

A HALF-CENTURY OF HELPING OTHERS

Manitoba Inc.

4 Min Read



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HELP THE THRIVE COMMUNITY SUPPORT CIRCLE SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY WHERE IT MATTERS MOST

The [Thrive Community Support Circle](#) offers a laundry list of products and services to people in Winnipeg's inner-city, including clothing giveaways, hot lunches, hygiene products, pregnancy tests, a childcare centre and tax preparation.

Wait, what?

Since 2018, Thrive has helped several thousand people file their tax returns—some for the first time in a few years and others even longer. Its one trained expert has ticked off tax credits and found countless deductions that have put several million dollars into the pockets of hundreds of Winnipeg's poorest citizens.

"We've had people who have received \$20,000 and \$30,000 returns," says Rhonda Elias-Penner, executive director at Thrive.

That kind of windfall can help secure an apartment, furnish it, and pay for the first year's rent. It could also mean paying tuition to go back to school or buying a vehicle to get to a job more easily.

Thrive's financial empowerment specialist offers budgeting programs to help people manage their new-found wealth. The specialist also informs them about federal government programs that match the savings of low-income earners dollar for dollar.

Thrive is currently providing all its services out of a temporary location on Edmonton Street as it's in the middle of a fundraising campaign to finance a \$4 million expansion of its space at 555 Spence Street. The blueprints call for a doubling of its 3,750 square feet which will enable it to expand its programming and offer a safer, more secure building that can remain open later in the evening.

Thrive's capital campaign committee is soliciting donations from the private sector and applying for grants from all three levels of government.

The new space will feature a dedicated donor wall to recognize the generosity of the community. (A donation of \$250,000, for example, will get you naming rights for Thrive's thrift store.)

Approximately half of the fundraising goal has been secured and Elias-Penner says the plan is to start construction in the fall, by which point the hope is to be at 70 per cent, or \$2.8 million. The construction phase is expected to take 12 to 18 months.

The [Winnipeg Foundation](#) has contributed \$250,000 towards Thrive's capital campaign. Megan Tate, its vice-president of community grants, says Thrive is an invaluable part of the community and its commitment to the inner-city has enabled its staff to build trusting relationships with the people they serve.

"Those relationships are the foundation for all of the work that they do, including counselling and financial empowerment," she says. "Their work is so essential. We saw during the pandemic how important family resources like Thrive are to our community. The support that they provide, including for mental health, is critical."

Elias-Penner is quick to acknowledge that Thrive owes a gigantic debt of gratitude to its many donors over the years. Without their generosity, it wouldn't be able to provide its wide range of services to the many thousands of people who walk through its doors every year.

"The social impact of not having Thrive would be huge," she says. "What we're seeing out there today would become more extreme with children continuing to grow up in poverty, families breaking down, increased substance abuse, mental health challenges, poverty and people not realizing their potential."

Thrive's childcare centre plays a particularly valuable role in getting kids off on the right foot, including developing language and social skills.

"Teachers in our neighbourhood tell us they know which kids in their classrooms come from Thrive and parents tell us they have a relationship with their children in a way that they didn't with their own parents. Those little things can make a huge difference to a family and change the path of someone's life," she says.



For more information about Thrive or donating to its expansion, visit [ThriveCommunitySupportCircle.com](https://manitoba-inc.ca/ThriveCommunitySupportCircle.com) or call (204) 772-9091.

Source: <https://manitoba-inc.ca/>