



HONOURING THE JOURNEY:

Truth, Respect and Reconciliation



ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025



Land Acknowledgement:

The Link: Youth and Family Supports is honoured to be situated on Indigenous lands where we work with Indigenous and non-Indigenous families, staff and communities. Our offices and homes are located on Inineew, Anishinaabe, Anishiniimowin, Dene, and Dakota land and in the Homeland of the Red River Métis. Our head office is located on Treaty 1 territory, and our homes and sub-offices are located throughout Treaty 2 and Treaty 5 territories. We acknowledge the harms that our work, rooted in colonial systems, has caused and we are dedicated to correcting our mistakes by listening, learning from and cooperating with Indigenous communities and families in a spirit of truth, respect, collaboration and reconciliation.



VALUES

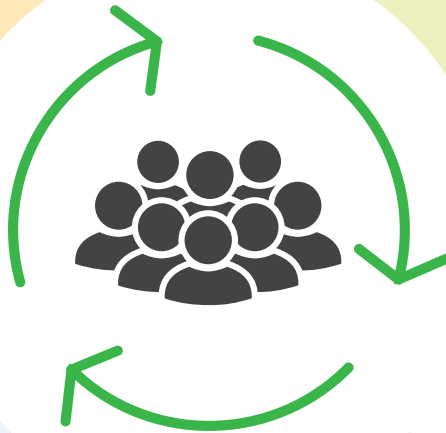
Compassion: through Inclusivity, Respect and Humility.

Community: through Engagement, Reciprocity and Responsibility.

Well-being: through Connection, Growth and Balance.

VISION

To become a community that shapes and creates opportunities for belonging, pride and purpose.



MISSION

We walk alongside children, youth, adults and families as an inclusive community, strengthening and empowering a sense of belonging, pride and purpose.



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Message from the Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer

The Link: Youth and Family Supports provided critical, life-changing support to youth, adults and families across Manitoba. Our 2024-2025 Annual Report summarizes the outcomes and impact of the services we delivered over the course of the fiscal year.

In September 2024, our Board of Directors announced a community engagement process to find an Indigenous government or community partner to transition The Link's services and programs to become Indigenous led. Community meetings were hosted with Métis, First Nation and Inuit leaders to discuss the concept and identify strategies to move forward.

In January 2025, we welcomed Victoria Fisher as our First Nation Associate CEO. She led program redesigns that worked towards enhancing organizational capacity to decolonize current services, such as the Mobile Crisis Team program, as well as conducting organizational policy reviews. These changes will assist in further developing community services to better serve the 90% Indigenous participants The Link has the honour of serving (75% First Nation, 22% Metis and 3% Inuit).

In 2023, The Link acknowledged and responded to the issue of being unable to recruit culturally relevant Foster Care Providers. In response, we've transferred Foster Care Providers and the children/youth served back to Indigenous guardian agencies.

In early 2025, the organization was approached by Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, which expressed an interest in exploring a potential transition of The Link to their jurisdiction. We initiated a due diligence phase that will provide organizational facts to the Nation to make an informed decision on a historic repatriation of service to a First Nations community, as they consider leading service delivery at The Link for all Manitobans.

Our programs this year continued to focus on young people and families who are navigating serious challenges—such as homelessness, involvement in the child welfare or justice systems and experiences of trauma, violence or exploitation. With every program we offer, our goal remains the same: to meet people where they are, walk alongside them with respect and compassion and help them move toward safety, stability and hope for the future. During the 2024-2025 fiscal year, we successfully operated the following programs:

- Housing and Stabilization Services
- Justice Services
- Child Welfare and Family Support Services
- Shelter and Anti-Exploitation Programs

We are incredibly proud of the work that Link staff, youth and partners have done together this past year. These programs are not just services—they are lifelines. Behind every statistic in this report is a young person or a family who faced real hardship and found support, guidance and hope through The Link. We are deeply grateful for the partnership and trust that make this work possible.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to delivering high-quality, culturally responsive services that lift up youth and families across our community. We thank our partners, funders and community collaborators for continuing to believe in and support this mission.



Kerri Irvin-Ross
Chief Executive Officer



Candace Olson
President of the
Board and Chair

Introducing Victoria Fisher

First Nations Associate CEO



Welcoming Victoria Fisher: A Vision for Inclusive Leadership

In January 2025, Victoria Fisher joined The Link as First Nations Associate CEO, bringing a powerful vision for inclusive leadership grounded in her identity as a member of Ebb and Flow First Nation and her deep respect for First Nations communities.

With extensive experience and a strong sense of purpose, Victoria is focused on fostering collaboration, inclusivity and meaningful engagement with youth, families and communities. “Together, we can work as one team to create meaningful impact,” she says, emphasizing the need for shared understanding and collective responsibility in shaping the organization’s future.

Central to her approach is ensuring First Nations voices are heard and respected. She advocates for structural change, including the revival of the youth council, to give young people a direct role in decision-making. “It’s essential to include the voices of those we serve,” she notes.

Victoria also highlights the importance of relationship-based work and recognizes the intergenerational impacts of systemic barriers. Her goal is to shift power and resources to communities, creating space for self-determination and culturally grounded solutions.

As The Link begins a community consultation process to transition the organization to be Indigenous led with First Nations partners, Victoria sees this as a vital opportunity to align services with Indigenous values and traditions. “This process is about building trust and allowing our work to evolve in response to community needs,” she explains.

Her leadership is rooted in humility and critical reflection, aiming to move beyond colonial frameworks and create a more inclusive, self-aware organization. “The people we serve should be reflected in how we guide and deliver services,” she says. “Success means building something new—together.”

At The Link, we are proud to support more than 10,000 youth and families across Manitoba each year.



Our dedicated team delivers a wide range of comprehensive, community-based programs and wraparound services designed to empower individuals and families by ensuring they have the tools, resources and support needed not just to overcome challenges—but to truly thrive. These services aim to:

- Help individuals reconnect with their culture, identity and community.
- Promote physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.
- Nurture safe, caring and respectful relationships with family, peers and the broader community.
- Equip young people with the essential life skills they need for long-term success, including access to academic support and job training opportunities.

The three priorities from our 2025-2026 strategic plan:

1. The Link will continue to deliver programs that respond to the needs of children, youth and families.
2. The Link will further develop relationships and understanding with Indigenous communities toward reconciliation.
3. The Link will enhance staff recruitment and retention to ensure quality services are provided by skilled and committed people.



Joshua Nepinak, Board Member and Youth Representative, shared opening remarks at our Leadership Summit on March 3, 2025, where we gathered for a day of connection, collaboration and forward-thinking.



Cathy Steven and Kathleen Bluesky facilitated as the team explored new possibilities and worked collaboratively to shape the vision for The Link.



Board of Directors

Candace Olson
President of the
Board and Chair

Brandy Kowal
Vice Chair

Ryan Kwan
Secretary Treasurer

Kaeden Merasty
Director

Sudhir Sandhu
Director

Caroline Christie
Director

Alyssa Mariani
Director

Joshua Nepinak
Director (Youth
Representative)

Gordon Chandler
Director (Appointed
September 2024)

Glen Fleetwood
Director (Appointed
September 2024)

Saheed Lasisi
Director (Appointed
September 2024)

Sarah Corley
Secretary and Treasurer
(Completed Term
September 2024)

Shane Storie
Past President
(Completed Term
September 2024)

Alec MacIsaac
Director (Completed
Term September 2024)

Mandeep Rai
Director (Completed
Term September 2024)



Advancing Reconciliation at The Link

Throughout 2024-2025, The Link continued its ongoing commitment to addressing the lasting impacts of Canada's Indian Residential School System, colonization and the systemic challenges faced by Indigenous peoples today.

Our journey toward reconciliation began in spring 2021, with a customized organizational development process created in partnership with the Manitoba Harm Reduction Network and Ka Ni Kanichihk. This initiative was specifically designed to support non-Indigenous organizations like The Link in deepening their understanding of these complex and deeply rooted issues.

At the heart of this work is a commitment to increasing staff knowledge about Canada's colonial history, the Residential School System and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action. Every department across The Link is actively working to integrate these Calls into our daily operations, with the goal of making our programs and services more culturally responsive and supportive for Indigenous youth and families. We remain focused on creating safer, more inclusive spaces grounded in respect and cultural humility.

The Indigenous Initiatives team, along with our Knowledge Keeper, continue to provide essential leadership by guiding staff through cultural teachings and programming. They also share community-led events and initiatives, helping our teams and youth connect with culture, tradition and healing. In addition, ongoing training opportunities support our reconciliation efforts by deepening staff understanding and equipping them to apply culturally safe practices in their work.

This year, we took meaningful steps toward advancing Truth and Reconciliation within our organization and the communities we serve. We welcomed an Associate First Nations CEO to our leadership team—an important milestone in deepening Indigenous representation at the executive level. We began a community engagement process directly with

Indigenous communities to listen, learn, and co-create a path forward for our organization.

We also partnered with Spirited Ways Consulting, whose expertise helped to align our practices with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. This collaboration ensures that our commitments are not only intentional, but also accountable and informed by Indigenous perspectives.

We recognize that reconciliation is an ongoing journey and we remain committed to walking it with humility, respect and purpose.

The organization focused on three of the 94 Calls to Action in 2024-2025:

#1 We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care by:

- ii. Providing adequate resources to enable Aboriginal communities and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together where it is safe to do so, and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments, regardless of where they reside.

#66 We call upon the federal government to establish multi-year funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation and establish a national network to share the information and best practices. .

92 We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources.

- iii. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.



If you would like to learn more:

- Read the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#).
- Watch the [Every Child Matters: Reconciliation through Education](#) videos.
- Visit the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) website: www.nctr.ca



Meet the Team

Cheyla

Youth Ambassador

In December 2024, we shared the inspiring story of Cheyla, a single mom whose journey from struggle to strength is a testament to the power of community and perseverance.

Three years ago, Cheyla was navigating the challenges of single motherhood on Employment and Income Assistance when she found The Link through the NorWest Co-Op Youth Employment Supports for Success (YESS) Program. Cheyla knew she wanted to work in a place that embraced community and Indigenous culture, so when The Link reached out, she found a home that supported her growth.

As a Youth Ambassador, Cheyla empowered youth by guiding them to programs and creating safe spaces for discussion. “It was a great role, and I loved it,” she recalls. Her career flourished when she joined the Indigenous Initiatives team, where Cheryl Alexander’s mentorship connected her to her culture and healing traditions. “Getting to know our teachings healed a little bit inside of me,” Cheyla shares.

Balancing work, parenting and education was a struggle, but Cheyla’s devotion to her daughter kept her motivated and, with support from her co-parent, she pursued a welding program for women, one of the hardest and most rewarding achievements of her life. “I am very proud of myself for doing that,” Cheyla beams. This accomplishment showed her daughter that education is lifelong, and a brighter future is possible.

The support Cheyla received at The Link was unwavering. “They were the most supportive people ever,” Cheyla says. Supervisors Cheryl and Kerri Irvin-Ross attended her graduation, and the youth she worked with even asked if they could come. “It was amazing to see the relationships I built and the impact I made,” she reflects.

Cheyla continues to inspire with her resilience and belief that, with community support, anything is possible. To young mothers in similar situations, she shares:









*Don't be scared to ask for help.
If not for you, do it for your kids.
You'll look back and be proud
of what you've accomplished.*



Youth Engagement Survey Report

At The Link, our Youth Engagement Survey is a voluntary initiative designed for youth up to age 29 who access our Healing Homes, COACH, LIFE Apartment, Youth Hub and Youth Resource Centre programs. This survey is a valuable tool that facilitates meaningful, therapeutic conversations between caregivers and young individuals, helping to ensure that their perspectives are integral to shaping the quality and effectiveness of the care they receive. It also provides The Link with valuable insights and opportunities to:

 <p>Highlight Strength-Based and Recovery-Oriented Practices:</p> <p>By valuing and integrating youth feedback, we can continuously improve the care we provide.</p>	 <p>Empower Youth in Their Care:</p> <p>Involving youth in their own care plans and goal setting nurtures greater engagement and personal investment in their journey.</p>	 <p>Address Concerns and Celebrate Successes:</p> <p>The survey helps us identify and address any concerns while also recognizing and celebrating positive developments.</p>
 <p>Enhance Family and Community Engagement:</p> <p>Feedback is used to strengthen and support positive interactions between youth, their families and their communities.</p>	 <p>Improve Experiences and Service Effectiveness:</p> <p>Insights gained from the survey help us refine our services to better meet the needs of the youth we serve.</p>	 <p>Respect and Uphold Youth Rights:</p> <p>This process ensures that the voices of the young people we work with are heard and their rights are respected.</p>



148
surveys completed



79%
feel safe in the home where they live



90%
have at least one safe adult they feel comfortable talking to



76%
practice or explore spiritual and cultural traditions and customs that are important to them



79%
feel they have a voice in their own planning and goal setting



Training

Our organization is committed to delivering exceptional programs for children, youth and families across Manitoba, which means that, each year, we dedicate hundreds of hours to training and developing our team members. This ensures they are equipped with the skills, knowledge and confidence to provide the highest quality of care and support to meet the diverse and evolving needs of the individuals and communities we serve.

The Link continues to create meaningful learning opportunities for its Youth Care Practitioners (YCPs), ensuring they receive the training necessary to not only achieve positive outcomes for the youth they support, but also to foster their own professional development and long-term success. A one-week YCP 101 Orientation training program is provided to all new Youth Care Practitioner hires. This orientation builds foundational knowledge and confidence before staff begin work in our healing homes. Additionally, current staff are welcome to attend the workshops as a refresher. Over the course of the week, participants engage in eight to ten different sessions designed to support their success in the role.

In fall 2024, The Link was proud to launch an online Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) training for all team members. These eight modules equip staff with the tools to better understand, create and maintain a supportive, diverse and inclusive workplace culture.

Further demonstrating its commitment to internal capacity-building, The Link has successfully developed two in-house trainer roles for Purposeful Use of Daily Life Events (DLE) and is actively working towards training internal facilitators for Therapeutic Crisis Solutions (TCS).

Throughout 2024-25, we offered the following new training opportunities and workshops:

Aanioobijigan Series (Lateral Violence to Lateral Love, Rites of Passage, Seven Sacred Teachings)

Anti-Oppression/Anti-Racism/Implicit Bias

Making Truth and Reconciliation Real

Neurodiversity Affirming Strategies and Co-Regulation

Working with 2SLGBTQI+ Youth

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



The Link offers **30**
internal training opportunities



There were **7,472**
hours of training completed
in 2024-25



934 participants across
the organization

Indigenous Initiatives

The Indigenous Initiatives team at The Link plays a vital role in nurturing cultural connections and supporting the healing journey of Indigenous youth and families. Through the sharing of traditional knowledge, languages, land-based teachings and cultural practices, the team actively engages youth, families, staff and community members—strengthening identity, belonging and resilience.

Aligned with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, which emphasize the importance of culturally grounded and community-led supports for Indigenous children and youth, The Link acknowledges its responsibility to act. As a non-Indigenous organization serving a predominantly Indigenous population—90% of the youth in our care—it is essential that we create meaningful opportunities for culturally resonant healing and connection, in response to the enduring impacts of colonialism.

Our programming includes a blend of daily practices, weekly, monthly and seasonal cultural activities, all designed to foster a strong sense of belonging, confidence and mastery. These experiences are intentionally rooted in cultural authenticity and respect, ensuring that Indigenous youth and families are supported in reclaiming identity, community and connection.

The Team

- Cheryl Alexander, Knowledge Keeper
- Norway Rabliauskas, Uncle
- Blair Carriere, Uncle
- Jocelyn Pambrun, Auntie
- Cheyla Ponace, Youth Ambassador

Community and Restorative Cultural Healing through Indigenous Initiatives in the North

Youth involved with the Northern programs attended local cultural events such as Pow Wows and traditional teachings. All youth groups were facilitated with Indigenous perspectives at the foundation, such as:

- Sharing circles
- Language (Cree and Ojibway languages incorporated into activities)
- Indigenous teachings, perspectives, values and connection to the medicine circle
- Cultural relevancy and respect
- True history and traumas acknowledged



Overview of Programs and Services

Community and Youth Care Services

The Link: Youth and Family Supports offers a range of services to help stabilize youth and families in times of crisis and improve long-term strength, resilience and well-being. Our goal is to help keep families together, surrounded by an extended community of support.

Heart to Home provides short- and long-term specialized and trauma-informed alternative care services for children and youth for whom good homes are hard to find. The Heart to Home program is currently operated at Thompson and The Pas, with a goal to transition the homes to First Nations agencies to provide care that is directed by the distinct First Nations identities of our young people.

Healing Homes are a network of community care dedicated to providing safe and nurturing environments for young people ages 10-18. These homes offer personalized support focused on supporting personal, emotional and social growth. In 2024-25, The Link operated 12 Healing Homes.



Caring Connections is a family preservation and reunification program that offers a safe, nurturing environment with mental health and clinical supports available on-site, as well as access to The Link's multi-disciplinary clinical team. In 2024-25, the program supported 33 youth and their families.



Kent Road Lodge is an Out of Home Respite and Family Support Resource built in partnership with Winnipeg, Rural and Northern Child and Family Service Agencies and the General Authority. This program offers community-based service focused on preservation of care for young people whose needs are complex. The program assists families through building upon their skills and providing relief when in need.



91
families
supported



194
family
visits

Rebuilding Connections are homes that support families through facilitating meaningful visits. Child and Family Service Agencies book visits for families based on their needs and goals. The team is trained to engage families in problem-solving, child-centered play and caring for the home. Rebuilding Connections provides a safe and supportive environment where staff build trusting relationships with parents that are centred in strengthening families and promoting healthy child development.

Janice Howard, Manager of Family Preservation and Reunification, facilitated a presentation on the program at the 2024 National Child and Youth Care Conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The theme of the conference was “Ally-ship: From the Heart,” with a focus on inclusivity and anti-oppression in Child and Youth Care. At the conference, Janice shared the successes of families; her presentation focused on the importance of nurturing family relationships, creating space for reunification and the journey of developing resources that respond to the needs of families.



Regent



342
hours of hourly
visitation



687
overnight
stays

Pandora (2 suites)

Suite A —
opened May 2024



946
hours of hourly
visitation

Suite B — opened
December 2024



121
overnight
stays



44
Families Reunified

Mobile Crisis Teams (MCT) supports youth and families facing challenges and conflict. This includes the areas of family conflict, mental health and individual wellness. MCT Clinicians respond to calls of support to assist youth and families where they need us. Our approach focuses on providing on-site intervention and collaborating with partners in service to promote emotional and physical safety. The program is available 24 hours per day.

In 2024, The Link initiated a program review and redesign exercise to enhance our response to the needs of young people and families. We invited young people, families, caregivers and service professionals to share feedback that informed the development of new approaches to service delivery that meets the real and changing needs of our community.



If you or someone you know is in crisis,
call 204-949-4777 or 1-888-383-2776.

Or TEXT us!

Our 24/7 text line supports youth in Manitoba!

Those needing assistance can text “support” to 204-900-6010.

TEXT
for support

204-900-6010

24/7 Crisis Line and Mobile Crisis Teams

Callers will speak to The Link’s team of intake clinicians who help youth, families and caregivers experiencing mental health concerns, conflict and other challenges.

7,884
calls received by
The Link’s intake
clinicians from
April 1, 2024, to
March 31, 2025

595
youth remained safe
and supported in crisis
stabilization units for an
average of 3.4 days

249
youth in crisis received
educational supports
to ensure they stay in
school and on track to
achieve their goals

399
families benefited from
intensive therapy from
our Brief Therapy Team

The top two issues presented at the time of the calls were:

- 1

Mental Health Challenges
- 2

Family Conflict

Brief Therapy Team are therapists who collaborate with young people and their community to plan and begin their therapeutic path. Services provided by the team include intensive individual and family-oriented therapy that is provided over a six- to eight-session schedule. Goals defined by the young person and their family inform practical strategies focused on by the therapists during the sessions.

The Youth Hub is a safe and welcoming space where youth ages 16-29 can connect and access resources, ranging from food and clothing to mental health supports and system navigation services. The Hub champions Harm Reduction practices and works to eliminate barriers and create a welcoming environment for everyone. The Youth Hub Team support youth in accessing services including Employment and Income Assistance, Housing, and Community Activities. The kind and welcoming environment created by the team has resulted in the Hub being a resource of choice for young people.

3,264
youth attended The Hub
with more than 18,000
visits in 2024

150
meals made and
served per day =
450,000
meals annually

90%
of youth who attend
The Hub are Indigenous

90%
of The Hub's team
are Indigenous

“ The Hub helped me with my mental health and helped me get back on my feet.



“ Thank you for helping me have a safe place.

COACH Program is a partnership between The Link, Child and Family Services Authorities and the Winnipeg School Division with funding from the Province of Manitoba's Department Housing, Addictions and Homelessness. The goal is to provide a comprehensive, wraparound program consisting of academics and after-school and evening programming. The program is divided into two groups: COACH 1 for grades 1-6 and COACH 2 for grades 7-9. Coaches are employees of The Link and they support, mentor and care for the students in the classroom and community. They also encourage youth to engage in community activities and offer ongoing support to their families.

The goals of the COACH program are to:

- Create relationships that promote successful educational and community experiences
- Increase student attendance
- Reintegrate students into their community school

In 2024, an evaluation of the COACH program was carried out to inform further planning and expansion of wraparound services in schools, including the potential to include a COACH 3 that is developmentally appropriate for students ages 16+ to support young people towards graduation.

Each year, on average, COACH students advance



1.4 grade levels
in reading



1.2 grade levels
in writing



1.1 grade levels
in numeracy



Students show an average
39% progress
towards achieving individual
goals, ranging from 15% to
75% goal achievement per year.

“ I became a part of the COACH family, and they treated me with respect and dignity and understood me and my child. I didn't feel judged. I was so relieved when I saw that this school was different. My son has had an excellent school year, began to re-like school and is now reading and writing at grade level.

• Mental Health and Substance Use Supports

The Link offers a range of crisis supports to help stabilize youth under the age of 21 experiencing trauma, suicidal thoughts and difficulty coping, while also ensuring emotional, physical and cultural safety and wellness for everyone in the home.

Our organization has a diverse group of experienced and knowledgeable people representing various professional disciplines, which include youth care practitioners (YCPs), occupational therapists, marriage and family therapists, and Master of Social Work and Master in Counselling Psychology therapists to help steer the organization toward clinical excellence in supporting our young people.

Our programs support individuals, couples or families who are navigating a variety of challenges including grief/loss, anxiety, depression, life transitions, issues related to gender and sexuality, divorce, communication, trauma and stress.

Momentum Program offers a collection of free therapy groups facilitated by The Link's clinical team. Topics include parenting during times of crisis, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) and social emotional learning.

Connect Program is a free community-based therapy program and is run entirely by Master's-level therapy students from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds.

• Youth Resource Centres (YRCs) and Emergency Shelters

The Link operates two Youth Resource Centres (YRCs) and Emergency Shelters, located in Winnipeg and Thompson, Manitoba. These facilities are available 24/7, serving as emergency and transitional shelters for youth and young adults aged 12-20.

Our YRCs offer a safe, supportive environment where youth can stay overnight or for short periods, ensuring they have access to a warm bed and essential resources. We provide a crisis response and basic needs support that is accessible around the clock, either in person or by phone.

We cater to youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and who may be involved in the child welfare or justice systems. YRC also serves as a support for the parents.

YRCs also serve as a resource for parents and community members seeking support and information.

Our services include:

- **Food, Clothing and Hygiene Needs:** Providing nourishment, clothing and hygiene products.
- **Showers and Laundry:** Ensuring access to clean clothing and personal hygiene.
- **First Aid and Emergency Transportation:** Offering immediate medical assistance and transportation support.
- **Bus Tickets:** Facilitating necessary travel.
- **Indigenous Initiatives:** Cultural programs and resources.
- **System Navigation:** Assistance in accessing various support systems.
- **Referrals and Advocacy:** Helping youth connect with additional services and advocate for their needs.
- **Mental Health and Addictions Counselling:** Providing professional support for mental health and substance use issues.
- **Crisis Intervention:** Offering immediate support during critical situations.



YRC Winnipeg



1,304 individual youth were provided with basic needs and supports a total of **6,294** times, which includes overnight shelter stays and walk-in and call-in services



394 individual youth provided with **1,502** overnight shelter stays



1,346 professional contacts in network of youth-serving agencies



YRC Thompson



3,742 youth walk-ins supported



1,115 overnight stays



StreetReach North plays an important role assisting youth in Thompson and the surrounding community. StreetReach is part of Tracia's Trust, the Manitoba Government's strategy to prevent sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of children and youth. The StreetReach program currently includes a Winnipeg team and Northern team. The program works with community organizations and child welfare, education and justice partners to provide a comprehensive and coordinated rapid response to address the safety and well-being of vulnerable children and youth.

Skills4Life Programs

In 2024-2025, there were four Skills4Life programs, each aiming to help youth and young adults achieve goals for school, work and life.

1

Life Train

2

Positive
Alternatives
for Youth (PAY)

3

Independent
Living with
Supports (ILS)

4

Housing First

Skills4Life Program Participants and Employer Partners

223

Life Train
participants

192

Positive Alternatives for Youth
(PAY) participants

Community Partners for PAY:

- Revive and Thrive Thrift Store
- Riverview Health Centre
- FortWhyte Farms
- Manitoba Harvest
- Animal Services Agency

46

Independent Living
with Supports
participants



24

Housing First
participants



Northern Housing Supports

The Link has two housing support programs in the North: the Independent Living with Supports (ILS) North – Transition House Program and the LIFE Apartment Program. Both programs assist youth ages 16-21 as they prepare their transition to independent living by providing educational and employment services for youth learning to live on their own and, in some circumstances, with their own children.

All youth involved in the programs receive a minimum of 15 support hours per week. Support hours are determined based on individual needs, plans and youth-led goals to assist program participants with budgeting, shopping, child care, scheduling/attending appointments and school or employment commitments.

ILS North provides young adults with the necessary life skills to transition into independence. The following are some examples of the Life Skills Supports:

- Assistance to obtain all forms of identification
- Access to primary health care
- Home maintenance and tenant supports
- Money management skills
- Meal planning and preparation
- Educational and employment resources



Team Building and Staff Wellness

At The Link, we know that the strength of our work begins with the strength of our people. That's why we're committed to creating an environment where staff are encouraged to **learn, grow and connect**—both personally and professionally.

Through intentional team-building activities, wellness initiatives and opportunities to celebrate diverse cultures and identities, we nurture a workplace culture rooted in inclusion, support and shared purpose.

This past year, some of our most memorable moments included:

- Marching with pride in the **Winnipeg Pride Parade**
- Laughing (and competing!) during our **"Minute to Win It" Team-Building Week**
- Taking time to reflect and recharge at our **Mental Health Week Coffee Break**
- Celebrating culture and community at the **Kent Road Lodge Nigerian Celebration**
- Honouring leadership and empowerment on **International Women's Day**

Whether we're showing up in the community or coming together in the office, these shared experiences strengthen our bonds, reinforce our values and remind us that we're not just coworkers, we're a team working toward a common goal.





Community Engagement

At The Link, community engagement is at the heart of everything we do. We're committed to building authentic relationships that create meaningful collaboration, shared learning and lasting impact.

By actively listening to and partnering with local organizations, service providers and stakeholders, we've deepened our connections and broadened our reach. From grassroots initiatives to province-wide campaigns, our approach prioritizes inclusivity, responsiveness and community-led solutions.

This year, our engagement efforts included:

- Hosting **tours** and **informational meetings** with potential partners and supporters
- Participating in **external events** that support youth, families and community, such as the 2024 Winnipeg Street Census
- Making **presentations** at conferences and workshops to share knowledge and advocate for systemic change
- Setting up **information booths** at job fairs, school events and mental health resource fairs

These activities not only build trust and visibility but also lay the groundwork for future partnerships and projects. By showing up, sharing resources and creating space for dialogue, we're helping ensure that our services reflect the real needs of the communities we serve.



Gang Life is No Life – Fall 2024 Campaign Update

The Gang Life is No Life campaign returned in Fall 2024 with a refreshed digital rollout targeting youth aged 13-16 across Manitoba. Building on the success of its award-winning launch in 2023, the campaign once again used a bold, video game-inspired design to highlight the real dangers of gang involvement, including gun violence, drug use and sexual exploitation.

Funded by the Manitoba Association of Chiefs of Police (MACP) and Manitoba Justice, the campaign also features a direct support component. Youth are encouraged to reach out via text to a confidential hotline operated by The Link: Youth and Family Supports, connecting them with trained crisis staff who can help them safely exit gang life. Since the campaign launched, there have been approximately 550 conversations with youth.

TEXT 204-900-6010 To Get Out.



United Way Winnipeg Campaign

A heartfelt thank you to everyone on our team who contributed to the success of our 2024 United Way Winnipeg Campaign! The incredible support, enthusiasm and participation throughout The Link's two-week-long series of events not only advanced the vital work of United Way Winnipeg but also deepened our organization's commitment to giving back to the communities we serve.

The United Way plays a critical role in strengthening the well-being of individuals, families and neighbourhoods across our province, and we are proud to stand alongside them in this mission. This year's campaign was a powerful reflection of the generosity, compassion and collective spirit of our team.

Thank you to all who took part in our fun and meaningful activities—pancake breakfast, costume contest, soup competition, Bingo and the always-anticipated Time, Talent & Treasure Auction.



The Link's Clinic

The Link's Clinic is a walk-in service model led by Nurse Practitioners (NPs). NPs at our clinic function as primary care providers with responsibilities similar to those of clinic-based physicians.

Our interprofessional team consists of:

- Nurse Practitioners
- An Immunization Nurse
- A Medical Office Assistant
- A Pharmacist (Sabe Wellness)

Through integrated care and strong community partnerships, The Link Clinic remains a vital access point for equitable, compassionate and comprehensive healthcare in our region. We serve individuals who face significant barriers to health care—particularly those who are unhoused, experiencing food insecurity or have encountered systemic racism and discrimination in health care settings. Our model prioritizes trust, flexibility and non-judgmental, culturally safe care that meets clients where they are.

Our services include but are not limited to:

- Medical assessment, diagnosis and treatment of both acute and chronic conditions
- Monitoring of vital signs
- Prescription renewals and follow-up care
- Injection administration, including monthly long-acting medications
- Wound care, including suturing and suture removal
- Sexual health services: Education, STI testing and treatment, pregnancy testing and provision of contraception, including both short and long-acting reversible contraception
- Cervical cancer screening for individuals aged 21-69
- Specialist referrals
- Mental health support and referrals

- Harm reduction and naloxone distribution, with detox referrals in partnership with the Youth Hub
- Immunization services in collaboration with the Public Health Agency of Canada: Vaccine administration (including travel to healing homes providing on-site vaccinations for both youth and staff), vaccine education and dissemination of local up-to-date information on the current measles outbreak



Despite operating on a part-time basis, The Link Clinic continues to provide essential, high-impact services that respond to the needs of vulnerable populations in our community.

From April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025

258 active patients

643 total clinic visits

165 individuals vaccinated, receiving a combined total of **299** vaccines

2 dedicated community Flu/Covid-19 immunization clinics

193 individuals requested harm reduction

Donors, Donations and Drives

On behalf of the youth, families and communities we serve, we extend our deepest gratitude to every donor who supported our work in 2024-2025. Your generosity through financial gifts, in-kind donations and community-driven drives has helped us reach more young people, deliver more services and create lasting change across Manitoba.

Every contribution, big or small, fuels our mission and brings hope to those who need it most. Your belief in our work and the potential of young people inspires us every day. You are an essential part of The Link's journey, and we are profoundly grateful.

While we're proud to acknowledge the impact of all 122 donors this year, we wish to highlight three whose contributions made a particularly significant difference:

Carte International

Ai-Kon

Clear Concepts



122
total gifts and
in-kind contributions



\$100,000+
received in support of
youth, families and programs



Contributions come from
**individuals, businesses
and community events**
province-wide



Province of Canada generously donated 500 pairs of socks to our Youth Hub! This is amazing as pairs of socks are one of the most requested items at The Hub.



The United Way Winnipeg and Canada Life donated 200 Snack Packs to The Link during one of their Pop-Up Days of Caring! The kits were delivered by RaY Winnipeg to The Hub and our YRC. We were so grateful for this donation, as we feed hundreds of youth each week in our community!



Pollard Banknote hosted a work wear clothing donation drive for The Link. Youth in our Life Train Program were gifted access to steel-toe shoes and boots, safety vests and shirts and interview wear!



Beyond grateful to United Way Winnipeg and Canada Life for their continued generosity at a second Pop-Up Day of Caring! Their hard work resulted in the creation of numerous hygiene kits for our Youth Resource Centre and Youth Hub. These kits are essential for the youth who visit our programs—thank you for making a positive impact in our community.



During the holiday season, we were deeply moved by the generosity and kindness of all who supported us. The contributions made a meaningful impact, and we are truly grateful for our community's unwavering commitment to our mission.

To each of our donors—thank you for your kindness, your trust and your belief in the work we do. Your support helps us continue to grow, serve and make a difference in our community. We couldn't do it without you!

- Princess Auto
- Bell Canada
- Kits for a Cause
- WCB Manitoba
- Murray Chevrolet



Thank you to the Festival du Voyageur and the Réseau Compassion Network for the community tickets to the 56th festival! Some of our youth, families and staff got to experience the magic of this iconic event—we embraced the cold and made memories that will last a lifetime.



We were thrilled that the Regent Avenue Jollibee crew visited us as part of their initiative to connect with the community. We had the opportunity to learn more about the brand and got to experience their world-famous Chicken!



Our generous and talented neighbour Doug G. surprised us with a few copies of his book Bailey Flies Again, which he published and shares the proceeds of with The Link!

The Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act

The Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act gives employees a clear process for disclosing concerns about significant and serious matters (wrongdoing) in the Manitoba public service and protects employees who make those disclosures from reprisal. The act builds on protections already in place under other statutes, as well as collective bargaining rights, policies, practices and processes in the Manitoba public service.

Wrongdoing under the act may be: contravention of federal or provincial legislation; an act or omission that endangers public safety, public health or the environment; gross mismanagement; or knowingly directing or counseling a person to commit a wrongdoing. The act is not intended to deal with routine operational or administrative matters.

A disclosure made by an employee in good faith, in accordance with the act, and with a reasonable belief that wrongdoing has been, or is about to be, committed is considered to be a disclosure under the act, whether or not the subject matter constitutes wrongdoing. All disclosures receive careful and thorough review to determine if action is required under the act, and must be reported in a department's annual report in accordance with Section 29.1.

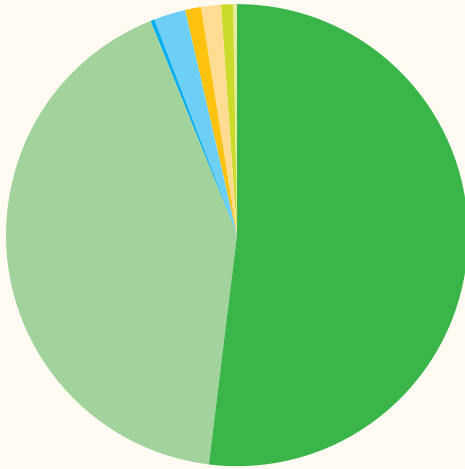
The following is a summary of disclosures received by Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure for fiscal year 2024-25.

Information Required Annually (per section 29.1 of PIDA)	Fiscal Year 2024-25
The number of disclosures received, and the number acted on and not acted on. Subsection 29.1(2)(a)	NIL
The number of investigations commenced as a result of a disclosure. Subsection 29.1 (2)(b)	NIL
In the case of an investigation that results in a finding of wrongdoing, a description of the wrongdoing and any recommendations or corrective actions taken in relation to the wrongdoing, or the reasons why no corrective action was taken. Subsection 29.1(2)(c)	N/A

2024-2025 Finances

Fiscal Year: April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025

The Link is grateful for the financial support received from our funders and donors that ensures we can provide healing and hope throughout the province of Manitoba.

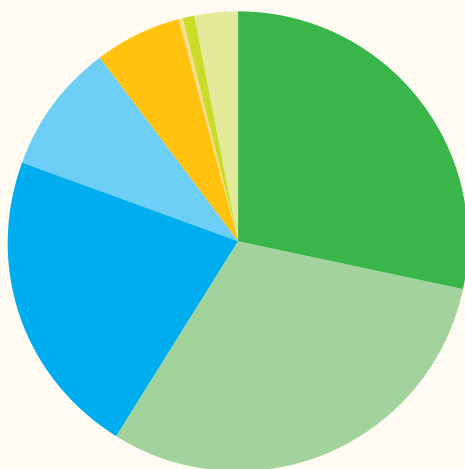


Revenue by Sources

Province of Manitoba	52.22%	\$12,668,849
Child and Family Services Agencies	41.67%	\$10,108,903
Government of Canada	0.29%	\$71,020
End Homelessness Winnipeg	2.25%	\$545,540
Grants and Donations	1.29%	\$311,827
Other	1.20%	\$290,273
United Way Winnipeg	0.84%	\$204,585
Winnipeg Foundation	0.24%	\$57,810

Total

\$24,258,805



Expenses by Programs

Community Services	28.49%	\$6,864,171
Healing Homes – South	30.51%	\$7,349,389
The Link – North	21.77%	\$5,243,460
Skills 4 Life	9.08%	\$2,188,422
Heart to Home – South	6.09%	\$1,466,154
Administration and Operations	0.44%	\$106,344
Social Enterprise	0.65%	\$156,345
Capital Fund	2.97%	\$715,730

Total

\$24,090,015



The Link: Youth and Family Supports is grateful to the following funders and community partners without whom our work would not be possible:





The Link
Youth and Family Supports

Winnipeg

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Winnipeg, MB R3L 0A1
204-477-1722
info@thelinkmb.ca

Thompson

102-83 Churchill Drive
Thompson, MB R8N 0L6
204-677-7870
info@thelinkmb.ca

thelinkmb.ca



Email us for information: info@thelinkmb.ca

Charitable Registration Number: 131215196RR0001