– Words by Ernest Jones*



**The video can be found on the Health Sciences Centre website and on Artists in Healthcare's Facebook page and website.**

*"Who hears music feels his solitude peopled at once."  
– Robert Browning*

# Our Programs:

## Music to My Ears

This program resumed thanks to the Service Canada grant program. It also seemed to generate confidence in staff in many facilities about resuming year-round programming, though with restrictions there was limited ability to do so. CancerCare and Health Sciences Centre resumed in August, St. Boniface Hospital in September with no rural programs restarting in this year.

Overall, AIHM's partner facilities received 5,447 hours of programming in 2021–2022 compared to 2,582 hours of programming and 14,000 online hits in 2020–2021. These hours include the Service Canada Student Summer Jobs Program hours, but do not include the outdoor concert series hours provided in collaboration with Manitoba Chamber Orchestra.

## Art by the Big Blue Chair CancerCare

Feedback on the Art Kits, July 2021:

“Kate Black and I are working on plans for Art Kits for the new funding year. We want to **thank you** for your support of this initiative! The Art Kits have been well received and the feedback has been *glowing!*”

- “*It helps me in all aspects as my attention is deviated from checking how much time is left before I finish my session. It alleviates the anxiety of chemo treatment.*”
- “*Thank you for this program! This was calming. I moved to talking without crying.*”
- “*Great ways to just let your mind rest.*”
- “*Thank you for introducing me to colouring. It is very calming!*”
- “*Thank you so much for having the foresight to realize how this can make such a big difference in feeling accompanied in a profound way on this journey to greater health on many levels.*”
- “*Very nice idea! Thank you so much. My blood transfusion (2 hours long) felt like no time at all.*”

Miriam Duff, M.Ed., D. WHEAT, CCLS, CCC and  
Kate Black, Art by the Big Blue Chair Program  
Facilitator (with Artists in Healthcare)

*“Musicians want to be the loud voice for so many quiet hearts.”*  
— Billy Joel

# Our Programs:

(continued)

## Art at the Bedside St. Boniface and Grace Hospitals

Both programs remain suspended until hospital volunteers are allowed to work beside patients. Art kits continue to be made.

## Art in Hospital Donation Program

The program made a few donations this year but will need renewed efforts to continue, as there is ongoing interest and requests from hospitals and the new WRHA Hub Program. AIHM is working on it.

## Rejuvenation, Resilience and Recovery through the Arts Selkirk Mental Health Centre

The live music and the Mindfulness, Yoga, and Music programs were “on again, off again” over the year but mostly on. When restrictions were significant, Ashley Voth delivered the yoga program virtually. Musicians Ashley and Luciano adapted as needed, providing some programming inside, some outside and some virtually.

## Manitoba Adolescent Youth Treatment Centre Songwriting Program

Our second \$10,000 Telus grant returned programming November 2021. Quotes from prior years attest to the importance of youth in care having programs to help them express their emotions and see them validated. With Madeleine Roger’s musical career taking increasing amounts of her time, she is bringing on a second musician from the Indigenous community.

- *“Thank you so much for coming here, this has been really seriously helping me.”*
- *“I love this, I’m going to keep writing after I’m out of here.”*
- *“We’ve been really impressed with the engagement we’ve been seeing. Everyone has been really interested and they get excited for every class.”*
- *“I’ve always wanted to write a song, this is awesome.”*
- *“This is several of the kids’ favourite group.”*
- *“Oh, so you can practise expressing yourself, and you’ll get better at it...”*

# Who We Are:

at March 31, 2022



## Executive Director

Shirley Grierson

## Board of Directors

Chairperson – Tom Carson

Treasurer – Pam Campbell

Directors – Dan Donahue, Jennifer Dubienski, Chuck LaFlèche

## Honourary Advisory Council

Dee Buchwald, Ken Campbell, Sylvia Kuzyk, Randy Moffat, Dr. Merril Pauls, Dr. Brian Postl

## Advisory Committee (Special Projects)

Sylvia Kuzyk, Dr. Merril Pauls, David Northcott

## Communications

Leif Norman

## Program Staff And Support:

### Art at the Bedside – St. Boniface Hospital

Program Coordinator – Claire Stephensen

### Art by the Big Blue Chair – CancerCare Manitoba

Artist – Kate Black

### The Care Home Outreach Project – Brandon

Programming is still suspended

### The Johnston Group St. Boniface Atrium Concert

**Series** Various MB Chamber Orchestra musicians and others from the community: Latin, Jazz, and sixties' musicians – Artists in Healthcare has applied for three new grants to continue with the concert series in healthcare, as well as funding for more virtual concerts.

### Music to My Ears

#### Winnipeg:

Lynn McClure – CancerCare Manitoba; Peter McClure – Cancercare Manitoba; Ann-Marie Williot – St. Boniface Hospital; Aaron Shorr – CancerCare Manitoba; Lois Gillespie – St. Boniface, Misericordia; Jesse Popeski – Heritage Lodge, Deer Lodge Health Centre; Liz Goossen – Grace Hospital; Brian James – CancerCare Manitoba; Nic Lawrenz – St. Boniface Hospital; Sam Singer – Health Sciences Centre; Gabriella Ocejo – CancerCare Manitoba; Nic Lawrenz –

St. Boniface Hospital; Madeleine Roger – Manitoba Adolescent Youth Treatment Centre; Quinton Poitras – CancerCare Manitoba, The Saul and Claribel Simkin Centre; Sam Singer – CancerCare Manitoba and Health Sciences Centre; JD Ormond – CancerCare Manitoba; Gabriella Oceho – CancerCare Manitoba; Tate Hiebert – Concordia Hospital

**Brandon** – Lyndon Bournon, Emmanuel Bach

**Brandon Home Care Outreach**

#### Boundary Trails

**Bethesda Regional Health Centre**

**Selkirk Mental Health Centre** – Luciano Armenti

**2021 Service Canada Students – Winnipeg**

Narrative and student names listed below

**Rejuvenation, Resilience and Recovery with the Arts – Selkirk Mental Health Centre**

Yoga, Mindfulness, and Music – Ashley Voth

## The Art in Hospital Donation Program



**With thanks to all our generous partners. We could not do this without you.**

# 2021 Service Canada Student Narrative

1. Sam Singer – Health Sciences Centre
2. Ryan Guth – Concordia Hospital
3. Erika Einarson – St. Amant
4. Quinton Poitras – The Saul and Claribel Simkin Centre
5. Gabriella Lampman – The Saul and Claribel Simkin Centre
6. Kyle Cobb – The Middlechurch Home of Winnipeg
7. Brenden McLean – Deer Lodge Health Centre
8. George Bajer – Koulack (funded by a private donor)
9. Dan Keding – St. Boniface Hospital (part-time)
10. Daniel Nemez – Riverview Health Centre (part-time)

## Musicians experiences

All names are pseudonyms to protect patient confidentiality.

### 1. Health Sciences Centre – Sam Singer

I have been playing in various units in HSC and I would like to share an experience I had in the oncology unit GD-6 with a man by the name of “Teach”.

For the past two Fridays I have had the pleasure of playing for Teach and we already have our system perfected. I play him a song while he closes his eyes and then tells me where that song took him. Whether it be the foothills of Alberta, or on his boat off the coast near Stanley Park, or even to a busker in Barbados playing a similar song in front of these large steps. Each time I leave Teach I leave with a smile on my face and a new piece of advice from a wise, wise man and I know he appreciates the places I have been able to take him in his mind as well as our conversations.

Another unit I have spent quite a bit of time in at HSC is the rehabilitation unit and I've had the pleasure of meeting George who was a singer in his younger days and has given me quite a bit of homework for songs to

learn for him. George has printed out multiple copies of each song to give to other patients if they wish to join us. I can tell he really appreciates the time we get to spend playing music together because he tells me that it really means the world to him, and when I told him I would be coming the whole summer he was quite giddy to know that we can work on our new band all throughout the summer. George makes my day every time I see him, from the moment I get to the unit and he's waiting for me at the elevator.

One more moment I would like to highlight is from playing in a dialysis unit. There was a fellow I noticed my first time there wearing a Hawaiian shirt and I noticed that he was being attentive of what I was playing and staring in my direction.

The next time I came to the unit I asked him if there was anything he might want me to play? To this he requested Hawaiian slack guitar, which I was not familiar with, but he said based off the stuff I was playing that I would pick it up just fine. He looked up a tuning for this style and I said I would try something out for him, and it turned into what I would call a mental jam session or something of the sort because I played in the tuning for a bit and very naturally a song came for him, and it's definitely his song. I still need to brush up on my Hawaiian slack guitar, but I will be seeing him tomorrow and I'm going to play him something from an artist he showed me and I think he will really appreciate it.

I could go on and on. I am extremely lucky to be able to share these beautiful moments daily with many different, interesting people, and I know there are more to be had which is the most exciting thing to me.

I would love to help with this great program in any way I can. Thank you very much!

# 2021 Service Canada Student Narrative

(continued)

## 2. Concordia Hospital – Ryan Guth

This was my third year doing the Artist in Healthcare program and my third year at Concordia Hospital. I have had another wonderful summer here playing music for patients, visitors, and staff. I have had to make some adjustments to how I perform, as was the case last summer, but have continued to get good responses from those who hear me.

A major change was switching from singing to 100% instrumental last summer. By the end of last summer, I was able to get together around 100 memorized solo guitar arrangements and I am pleased to announce that number has increased to almost 160 by the end this summer. I am given one hour of preparation time every morning to work on repertoire and develop arrangements of songs that were either requested or that I have chosen for a specific type of listener that I might encounter. At this point, I have a very diverse catalogue of music to suit the needs of almost anyone who will come through the door.

My daily routine at the hospital changes slightly day to day so that I spend time playing in every area of hospital and the personal care home over the course of the week. I also make sure to spend time playing at the two areas of the hospital where most foot traffic comes through: the main entrance and the clinic. I feel that filling those spaces with some gentle music can be a nice “greeting” for anyone who comes to our facility. Half of each day is spent performing for the residents of the attached personal care home, Concordia Place. The folks there are very receptive to my music and love to hear favorites from their youth (and a lot of Johnny Cash!). I also link up with the chaplain there who does daily services for small groups. Once the service has concluded, I carry things on and begin playing hymns and familiar spirituals for those gathered.

This year, I have tried to have interactions with the staff of the hospital as well. It has been a very difficult year for healthcare workers, and many are likely feeling overworked and burned out. I will often ask staff if they have requests, humor them with TV theme songs or talk about what music they like, in hopes that it will brighten their workday. This job is very rewarding in that way that it grows me both as a musician and as a person. I have had many meaningful interactions with patients and PCH residents that I will remember for years to come.

It is a privilege to be able to come into a hospital during a very difficult time and attempt to uplift people with the power of music. It's a great feeling when you play someone a song that they really love, and they tell you “That just made my day”. Music has a powerful way of transforming people’s moods and feelings, and that can be useful tool to have available in a healthcare facility.

## 3. St.Amant – Erika Einarson

I have had the opportunity to play music for the residents at St.Amant for the past three years now and have built many strong relationships within the community through my concerts. Even as the past two years have been in a virtual setting due to the pandemic, the daily music concerts have been invaluable to the residents and the staff.

It has been incredible to watch the personal growth from some of the residents. Those who initially had trouble conceptualizing a zoom call or virtual concert have gone from being unaware that I was providing virtual services, all the way to comfortably interacting with me through their screen. I think the scheduled slots with myself in the Artists in Healthcare position helped to facilitate this- both through playing client-preferred music as well as talking and getting to know each viewer.

A great example of this can be found with one gentleman, “Glenn”. Glenn is a resident at St.Amant whom I have had the opportunity to get to know over the past three summers in this position. I met him in my first year as the AIHM summer student in 2019, when I was able to visit the units in person and provide music in the lounge areas. Despite his nonverbal style of communication, Glenn was very expressive and interactive during my concerts through vocalizations and facial expressions (and would sometimes frown at me until I found his favourite song!). In the year of 2020, Glenn attended very few of the virtual concerts due to the higher level of isolation in which some residents, including him, needed to stay in their bedrooms as a health precaution.

This year Glenn was able to attend the virtual concerts once again as the restriction levels changed and vaccinations increased, and always placed himself closest to the camera to interact with me during concerts. Our relationship and his comfort level with

# 2021 Service Canada Student Narrative

(continued)

my concerts appeared to be unchanged! The music slots were important to him- to the point where the support workers would still log him into the zoom calls even when the rest of his unit was engaged in another activity. He would often smile, laugh, and vocalize while I was singing, especially in response to higher pitched pieces of music. About halfway through my term, Glenn started practicing waving with his arms to say hello and goodbye to me during concerts and now consistently does so! I'm glad that these concerts were an opportunity for him, and all the residents during these past two years of frequent stress and isolation. The music concerts have also provided the units with an opportunity to talk to one another through a zoom call format.

The units haven't been able to mingle with one another in common areas since the pandemic began, so this was another gift that virtual concerts provided.

*Erica was subsequently hired by St. Amant as a full-time music therapist.*

## **4. The Saul and Claribel Simkin Centre – Quinton Poitras**

My final month playing at The Simkin Centre for Artists in Healthcare's Summer Program continued to top the prior one.

I had a regular routine of playing concerts and visiting residents in between these to play for them in private. At lunch I assisted someone in feeding themselves, which turned out to be nice as the person I was feeding didn't say much but she would shoot me a look to let me know. In a look you can say a lot; I could tell the resident I fed used to be quite sassy. At the end of the day I sat with the recreational staff and filled out the "stat book" and marked who I had visited with that day.

By now I've been introduced to a lot of old music from the residents. A lot of these artists I hardly knew existed and it turns out I really enjoy most of it. So, I've got to share my new findings with the residents as per the requests and in turn have gotten a lot closer to many of them. I was encouraged to try new programs instead of just concerts so I started writing some songs with the residents too. We wrote a song about a lonely cowboy, a song about injustice and peace, a song about

God and being grateful to be alive, and a song about Sisyphus pushing a rock up a mountain for no good reason. I got to sit down with residents and just talk about what they might want to express in a song and doing this I found them opening up and realizing a lot about themselves and their place. Just giving them the space to talk has been very moving!

The response to my music in the facility has been wonderfully welcomed. The recreation staff, nurses, care workers and residents all have given me such praise. We've all gained so much, and I am so thankful for the experience.

*Quinton was hired by The Saul and Claribel Simkin Centre to play 30 hours a week for the rest of the year.*

## **5. The Saul and Claribel Simkin Centre – Gabriella Lampman**

As a summer student for Artists in Healthcare I have seen music's capacity to brighten people's lives in small but significant ways. At lunch once I was helping feed an elderly woman, and for whatever reason she was not interested in this and was quiet. As I was quietly singing Somewhere Over the Rainbow, her whole countenance changed as she recognized the song and began to sing along. She is almost completely blind, and her eyes are usually closed, but her whole face opened up and came to life. She ended up allowing me to feed her the food she had been given and spent the rest of the meal sharing memories of her family making music together and her mother's beautiful voice. Since then, I often sing to her on the days that she is less inclined to eat and I notice a difference, especially when she recognizes the songs and participates.

Another day I visited someone in her room who was very distressed, clearly unhappy to be in a care home and frustrated that she could not just walk out the way she would have been able to do so once. She kept asking me to take her home, but of course, this wasn't an option. She grudgingly consented to listen to a few songs, and sat there silently listening, and ended up singing to a couple. Although she still asked the same questions as I left, there was far less urgency in her voice, and she was more relaxed and capable of accepting my response. Even though she was far from

# 2021 Service Canada Student Narrative

(continued)

overjoyed at her living situation, the small difference in her mood felt substantial, brought on by just a few simple melodies.

*Gabriella was hired by The Saul and Clairbel Simkin Centre for the year.*

## 6. The Middlechurch Home of Winnipeg – Kyle Cobb

My experience at The Middlechurch Home of Winnipeg cannot fully be put into words. I spent my summer working for and performing for the kindest people. The residents at Middlechurch are remarkably insightful, sweet, and hilarious. I've made friends and memories that I will never forget. I am so utterly fulfilled by the opportunity to wake up each day and witness the beautiful things music can do in the healthcare environment.

## 7. Deer Lodge Centre – Brenden McLean

My first day at Deer Lodge was both challenging and exciting; it had been roughly a year and a half since I had performed in front of anyone in person. After my training, I started on a Special Care Unit and played for a dining room full of residents alongside a few visitors. It was quite nerve wracking as I hadn't played for anyone in person for so long. Within seconds, I was immediately filled with joy – this job is the most rewarding job that I've ever taken part in and each day gave me a feeling of purpose.

This was my third summer at Deer Lodge, it was amazing to build new relationships with residents and staff as well as reconnecting with some familiar faces that I hadn't seen in two years. The staff at DLC are very compassionate people and were very good to me, they truly go the extra mile when dealing with the residents.

With COVID-19 cases being down this summer, I was fortunate enough to spend time on different units throughout the course of each day. Everything from one-on-one visits, to outdoor programs, to full dining rooms – each day offered a different schedule which made the weeks feel really exciting. On many of the units I spent a lot of time doing one on one visiting. It was amazing to build meaningful relationships with residents and their family members in a personal one on one setting. Alongside playing music, a big part of the job was connecting with the residents which taught

me a lot about listening. Visiting with residents and hearing their stories made for some very memorable moments that I am truly grateful for.

Some of the programs on the other units included room to room coffee and music as well as outdoor gardening programs. It was great to be outside with the residents enjoying the beautiful weather, sharing stories and playing music.

Every week I would look forward to larger programs in which I'd be playing for as many as twenty people at once. Two times a week, I would play after lunch for the folks visiting at PRIME. The residents would be out of their chairs dancing and we were able to share some great laughs between songs. I especially enjoyed my time on some of the Special Care Units, the impact that music has on the special care residents made for some truly Zen moments. It was great learning new music that really resonated with them – everything from Hank Williams to Johnny Cash and Burt Bacharach to the Beatles. I would like to thank Artists in Healthcare for giving me such a wonderful opportunity again. My summer at Deer Lodge was truly one to be cherished – thank you to the staff for making this a remarkable experience: Nicole, Clayton, Karen, Meagan, Lisa, Robin, Wendy, Burma, Shelley, Tara, Tammy, Gail and Sandra – thank you for such a great summer!

## 8. Misericordia Health Centre – George Bajer-Koulack

It has been an amazing opportunity to do regular music programs for such an extended period of time. I've really been able to develop some great relationships with residents. There's quite a group of music enthusiasts now. Some of the staff tell me certain residents are so excited for my programs that they show up an hour in advance!

I was shocked the other day by a resident who rarely ever speaks. I was playing a Johnny Cash tune that is a favourite of many of the residents and when I finished, she opened her mouth and said in a loud, clear voice "we love you"! Another resident offers me a little drawing each time I play on his floor as a sign of gratitude (almost always the same picture).

# 2021 Service Canada Student Narrative

(continued)

The other day there was a gentleman who really got into it! He was sitting right beside me and whenever I began to play, he would start slapping his knees or clapping his hands in rhythm. At the end of each song he held out his hand, looked me in the eyes and gripped my hand tightly and would slowly say “we really made hay there”. Speech was obviously very difficult for this individual and the sentiment conveyed in those few words and the squeeze of the hand were so beautiful.

I have another client who is very passive, I have never heard her speak, but each time I come around she smiles at me if she’s awake. I also have a special song that I know she likes that I play every time I see her. The part that I love the best is the smiling that takes place during these programs. People who are spending time in TCU or living in long term care don’t always smile and laugh easily, but when a music program is going well everyone present can get pulled along into positivity, including the very hardworking staff.

I hope that music in healthcare continues to gain more recognition. It is such a powerful force for healing! I’ve seen the change it can bring in people who are SO depressed, it can lift their burdens and take them away to a happy place, it can remind them that life is still worth living, it can provide something to look forward to and enjoy each week.

I believe that these programs are important for the well-being of many of the residents and I worry about them when I take time off or can’t come in for some reason. Hopefully I will be able to continue in some capacity throughout the winter! I dream of a day when every hospital and long-term care facility simply has a musician on staff and the constant quest for funding can be laid to rest. These programs ARE essential, they are not simply entertainment!

## **9. St. Boniface Hospital – Dan Keding (worked part-time until complete in the fall)**

I have finally been able to begin playing music in person again, and I can tell it has had a big impact on the patients at St. Boniface Hospital. One individual is quiet, but enjoys hearing what I play, particularly classic rock tunes. He always enjoys hearing Jeff Healy and has told me My Girl and Pride and Joy are some of his favourite songs from my repertoire. He has been at the hospital

all summer and fall, mostly confined to one building, but always has a wide smile when I come by and play music. He also plays bass, drums, and a bit of guitar so he often jams along in his seat. While he is reserved, I know he has a great sense of rhythm! It’s been great getting to know him better over the past couple months, and he always lets me know how much he appreciates me coming by.

I often play in the courtyard outside of the McEwen building at St. Boniface during their weekly ice cream social. Having a small audience is an absolute delight, and patients will sometimes dance or sing along with songs by Elvis or Johnny Cash. It also provides an opportunity to converse with many different folks, and even allows me to showcase the harmony behind the solo guitar arrangements. I also get plenty of questions about my guitar, my experience in music, and my schooling.

One lady I met mid-summer very much enjoys any tune that is energetic or bluesy. She often dances and even sings along if she knows the words. She often has plenty of requests, which I try and play to the best of my ability. Anything by Elvis she will dance to, no question about it! She has also told me all about her son, who is around my age and visits virtually with her from time to time. I only played for this individual a few times over the course of a week or two, but she made sure to let me know it was often the highlight of her day.

An elderly gentleman I played for a few times this fall particularly enjoyed my jazz repertoire. This was a great chance for me to put my music studies on display, as I would often play material I was working on. This helped keep the songs fresh from week to week, though his favourite tune remained Fly Me to the Moon. A few times he even dozed off when I would play a ballad, which I thought was adorable. It’s always a treat to play the type of music I excel at.

One staff member really enjoyed dancing, singing, and clapping along to anything I was playing. He often got the patients into the music as well which I always appreciated! His favourite tune to hear was Blue Skies, which is a jazz standard I love to play. He also told me about some other places around the city I could investigate for gigs. A very animated individual, who always brought joy into the room.

# 2021 Service Canada Student Narrative

(continued)

I am only at the hospital a few days a week, but it's great to come by and share music. I find that it brings many people out of a funk which is quite rewarding for me. This program has also helped me learn genres of music I might not otherwise play, so much so that I am playing the same repertoire at an upcoming solo gig! In addition, the staff, Warren and Saranjit specifically, are always very helpful and I have really enjoyed getting to know them, and finally seeing them in person! I will miss them as my session ends.

## **10. Riverview Health Centre – Daniel Nemez (worked part-time until complete in the fall)**

As the Artist in Healthcare at Riverview Health Centre, I spent much of my time playing on the Palliative care unit. Being there every day, I would see many family members visiting daily in the days or weeks leading to their loved-one's death. I was often asked by these family members to step inside the room so their loved-one could see the face that was providing the music they heard every day. I met many people who were once musicians, or told of playing the guitar, and they were overjoyed to hear a young player and know that there are still people learning old country songs. Seeing a tired face light up as I walked in with the guitar was one of the most gratifying parts of the job. One experience in particular affected me greatly, and I will carry it forever. When I lived in Brandon, I briefly taught a student and her mother, and when I moved back to Winnipeg, at the same time as COVID-19 shut down in person lessons, the parents of this student chose to keep me as her teacher online. She was surround by music in her house, and spent much of her time playing guitar and singing. Teaching such a passionate student was wonderful. By the summer of 2021, I had been her teacher for two school years. That summer, her grandfather became ill and was placed in the palliative care unit at RHC. I didn't know who he was until the

mother (whom I had taught briefly as well) showed up to visit. They brought me in the room and had me play a song, and then he began to tell me about his life. He was also a musician, playing guitar and other instruments all his life, but beyond that he was an author who had written one of the only first-hand accounts of the fur trade in northern Manitoba during his lifetime, from the perspective of an Indigenous person. He was a highly respected elder in his community and had impacted a great number of lives, and received many honours in his life. My student and her family had never told me who their grandfather was, and I felt so lucky to happen to be in the right place at the right time to meet him, talk to him, and play music for him. If I step outside of myself, I also think it is pretty special that at the end of his life, after passing on the love for music to his daughter and granddaughter, he was able to meet the person being entrusted to guide his granddaughter on her journey with the guitar. Meeting this man showed me just how much music matters to this family I had already been teaching. I feel grateful to participate so directly in the meaning that music gives to people's lives through generations.

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# Links

**Art at CancerCare Manitoba:** <https://vimeo.com/154359060>

**Music at CancerCare Manitoba:** <http://www.artistsinhealthcare.com/videos/>

**Music to My Ears, Grace Hospital:** <http://vimeo.com/24829257>

(this program will run year-round at many hospitals, hospices and long-term care in Winnipeg and Brandon, Bethesda, Boundary Trails, and Selkirk Mental Health Centre)

**Art at the Bedside, St. Boniface Hospital:** <https://vimeo.com/37978606>

**String Quartet Series:** <http://vimeo.com/16381026> and <http://vimeo.com/16381760>

**Shaw feature on Art by the Big Blue Chair CancerCare Manitoba:**

<http://youtu.be/rHwqTUXsPqE>

**2019 Culture Days video on Kate Black,**

**our Art by the Big Blue Chair artist at CancerCare Manitoba:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBwS2OaKAZM>

