

THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS, MERCHANTS CORNER IS TAKING SHAPE!



Elder Ann Callahan and student Kevin Settee swing the first hammer

In September 2015, our North End community celebrated on Selkirk Avenue as the first sledgehammer swung at the old Merchants Hotel, which is being transformed into an educational and affordable housing complex.



I love the North End because...

Elders, community leaders, residents and donors gathered to mark the historic occasion. For a small donation, people took turns swinging the hammer and then created a community wall answering the phrase "I love the North End because..." The event raised \$2,500.



Singing the blues at the Windsor Hotel in November

More than 100 people attended, including these students, and thanks to the band "Frenz", another \$2,500 was raised! Bob Silver, President of Western Glove Works and Chancellor of the University of Winnipeg, is a strong champion of Merchants Corner and he added \$10 for every community donation at both events. The community donations triggered an additional \$50,000 gift from Bob Silver.



The Trio

Cheyenne Henry, Urban and Inner-City Studies Program Coordinator/Academic Advisor; Brendan Reimer, Assiniboine Credit Union Strategic Partner of Values-Based Banking; and Jim Silver, Urban and Inner-City Studies Department Chair.

Assiniboine Credit Union has also made a significant commitment of \$50,000 toward the Merchants Corner project. For many years, Assiniboine Credit Union has been very involved in supporting community economic development and neighbourhood revitalization, something that is known to many in our communities. They opened a branch here in the North End when bank closures left our community without access to financial services, they work with community partners to help those without access to financial services become members in the credit union, and they invest additional resources through grants such as these to support initiatives that positively impact our communities.

To date we have raised just under \$2 million dollars in donations! This is over and above the more than \$15 million that has been contributed towards the project by the provincial government through Manitoba Housing and Community Development. This is an amazing collective effort, but we are not done yet. The community continues to raise another \$1 million to go towards technology infrastructure and community programming and training within the complex, including a community kitchen and social enterprise café fronting onto Selkirk Avenue.

All financial gifts however big or small are appreciated. We are also seeking corporate donors willing to help furnish the educational and community spaces including computer equipment. **Coming soon:** watch for our crowd funding campaign.



Demolition gets underway at the Merch



Architects rendering

The original three storey Merchants building, constructed in 1913, is being converted to a mix of affordable housing and educational uses. The interior of the existing Merchants Hotel has now been gutted, leaving the façade. Most of that work has been done by local labour. Hiring local workers continues to be a central feature of the construction work. Construction is slated for early March on the south side and early April on the north side, and we expect to be teaching in Merchants Corner by September, 2017. Redevelopment of Merchants Corner is led by a community-based steering group that includes broad stakeholder and resident input. The mixed-use housing and education project is guided by the principles of community economic development and respect for Indigenous culture.

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