

Annual Report April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020



~Music and the arts are essential for a healthy life~



Tim Cummings playing up close for chemo patients



Papa Mambo distanced outside

'I know that the most joy in my life has come to me from my violin.' Albert Einstein

A message from the Board Chair

On behalf of Artists in Healthcare Manitoba, I am pleased to provide you with our Annual Report for 2019/2020.

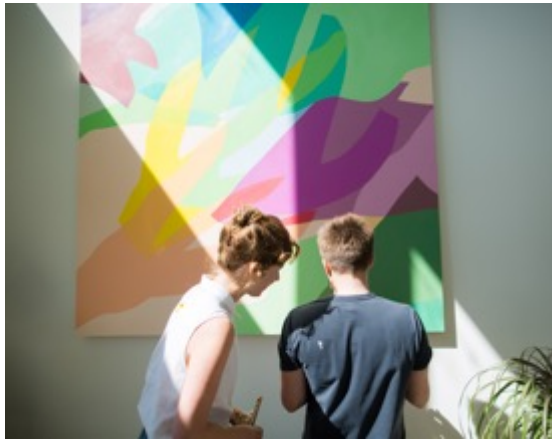
While our 2019 year was an excellent one, this year seemed to disappear from mind when March arrived and many of our programs were suspended or continued virtually.

In the prior 11 months hundreds of pieces of Woodlands Indigenous art were donated to numerous healthcare facilities, details to be shared further in this report. The music program continued to thrive with one request for program expansion from 560 to 1,300 hours in 2020. In general, it was a thriving, creative year with good programs producing good outcomes and stable growth. Now we are working virtually after offering 30 excellent concerts with the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, mostly outside, over the summer of 2020. I hope you enjoy this look back at a 'normal' year, as we continue to work to regain as much programming time for patients, families and staff, however differently and definitely creatively!

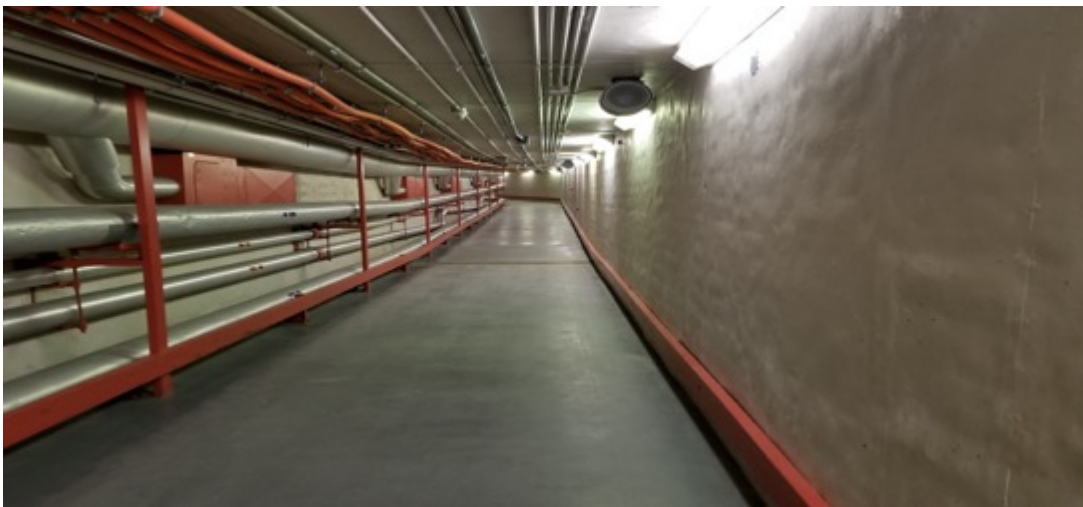
On behalf of the Board of Directors of Artists in Healthcare Manitoba, and our Honorary Advisory Council, I thank you for your interest and ongoing support.



Tom Carson, Chair Artists in Healthcare Manitoba



A Jewish Foundation of Manitoba grant to Artists in Healthcare in 2019, will see a lovely design created by artist Toby Gillies, painted on the tunnel walls through which psych patients are transported from the ER to the McEwen Psych Health Centre at St. Boniface Hospital. The intent of the project is to make the beginning of this journey a much more positive experience.





WE BELIEVE:

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

OUR VISION:

Artists in Healthcare Manitoba envision a future where music and art are part of one's natural experience in health care.

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 can name the unnameable and communicate the unknowable,' Leonard Bernstein
"Music in the soul can be heard by the universe." – Lao Tzu

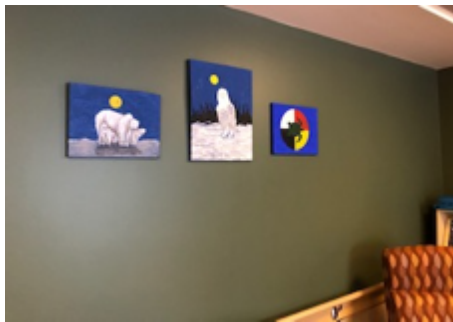
Greetings from our Executive Director

Agreeing with the spirit of our Chair's letter, it is complicated to look back at 2019 while we are in the thick of 2020. Programs that were thriving are now finding new ways to be delivered, sometimes virtually, always distanced and always ready to respond to new realities as information changes. The 2019 year was one of growth and positivity. It may be a while before we can resume all of our programs safely, but this continues to be the ultimate goal. We are hearing more and more from staffs that arts and music programs are needed *now more than ever*. Seniors who are isolated thrive when a musician can be present ... masked, gowned and all ... it's still a wonderful moment of communication and connection. Staff find that having a musician play in the screening area at the entrance of a hospital, reduces the stress greatly and notably. There is so much research on music and mental health that it goes without saying that we know we are having a good effect with music in healthcare. We can't wait to be able to return more music and in person live, as soon as it is safe to do so.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shirley Grierson".

Shirley Grierson
 Executive Director, Artists in Healthcare Manitoba

Southeast Personal Care Home is an 80-bed home dedicated to providing Resident-focused care to the Elders of the Aboriginal community. In 2019 we were able to place numerous pieces of art there and were about to bring them our music program and will when it is safe to do so.



‘Native theology works in a different way. There is no heaven, there is no hell, there’s just a circle. The circle of life and death that interconnect, and that when we pass away, we leave this planet. We don’t go up or down. We stay in another part of the circle’ – Tomson Highway, musician, storyteller, eternal optimist


OUR ORGANIZATION:


Artists in Healthcare Manitoba (AIHM), was established in 2001. Our 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 2019, we maintained existing programs, continued giving art to facilities through the Art in Hospitals donation program and completed the songwriting program for youth at the Manitoba Adolescent Youth Treatment Centre. We applied for funding to continue and received this so we will be doing so virtually fall 2020. We brought 30 performances in collaboration with the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra under a Winnipeg Foundation Grant to numerous facilities and maintained the Johnston Group atrium series at St. Boniface Hospital


Our live music and art at the bedside programs are found in hospitals, Cancercare, hospices and long-term care facilities. Musicians play for over 8,000 patients every month in dialysis, intensive care, chemotherapy, palliative care, geriatric rehabilitation, psychiatric health, and in a variety of treatment and acute care wards, facility lobbies and waiting areas.

Nine student musicians provided additional hours of music to hospitals, long term care and hospices through the Service Canada Student Jobs Programs.


ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS in 2019/20


 The Manitoba Adolescent Youth Treatment (MATC) song writing program was a celebrated success. Staff reported they learned more about these children's experiences through listening to what they wrote, than they did in any other capacity. We reapplied to Telus and are returning the program virtually fall 2020 thanks to a second \$10,000 grant from them.

 The Winnipeg Foundation's Youth in Philanthropy program awarded \$1,000 to the MATC program for instruments, mics and recording software.


 A \$25,000 Winnipeg Foundation Collaborative Grant for Artists in Healthcare and the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra brought 30 concerts to facilities, inside and out. This will continue into fall 2020 weather dependent.


<https://www.themco.ca/artists-in-healthcare-manitoba/>


 A generous Winnipeg Foundation funded a new Mindfulness, Yoga and Meditation class at Selkirk Mental Health.


 A fifth Selkirk and District Community Foundation grant maintained weekly music concerts for residents in the Alzheimer's and Dementia Geriatric Programs at Selkirk Mental Health Centre.


 The Johnston Group concert series at St. Boniface Hospital went into its sixth season


 The Art in Hospital Donation program continued to receive and share art. A report to follow.


 Artists in Healthcare Manitoba have received their eighth City of Brandon grant for Music to My Ears to continue their long-term care series The Care Home Outreach Project.


 In the summer of 2019, we placed ten summer students, details to follow at the end of this report.

 The Art by the Big Blue Chair program was suspended in March 2019. Our Coordinator Kate Black used the remainder of the grant to create art project packages for patients at CancerCare.

 The St. Boniface Art Coordinator created 200 art packages for patients at SBH in March.

 A private donor gifted a third 160 hours of live music to Boundary Trails Health Centre.

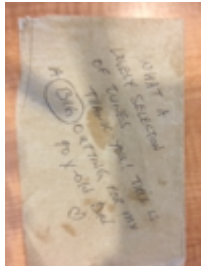
 The Manitoba Chamber Orchestra offered free tickets (50 tickets twice) to healthcare staff to attend their concerts.

 In May 2019, the Brandon palliative care funding was doubled to \$10,000 based on one family's very positive end of life experience.



The Johnston Group Series, St. Boniface Hospital

As in all of our reports, outcomes are most often captured by patient comments and stories. This particular day, the Johnston Group series with the MB Chamber Orchestra, were playing in the St. Boniface Hospital's Everett Atrium. When the musicians finished an older gentleman rolled his father by in a wheelchair to toss a message of thanks written on a napkin, to the players! They had come down to the atrium for lunch and were delighted to find live music, so they stayed and listened for the hour.



Opera students from the University of Manitoba toured an original show to a number of long-term care – this one at Deer Lodge Hospital.



Sierra Noble spent a day touring St. Boniface Hospital, playing for patients on eight units, bringing much joy to staff as well

OUR PROGRAMS:

Music to My Ears

Music to My Ears continues to be our core and most wide-reaching program. The response to the musicians is overwhelmingly positive, and we continue our efforts to expand into new hospitals, facilities and in long term and specialized care.

Musicians are found playing in patient waiting areas, at bedsides as invited and in a variety of common areas throughout the hospitals. This year has seen program expansion maintained at St. Boniface Hospital, Brandon Regional Health Authority and Selkirk Mental Health Centre with new year-round programming at Deer Lodge, Riverview and the Saul and Claribel Simkin Centre.

Music to My Ears can be found in rehabilitation units, in outpatient treatment areas such as dialysis, intensive care, psych health, radiation, cardiology, hematology, pediatric ambulatory clinic, geriatric, women and child, pain clinics and oncology. Through Music to My Ears, Artists in Healthcare are also an important part of hospices and palliative care. We aim to provide music anywhere it is possible to be enjoyed.

This year was our sixth year with the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra concert series at St. Boniface Hospital, in both the Everett Atrium and Buhler Gallery. Hospital staff and patients continue to enjoy the series, which grows yearly.



Guitarist Nic Lawrenz playing in the St. Boniface Hospital Everett Atrium – a Johnston Group series performance

Year-round programming was enjoyed in a number of health care settings, with the following hours of service:

Cancercare Manitoba - 546
 Grace Hospital and Hospice - 50
 Bethesda, South Eastman Steinbach – 144
 Brandon Regional Health Centre including Home Care Outreach– 1,020
 Boundary Trails Health Centre - 208
 Middlechurch Home of Winnipeg - 360
 Beacon Hill Lodge 72
 Health Sciences Centre
 Maples Personal Care 265
 Misericordia Place 384
 St. Boniface Hospital 1008
 Riverview Health Centre 384
 Selkirk Mental Health Centre 144
 Deer Lodge 384
 MATC 116
 St. Amant Centre 240
 Concordia 384

Including the summer student hours, Artists in Healthcare's (AIHM) musicians played over 7,000 hours reaching well over 8,000 patients and residents. Given the nature of the work and the environments where musicians play, including waiting areas, the numbers of patients reached are calculated with respectful guesses.

'Music is powerful. As people listen to it, they can be affected. They respond.' – Ray Charles

Art by the Big Blue Chair Cancercare

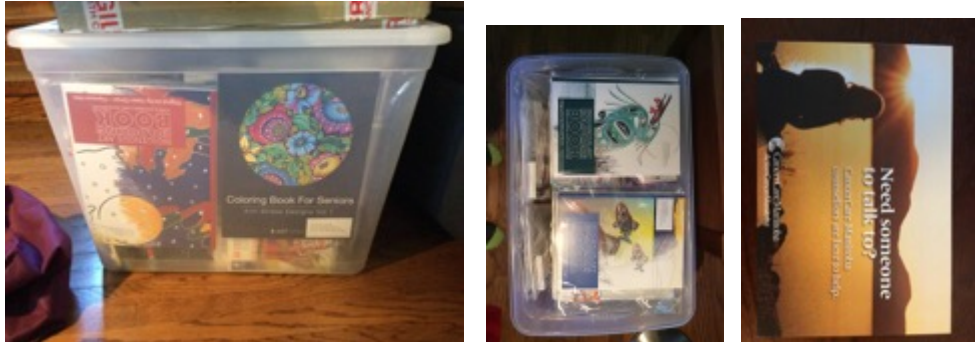
The Art by the Big Blue Chair program was suspended March 2020 due to COVID, leaving Artists in Healthcare with unspent funding at year end. Following consultation with Manitoba Arts Council program staff, program coordinator Kate Black purchased art supplies and created art packages for CancerCare MB chemo outpatients.

Kate worked with Psychosocial Oncology, Nursing and Art Therapy staff to develop patient focused art kits. The creation of these kits involved many hours discussions and hands on work to create feedback forms, instructions on the use of kits, research into products and pricing, coordinating the delivery of kits to patients and following up with nursing units and art therapy staff in person to ensure kit distribution.

The photos demonstrate the care and quality of art supplies Kate used. Information from Psychosocial Oncology was included in each kit, offering patients support and information regarding accessing counselling. An Artists in Healthcare CD was included for patients to listen to. In all, the creative repurposing of the grant, offered patients at six treatment sites, something engaging to do while receiving treatment, which they could take home.

We look forward to receiving feedback through the form offered to patients and will share this at a later date.

We are grateful to the Manitoba Arts Council for their agreement to repurpose the remainder of this grant, allowing Kate and Artists in Healthcare the flexibility to come up with an alternative plan to offer art making to patients at this time ☺



Examples of patient's mandala drawings:



Art at the Bedside St. Boniface and Grace hospitals

Art at the Bedside is in its ninth year at St. Boniface Hospital, providing approximately 60 volunteer hours monthly with 6 hours monthly paid coordination. Program hours, participants and projects chosen by patients are documented and tracked monthly.

Both programs access existing hospitals volunteers, trained by coordinator Claire Stephensen. The volunteers take art carts filled with creative projects ranging from collage, weaving, print making, beading and painting to make art bedside. As of March, Claire created 200 art project packages which were distributed by Volunteer Services and Spiritual Care staffs, to patients.



Volunteer comments:

- Visited with a patient in McEwen, left her paints to work on a bookmark. She was very happy.
- This lady only wanted to talk. We talked for about 1.5 hours; she told me things she never told anyone else. She said it felt good to get it off her chest.
- I made a paper quilt with a young girl
- Followed up with a young woman, previously did weaving. Showed her how to make a woven bag. She's in here for a long stretch and has two young daughters. She talked a lot about them.
- Made 2 bracelets with patients, they just wanted someone to talk to.

As you can see, the value of this program is as much friendly visiting as it is art making. The art becomes a conduit as people enjoy talking about their lives, confiding as they feel comfortable doing so, and enjoying a neutral relationship with another person in a hospital setting.



Culture Days 2019

This year Culture Days focused on the arts and health, led by their Executive Director who posted blogs on the arts which helped her through a cancer treatment process. Our CancerCare artist; Kate Black was chosen to be showcased in one of five videos made by Culture Days. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBwS2OaKAZM>

Art in Hospitals Donation Program

Art in Hospital Donation Program
Artists in Healthcare Manitoba
by
Gary Scherbain – Program Coordinator

Over the past four years, the value of Artists in Healthcare's Art Donation initiative has proven itself. To date 719 pieces of art have been donated with over 650 pieces given to healthcare facilities, and \$373,580 in charitable receipts issued.

Thanks to Artists in Healthcare's involvement, art was donated to more than 20 facilities – hospitals, hospices, treatment suites, out-patient facilities, long-term care as well as Selkirk Mental Health Centre.

The art donation program came about through the convergence of two factors—the aesthetic value of art and a surplus of art in the community.

While in university and with meagre financial resources I started buying art. I still have the first two local pencil sketches and an oil painting from Quebec City.

In 1966 I visited and procured my first two Daphne Odjig works when I met her in Easterville, Manitoba. Ultimately this led to almost 50 years operating The Wah-sa Gallery, devoted almost exclusively to Indigenous art.

During the last few years in the retail trade, we received an increasing number of calls from people who were at a stage in their lives where they wanted to dispose of art, but didn't want to throw it away. As a gallery we could not handle all the pieces people wanted to direct our way. There was also the personal question of how to occupy my time in semi-retirement when I exited the retail gallery.

Could we direct this art to hospitals? Surely, there had to be value in art on the walls to benefit patients and those visiting them. And what about the benefit to staff, hospital employees working in the premises every day?

The idea of an art donation program here in Winnipeg, was born...

You can now see the results of this program in patient rooms, waiting and family areas, ICU rooms and administrative offices. The program also allows facilities to use the donations to generate revenue for additional health services.

Thank you, Artists in Healthcare, for making this possible.

The Art in Hospitals Donation program also benefitted greatly from a large gift from a local dentist who collected close to 350 pieces of Indigenous art over three decades, often gifts from patients who could not afford treatment and from others who relied on income from his art purchases.. This collection was donated over a period of four months to Misericordia Hospital, Concordia Hospital, St. Boniface Hospital, McEwen Psych Health, Selkirk Mental Health Centre, Klinik, Centre de santé Saint-Boniface, South East Indigenous long-term care, Manitoba Adolescent Youth Treatment Centre and others. It was really a marvelous thing to be a part of, watching delighted staff choosing art for their facilities.



Art at the Manitoba Adolescent Youth Treatment Centre

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

In its seventh year at Selkirk Mental Health Centre (SMHC), Rejuvenation, Resilience and Recovery is a successful ongoing program thanks to the Winnipeg Foundation, the Selkirk District and Community Foundation and Bell Canada

'We are having a great time with lots of participation and so much mobility! Even my friend who has always opted to go out and smoke, sat and had coffee with us and did all the breathing exercises today!'

Music 'returned' to SMHC once weekly in the Alzheimer and Dementia Geriatric Program and dance/movement programming was resumed. The fifth Selkirk Foundation grant also covered the drummers and dancers for SMHC's Indigenous Day Celebrations for a second year.

The Dance/Movement program evolved as the staff's personal dance career thrived. Following a devastating stroke post brain cancer surgery, Ashley Voth developed a Mindfulness, Yoga and Music program to regain strength and movement. The program has become one of SMHC's favorites:

'Yoga classes at SMHC have been a wonderful opportunity to see the value of yoga in others' lives and journeys. Through this past year, these times of yoga practice have evolved. The classes began on a volunteer basis, then were fortunate to gain support through Artists in Healthcare. The classes halted when the current pandemic required a lockdown, and extra safety precautions in healthcare facilities led us to brainstorm other ways to continue classes. Now, we have restarted the yoga classes, having each session with the individual Area.'

Every week, we practice a variation of Chair Yoga classes with multiple Areas including Geriatrics, ABI, and Forensics. When this became a regular practice, the participants consistently showed enjoyment through the class, we formed connections as teacher and student, and they would often express their appreciation in various ways. When classes were held in the DBT Area of SMHC, there would be a student present in every class and always voicing how relaxing each class was and how wonderful she felt each week.'

Seeing recognition on the faces of some Geriatrics students and having many say they are happy to see the yoga classes return are some of the moments that make our yoga practice equally valuable for myself, as the teacher.'

Ashley

Manitoba Adolescent Youth Treatment Centre Songwriting Program

This program's funding ended in 2019 but has since received a second Telus grant of \$10,000 and is resuming virtually fall 2020.

Past quotes:

"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."

"I'm going to stop getting fake nails so I can learn how to play the guitar."

"We've been really impressed with the engagement we've been seeing. Everyone has been really interested and they get excited for every class." - A staff member

"I've always wanted to write a song, this is awesome." -

"This is several of the kids' favourite group." - A staff member

"Oh, so you can practice expressing yourself, and you'll get better at it..."

"Music is the universal language of mankind." - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



WHO WE ARE:

Executive Director

Shirley Grierson

Board of Directors

Chairperson - Tom Carson

Treasurer - Pam Campbell

Directors - Dan Donahue, Jennifer Dubienski, Chuck LaFleche

Honorary Advisory Council

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

Advisory Committee (Special Projects)

Sylvia Kuzyk, Barry McArton, Dr. Merrill Pauls, David Northcott

Communications

Leif Norman

PROGRAM STAFF and SUPPORT:

Art at the Bedside – St. Boniface Hospital

Program Coordinator – Claire Stephensen. This program's volunteer numbers range from 8 – 14

Art by the Big Blue Chair – Cancercare Manitoba and Misericordia Health Centre

Artist - Kate Black

19

The Care Home Outreach Project – Brandon

Student Musicians – University of Brandon

The Johnston Group St. Boniface Atrium Concert Series

Various MB Chamber Orchestra musicians as well as others from the community: Latin, Jazz and 60's musicians – these musicians will also be scheduled for the concert series in 18 facilities through our new Winnipeg Foundation Collaborative Grant with the MCO

Music to My Ears

Winnipeg:

Tim Cummings – CancerCare MB; Lynn McClure – Cancercare MB; Peter McClure - Cancercare MB; Ann-Marie Williot - St. Boniface Hospital; Alex Derlago, St. Boniface and CCMB; Aaron Shorr - St. Boniface Hospital and CCMB; Lois Gillespie - St. Boniface, Middlechurch, and Beacon Hill; Ashley Au - Grace Hospital; Daniel Nemez - Riverview Health Centre; Jesse Popeski – Deer Lodge Health Centre; Liz Goossen – Grace Hospital; Kyle Cobb -Health Sciences Centre; Brian James- CancerCare MB; Nic Lawrenz – St. Boniface Hospital; Madeleine Roger and Logan McKillop – Manitoba Adolescent Youth Treatment Centre

Brandon - Ann Germani, Ainsley Friesen, Naomi Leadbeater

Brandon Home Care Outreach – Ainsley Friesen and Naomi Leadbeater

Boundary Trails - Jess Reimer and Linda Hiebert

Bethesda - Willie Wiebe

Selkirk Mental Health Centre – Luciano Armenti

2019 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

Musician – Luciano Armenti

The Art in Hospital Donation Program – Gary Scherbain



artistsinhealthcare.com



Artists in Healthcare Manitoba
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STORIES FROM OUR SERVICE CANADA STUDENTS:

Service Canada 2019 student narrative



Artists in Healthcare received ten CSJ students through Service Canada this year.

- 1) St. Boniface Hospital – James Prescott
- 2) Health Sciences Centre – Blake Peter
- 3) Deer Lodge Health Centre – Brendan McLean
- 4) Riverview Health Centre – Daniel Nemez
- 5) Maples Personal Care Home – Justony Vasquez
- 6) Middlechurch Home of Winnipeg – Ashley Au
- 7) Concordia Hospital – Ryan Guth
- 8) St. Amant Centre – Erika Einarson
- 9) Misericordia Health Centre – George Bajer-Koulack
- 10) Brandon Regional Health Centre – Raelyn Adams

At this time, five of the ten musicians have been confirmed as hired by their hospitals/long-term care, to play weekly over the rest of the year and eight of the ten would like to return to another Service Canada placement next summer.

1) James Prescott – St. Boniface Hospital

My time in the hospital has been inspiring, and very uplifting as an artist who is still in a developmental stage of their career. The staff and patients in all areas of the hospital have been very

supportive and appreciative of the music I play. I was ending my week playing in the art gallery, when one of the board members of St. Boniface came in to see the new exhibit. The volunteers in the gallery brought him over to me so I could play a song for him. Once I finished we got to talking about the importance of the arts in healthcare. He noted that performing or painting in healthcare facilities is just as important for the artist as well as the patient, and that many artists and musicians spend their whole career unaware of the healing nature their art brings. This has been completely true for me, playing in a room and watching multiple patients relax and sleep, or bringing back fond memories of family members playing the same repertoire. *This job is giving me a deeper appreciation for my craft, and a new perspective on how music affects people.*

One day a family member wheeled a patient out to listen to me. I was playing Wildwood Flower which is a Carter Family staple and has become one of the tunes that every country and bluegrass musician knows. They sat right in front of me and just stared at my left hand the whole time. Once I finished the tune they said that they used to perform in a band and played that song differently than I had. They started asking questions about my technique, and how I played each of the different phrases. When I packed up and said goodbye their family had teared up and said thank you for the beautiful playing and good memories. After that encounter they always came over to visit if I was playing in the hallway or atrium and asked me to play Wildwood Flower. At the beginning I felt very in the way and out of place playing in the different wards, and I was really hoping I wouldn't disturb the staff members. After a few weeks some of the nursing staff started recognizing me and would start requesting songs, or sing along with my guitar playing. This always ends up snowballing, once patients see that I take requests and then I turn into a live karaoke machine! After one of these sessions I was asked to go into a patient's room to sing Somewhere over the Rainbow with their family member. We did a rough version with the family member singing harmonies. When I packed up the family thanked me for the distraction as the patient was anxious because they were waiting to go into surgery, and I had brought some joy to their day. I never thought I'd be performing and playing regularly in a hospital, but I've really come to love playing for everyone and am honoured that I get to share my gifts and skills with people who need some joy and relief in their day.

It's been awesome getting to play so much, and the patients and staff have been very supportive. This week a patient who joins me every time I show up on the ward, and enjoys singing jazz, said it was always a highlight of their day and week. The family thanked me, as they said the patient was really upset they weren't able to sing and play music while in the hospital.

I was up on one of the wards when a patient's child brought their guitar into the hospital to play a song for them. When they heard me performing they came out into the hallway with their guitar and jammed with me. I had an hour and a half left in my day, and the kid followed me around the ward and came to the atrium with me to keep playing (with their parent's permission of course).

Thank you for a great few months of employment. It honestly feels like I just started the job. I would love to be on the priority list, I'm finishing school this year, and then I'm taking a year to prepare for either a Bachelor's of Education, or a DMA/PhD in Jazz Composition, I'd love to do this again!
James

2) Blake Peter - Health Sciences Centre

The other day I was playing in a common area at the end of the day, it was the last ten minutes of my shift and I was almost wrapped up. As I was finishing a song a man came up to me holding a \$5 bill asking me to take it. I explained how we didn't take tips but thanked him for the offer. He then explained to me his current situation: his father had just had surgery the day prior and was currently on life support in the hospital. His father was also a musician and had taught him everything he knew. The man said that seeing me play guitar reminded him of when his father was well and brought

comfort and hope to him. We ended up chatting for a while about music and instruments. Hearing the condition of his father, all I could do was say how sorry I was to hear it and be a listening ear to him. It was a very special moment and a nice way to end the day.

Another moment happened in the rehab gardens last week. As I was playing a family came up to me with their younger child who was in a wheelchair and appeared to not be able move or talk. They asked if I could play a few songs while they sat. As I played you could see on the child's face that he was enjoying it in the midst of obviously difficult circumstances. The family said they had been at the hospital for months and this was the first time they were able to spend time together outside. It was truly a privilege to be part of that moment.

Last week as I was playing in the common area in front of cancer care I got chatting with a gentleman who was living at the hospital for the week. He was a musician himself but had an accident occur where he only has three fingers left on his hand. Throughout the week we chatted and connected about different types of music etc. At the end of the week he came up to me incredibly excited; he said it was his birthday and that he would love to be able to sing a song with me. We found one we both knew and went for it. Afterwards he said it made his day and that since he couldn't play guitar because of his hand this was very special for him and he was very thankful.

Another time last week as I was playing in a waiting room, two gentlemen came up beside me and were listening to me play. They had driven in from a reserve the day before and had been awake for over 36 hours. As I played, they commented how the music brought them peace in what had been a few hectic and crazy days for them. For me this was lovely and I was grateful to help bring some relief in an overall tough situation.

Last of all, my time in dialysis has been very rewarding. Getting to see the same people every week and learning their names is a really nice aspect of playing there. Patients often comment how they wish I could come play while they are getting their treatment, and that hearing music before, helps calm them down and relax. One patient specially asked if I had a CD of the music I was playing because he would love to listen to it at home too! Hearing this is always affirming and is a good reminder that people are appreciative of what this program does.

Playing with artists in Healthcare has been unlike anything I've experienced before. It's truly a place of privilege to be able to bring comfort through music to patients going through all kinds of circumstances beyond what I can imagine.

One of my highlights occurred last week. As I was taking an elevator up to play in a ward a patient commented on the guitar on my back and asked what I was up to. He ended up being in the same ward I was scheduled to play and as we were in the waiting room together, I got to play and dialogue about music, guitars and being in a band. Before you knew it an hour had gone by and he thanked me for making his time waiting great.

Playing in the common areas is also always enjoyable, as people will often stop and thank me for playing or comment how they enjoy the music. It's a very rewarding experience to help make their day a little better. I'm looking forward to what else awaits me as I continue with Artists in healthcare.
Blake

3) Brendan McLean – Deer Lodge Health Centre 2nd year

My time at Deer Lodge has been no less than incredible thus far. I am continuously making more connections with patients going room to room and am having a great time playing for large groups as well.

A really neat thing that happened recently was connecting with a fellow from China named "Qu". He is pursuing music therapy at CMU and his primary instrument is the Chinese Violin. He has been volunteering at Deer Lodge. Over the course of the last few weeks, we have played together in various units as a duo. I have shown him some Western music and he has shown me some of his traditional music from China. I am so happy as I'm continuously meeting new people through this job.

After reading Raelyn's email, I felt as though I could relate immensely. There are days where you are constantly playing and sometimes forget that people are actually listening! I have been receiving a lot of positive comments and it is a really great feeling and it really keeps the engine going. There's an older gentleman that I see every Tuesday, and if I'm not playing old country - I'm getting heckled. It's absolutely hilarious.

Some of the most joyous experiences that I've had at Deer Lodge have been working with patients in the special care units. Over that last two years I have pushed myself outside of my comfort zone with accompanying myself on guitar while singing. I have noticed that for the residents, especially in the special care units, there is an utmost positive energy in the room when I play/sing an old tune such as "Goodnight Irene" or "Bye Bye Blackbird". This creates a positive energy that is very special.

I would love to thank the staff at Deer Lodge for everything this summer and I would absolutely love to return next summer. Everyone has been absolutely amazing to work with and have truly made me feel welcome. Currently I am pursuing a bachelor of music ed. degree at the University of Manitoba and would be very happy to return to Deer Lodge next summer. Thank you for everything!

Brendan

4) Daniel Nemez – Riverview Health Centre 2nd year

The best thing about returning to the same place for a second summer is the few patients that remember me from last year. There is one wing that has a few patients who remember me. *One lady is always so excited to see me. She often looks rather sad when I come, and as soon as she looks up to see me her face lights up! It feels so amazing to be able to make someone's day better every time I see them.* Most of the times a family member brought me into a room happened on palliative care. In one case, I was playing outside a room, and a woman came outside crying, asking me if I would come inside the room. I went in and played for a few minutes, and she thanked me profusely. The next time I was in that wing, she was there again, and the same thing happened. The following day, I was at the elevators, and a woman asked me if I play in individual rooms. I said sure, and she asked if I would play for her dad on 3 east (she gave me the room number). She also said someone played there yesterday, and made his entire day. I knew it was this same room, and the first woman must have been the man's wife. The man wasn't doing so well, and didn't react beyond a smile when he first saw me come in, so it was amazing to hear that he was not only listening and enjoying, but it was the best part of his day!

One aspect that has been nice this year compared to last is that I have been invited into individual rooms much more frequently. I remember that last year there was some anxiety with walking the halls, hoping those in their rooms were enjoying the music and not bothered, but this year I've felt much more assured by family members and staff!

Daniel

5) Justony Vasquez – Maples Personal Care Home 3rd year

My experiences this year are just as fruitful and life-giving to me and those I encounter, as they have been for the last three summers. Family members, staff, and residents never fail to let me know the impact the music makes on their day to day lives.

I am always filled with gratitude when I realize that I can extend my humanity to the residents here through the gift of music and relate to them in ways that are unexplainable. One of my favourite recurring experiences so far is having the residents harmonize along to my singing.

I usually play songs throughout the lunch hour as background music for the residents. One day, *one of the Resident Care Managers asked me to softly sing to a man who was bed-ridden and was in his last few days life. I agreed willingly knowing the weight of the moment to come. When I started playing, the health care aid and the RCM in the room both instantly became emotional and had to leave the room. I was left with the resident and I, too, had to keep my composure. It was a beautiful moment to share as I pondered all the joys, trials, and victories his life must've been filled with.*

I help lead the music for the Roman Catholic Mass that occurs about twice a month. On one occasion, I was struck with joy from hearing the residents sing their favourite Marian hymn: Immaculate Mary. While each resident on their own faces moments of weakness that inevitably come with age, their voices came together to fill the room as a mighty chorus! There was only happiness in singing the familiar tune! Despite coming from different racial backgrounds, upbringings, and leading different lives, I was certain that in those moments of singing "Ave Maria!" we were in solidarity as brothers and sisters.

Over the summer, I've built friendships with many residents. When I first met Bonnie, she was sad and always anxiously waiting. Every day she let me keep her company in her waiting, and by the end of the program, she was always radiating happiness and friendship to other residents. William was another resident who I frequently sang with. He loved harmonizing to the tunes that I would sing and would never fail to share some inspirational messages. While at times he was angry (as all humans are), he always followed up with an apology and understanding of the importance of kindness and love in our world. I loved listening to his simple wisdom and singing hymns with William.

When we had outdoor parties I had the pleasure of sharing the gift of music. We'd share popsicles and songs every week. It was never a dull moment as friends, family, staff, and the residents themselves indulged in laughter and good times. The residents would often sing different harmonies and we'd always joke around about starting a choir. Some of our favourite tunes to sing together were "Happy Wanderer", "On Top of Old Smokey", "Take Me Home Country Roads", and everyone's all-time favourite: "You Are My Sunshine." I can't deny that this summer, I encountered many residents who were my sunshine, as I was theirs also!

The days aren't always easy or exciting, but reaping the small rewards of smiles and singing along makes it all worthwhile.

Justony

6) Ashley Au – Middlechurch Home of Winnipeg

My placement at Middlechurch Home has been an incredible learning experience. The recreation and nursing staff were very helpful in getting me oriented in the space and introduced me to the diverse community of residents living in each wing of the building.

I spent much of my time in the mornings, playing music for small groups of folks in their shared communal spaces as well as outside in the courtyard. During this time, I had the privilege of getting to know the residents and taking song requests. This process really expanded my personal repertoire of music and opened my ears to genres of music that I wasn't very familiar with.

The recreation workers were very keen on letting me know which residents had a particular fondness for music so that I would be sure to find them when I was performing on their units.

I met residents who were former musicians with orchestras and bands as well as residents that came from very musical families. I have also met folks who, having no experience playing music or being from a family immersed in it, had been lifelong admirers of music. I really treasure the conversations that I had with these folks because of how they emphasized the lasting impacts of art and music and its effect on one's quality of life. It has really changed the way I view my profession and how it impacts people on a daily basis.

The afternoons at Middlechurch were usually spent in the wing of the building that houses residents with higher needs. The folks living in this area of the building were living with various stages of Alzheimer's, dementia, and other cognitive impairments, requiring extra care and attention from staff. Many of the residents were non-verbal, in and out of lucidity, and in a state of anxiety. When I would perform for these residents, I was surprised to experience so many poignant and humbling moments.

One woman was new to the unit. She had previously been living independently and the transition to living in a community setting was unsettling. She had issues with memory and for the first couple weeks was nervous, almost on the verge of tears. When I first met her, she expressed her anxieties to me and would follow me around as I played on her unit. She would eventually sit down, listen quietly, and take deep breaths with her eyes closed, as though she was meditating. Afterwards, she would thank me for providing her with that quiet moment. She is now quite settled in her new living situation and less anxious.

There was a non-verbal resident who spent her time in the common area in a wheelchair. She would be present to my mini performances and I would be sure to say goodbye every day before I left. For weeks we would maintain this ritual until she surprisingly said, "thank you" when I was on my way out. During the entire time I was playing for her, I was questioning whether she was actively listening and definitely not expecting a response. But nevertheless, I was pleasantly surprised.

During that time, I met a woman who was in a wheelchair after a stroke. She seemed to be in a constant state of distress, reaching out towards passers-by, mouthing the words "I want to go home" to anyone who would listen. Her ability to speak was affected by her stroke and she was obviously very disheartened by this. I would spend time playing songs with her and talking about everyday things, she would nod or make faces to respond and usually by the end of our session, she would be calmed down, smiling and waving goodbye when I would be making my exit.

I could go on and on about the residents I've met and connected with over this summer placement. There was the Polish grandmother who loved to share her fond childhood memories of time spent singing and dancing with her mother and siblings while her father fiddled. Another gentleman wouldn't shy in telling me about his time as a touring country guitarist in his youth. Another, always requesting Patsy Cline and Kitty Wells songs and telling me about her extensive Country Western CD collection. One, who would belt the harmonies to You Are My Sunshine during group singalongs. Another woman had a guitar of her own and would ask for mini lessons to improve her technique. And one resident who loved to shower folks with compliments and would tell me, "you keep that up and take care of those hands", suggesting that I wear protective gloves when I'm not playing. Overall, my summer placement experience was so incredibly rewarding. I feel reinvigorated, purposeful and confident in my work as a musician.

Ashely

7) Ryan Guth – Concordia Hospital

I was welcomed into Concordia by friendly staff from Spiritual Care and Recreation therapy. I went on my first walkthrough with a very talented and experienced chaplain, Garry, who showed me the ropes as to how to best serve people who are staying in a hospital. He explained to me what is necessary to help those who are in pain or experiencing loss. I started out with very little repertoire

but was guided by the other chaplain, Lori, and given a list of essential hymns that would be sure to please most of my patients. I quickly learned them and began learning more tunes. The patients responded well to these instrumental pieces.

I created some nice relationships with some of the dementia patients and people who are here for extended periods of time. Soon I had "fans" who were excited when I would show up and would follow me around the wards, listening to my music. Staff also became warm to my presence.

My repertoire grew and was getting good patient responses. It was at this point I began experimenting with singing some songs when group sessions formed around me. I was nervous about this as I'm not a trained singer, but the patients were responding well to this type of performance. This encouraged me to explore this option more often, now giving patients the option of just guitar, or guitar and singing. It put the patient in control a bit and made them feel like they were sitting with a human jukebox, which delighted most.

Further into the summer, my repertoire grew significantly; around 20 hymns, 10 contemporary, and I could sing around 20 different songs. This is *when I started feeling confident. Nurses would on me to go see patients they felt might like the music or give them a distraction for a little while if they're restless. It also became a way to keep some wandering dementia patients seated and content for periods of time sometimes stretching to an hour, which apparently is quite a while.*

Towards the end of the summer I had created 26 original hymn arrangements, about 15 contemporary songs, and countless sung tunes, all under my belt ready to perform with only myself, my guitar, and my phone as tools. This has made me a very efficient and portable entertainment resource. In my time at Concordia, I've played at every part of the center, including Concordia Place, all regular wards, PANSU unit, Cancer Care, and often the waiting areas and hallways. I became very confident in my ability to divert and uplift patients with my music, or even simple conversation, keeping the patients company during the day who may not have visitors come for them. Overall, it was a very rewarding and worthwhile experience that I would gladly do again.

Ryan

8) Erika Einarson – St. Amant Centre

While working at St. Amant, I have been given the opportunity to collaborate with the centre's Spiritual Life Practitioner a few times a week. Together, we've been working on creating music relaxation concerts for people in the building - sometimes personalized sessions for specific people. For one woman who has been struggling with high anxiety and homesickness, we found a way to incorporate playing drums into my songs so that she could play along with me.

Being able to do something that she loves (drumming), while connecting with other people in a more comfortable way, she felt so happy and at home with us that she became emotional. It was one of the most powerful music experiences that I have ever had, and I'm glad I was able to help her feel more at home!

St. Amant has been really great for me to learn how to connect with people in an entirely different way. Based on the varying needs that different people have here, *almost everyone has a unique way of communicating- whether that be verbal, physical, or just small facial cues. As the person playing music, it is really amazing to see how both familiar and new songs can bring people in to a great headspace.*

Since I see the same people on a regular basis, I have been making a point to choose my new repertoire based on who I meet. Learning someone's favourite song is of course very exciting, but I had one gentleman who I decided to bring something different for. He gave me his preferred genre of

music, “sad country music”, and I came to him with both songs of that genre and some of my favourite songs based on that mood.

I felt that he really connected with me when I was able to say, “I brought you a new song that I thought you might like.”, but something that came from a meaningful place for me as well- he opened up to me way more than he ever had after I did that. This job gives a really unique way to make people feel special, and I’m glad that we can provide that lighthearted portion to peoples’ days through music.

Thank you!!

Erika

9) George Bajer-Koulack – Misericordia Health Centre

I have had a wonderful summer working at the Misericordia hospital. After all my experiences working here I strongly believe that the music programs I do are not simply entertainment, but essential therapy. It is difficult to properly convey the impact the music has on patients, but anyone who came to a concert would immediately see the benefit. *For certain residents in the advanced stages of Alzheimer’s and Dementia the impact is almost magical. I have witnessed residents who have difficulty completing sentences sing songs with me all the way through. The music can also calm down individuals who are stuck in negative thought loops, providing respite both for them and the staff members who have to contend with their anxiety on a daily basis.* One individual in particular is almost constantly concerned with the whereabouts of her children, she will ask where they are 30 times in one minute and forget the response in a matter of moments... the one time I see her relax is when I play a song she knows. As soon as she recognizes a tune the tension melts from her face and shoulders and her mouth drops into a contented smile. Unfortunately, the spell only lasts a short while and she soon returns to her anxious state when I am finished. Music is very powerful and it can bring joy to the hearts of people who no longer even have the ability to communicate. One time I was performing for a gentleman who was practically comatose, he was supported by a large wheelchair with head tilted back and eyes closed; I had never seen him react in any significant way to the ministrations of care aides or anything else that was going on. One day after I’d finished singing he suddenly started yelling loudly and waving his arms around, it was very surprising and he continued this behaviour every time I finished a song. After a while it became apparent that he was applauding the music! My work here is not only healing for the residents, but it also lifts my own spirits; people who have lost the majority of their memory remember my name and are excited when I arrive. There is nothing more satisfying then waking people from their depression, hearing them laugh and making them smile.

10) Raelyn Adams – Brandon Regional Health Centre

This summer working at Brandon has been such an amazing experience and I feel like I've already grown so much, not only as an artist, but personally. This is the first job I've ever had that I actually feel like my work is making a real and positive impact on those around me. I feel like I have a purpose to go to work each day other than just a paycheck. I didn't know what exactly to expect with this job but it is incredible how much music can truly help people. I find that in every single place through the hospital, the vibes are different. It is so interesting and playing in each different section is its own unique experience. It makes me realize how much music actually means and how it can literally change a mood. The first week at the hospital, I almost couldn't believe it. Music truly works! People being brightened by even a simple melody is truly a "you need to see it to believe it" sort of scenario, and I am so lucky to be getting to see it!

Today I played in the Center for Adult Psychiatry. The group at CAP today was very energetic and I was getting a lot of requests. Strangely enough we stumbled onto the stream of artists like Queen, and Prince. I ended up playing Kiss by Prince and EVERYONE was singing along, laughing and doing Prince impressions. It was super funny and uplifting. I would have never thought I'd be playing Prince covers

in the hospital but it goes to show that you never know what will happen! They gave me a thank you card with hand written notes which everyone in CAP signed. That really warmed my heart. Yesterday in dialysis, the employee who was earlier telling me how inspired they were, actually got a classical guitar over the weekend! So that is super exciting for them.

I wanted to thank you again for giving me the opportunity this summer. I look forward to potentially doing it next summer again!

Last week, it was nearing the end of the day and I decided to play a few songs in the atrium to finish off the afternoon. At the end of those 10 minutes, I head back to the office and as I'm almost there I hear my name being called. I turn around and see a staff member from dialysis. She was super excited and went on to tell me how my music was so inspiring and that all day she went home and couldn't stop thinking about it. She said she told her husband that she had been inspired and needed to buy an acoustic or a classical guitar and start learning how to play! This was so cool for me to hear, because even though this job is wonderful, at times I just feel on autopilot mode and forget that I am actually playing for people and that they are hearing what I am putting out. *Often times we are thinking about trying to make the patients feel better, disregarding that staff is listening as well. She also told me that one other staff member told her, that when I played for dialysis, her productivity level went up 100%. So to know that I am having this much of an impact is just wild. And knowing that the staff is being helped, in turn helps the patients, as the staff are inspired to be working better.*
Raelyn

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New in 2019 – Culture Days video on Kate Black, our Art by the Big Blue Chair artist at
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