Make Shift Happen

Make Shift Happen is a community wellness crime prevention initiative that has been created to bring awareness to the existing programs within the Northern communities of The Pas, Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Rural Municipality of Kelsey and all the neighbouring communities that surround and support our local business and organizations.

This initiative is funded by federally sourced grant dollars until July 2021. Karen Driedger of **fourward** **thinking** has been hired by the Town of The Pas to spearhead this project. Since the start of the project in February 2020, Karen has met with well over 150 organizations in the community. Karen has met with business owners, youth leaders, faith leaders, volunteers, mental health workers, addictions organizations, health and wellness store owners, health advocates, seniors, leaders, aboriginal leaders and others. She has called together community activators and advocates. She has created Solution Labs “connecting the dots” by working together through healthy conversation. This work is moving forward. Connecting with local community organizations to create conversation, promote creative thinking and generally thinking out loud with the theme of crime prevention strategies and community safety.

From these conversations, the common thread is that many people and organizations are already providing valuable services in many areas. However, one missing component is networking, communication and connecting. Groups are working in isolation. The objective of this project is to create awareness and allow groups to meet and work together at a community level. The goal is to share resources, ideas, and collaborate to strengthen supports and create solutions that impact our community.

 The concept of creating awareness and storytelling rose to the surface. The idea was to share valuable stories about organizations, businesses and volunteer groups within our community. There are so many stories that need to be heard in order to promote these organizations. Stories that bring us to the root of why they exist, who they impact, and answers to how these services improve lives of those utilizing them. Stories that have a positive impact for community.

It can be a story about a service that you provide and how it has impacted someone who has used the service. It can be a story about a new program that has changed someone’s perspective and made them shift towards a healthier lifestyle or career choice. It can be told by the organizer, by an onlooker, by a satisfied customer, child, youth, senior or visitor. Sharing stories to create a community lifestyle that is inclusive and sustainable.

Collaborations have been made with the Opasquia Times to share a community story through the editorial piece of the paper. Opasquia Times have generously agreed to publish one editorial each Wednesday in their paper. Articles have been submitted on Oscar’s Place, Northern Gateway Street Chaplaincy, Living Waters Soup Kitchen as well as education and youth projects. I am connecting with organizations to ask them to share a story about a project, event or idea that brings value. There are many more stories to be told.

CJAR, our local radio station, are also onboard with the project. You can get involved as well by sharing your story on the radio through a pre-recorded phone interview. These interviews are recorded, edited, and played three times a day on air. The play schedule is at 12.20 (lunch break), at 5.20 p.m. (drive home show), and later at 9.20 p.m. (evening). All spots are shared with various organizations that have agreed to be involved throughout the month.

As well, a tag of “Make Shift Happen” facebook page has been created to share information and additional stories, videos and photos of ongoing work that your organization is doing. You can look at this page by visiting Facebook and typing in Make Shift Happen. It will give you a better understanding of how this initiative is moving forward.

Our goal is to work together to create a safe and healthy community that we all want to live, work and play in.

If you wish to explore this initiative further, please contact Karen Driedger at 204 624-5050 or Denise Duncan at 204 623-7971.

I am truly looking forward to sharing your stories.

Denise Duncan

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