



Stronger Together: Using Partnerships and Collaborations to Enhance Your Work

The Pinawa Story

By Chris Saunders and Carol Findlay

Abstract

Most people believe their community is special. Pinawa is no exception. Over the past 12 years we have had the challenge of starting and growing a community foundation from scratch. We learned early that you cannot do it by yourself; you need friends and partners to be successful. Working together with community-serving organizations, our foundation's strength, and impact on Pinawa's wellbeing has been exponentially greater. This paper summarizes how our partnerships and collaborations have defined the Pinawa Foundation. We also look at the lessons we have learned and some of the mistakes we have made. The key messages we want to leave you are 1) your Foundation has so much more to offer your community than just grants, 2) your corporate and community partners benefit from knowing you as much as you benefit from working with them, and 3) You will be surprised by the impact you have!



Biographies

Chris Saunders moved to Pinawa in 1982 and in no time, he got involved in various local activities. Forty years later, Chris is still an active, engaged volunteer in Pinawa. His early activities in the community focussed on his love for sports. Chris served many roles including coaching, managing, and refereeing. Over the years Chris has participated on numerous boards and committees. Chris was part of the team that formed the Pinawa Foundation and has served as Chairman since 2010. The Foundation has experienced rapid growth under his leadership and with his infectious enthusiasm for supporting the community. Chris has great pride in his hometown, and can often be heard to say, "How can I help?"



Carol arrived in Pinawa February 1977. Carol worked with the Bank of Montreal, Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, and the Whiteshell School District, retiring in 2009. Carol's community involvement has included volunteer work with the Public Library, Pinawa Hospital and F.W. Gilbert School. She is also pleased to say she has been a Pinawa Player since 1991. The Pinawa Players is the local theatre group.

In 1997, she met Hugh Arklie of the Thomas Sill Foundation who introduced the idea of foundations and the possibilities for a community. This idea grew to the



point that in the Fall of 2009, Carol volunteered to join the new Pinawa Foundation board. Thirteen years later she is proud of her role and that the Foundation continues to grow and thrive. Her growth as a board member is like the growth of the foundation itself. Both are long-term commitments and require patience while the seeds germinate.

Why Our Story?

When we were first contacted by the conference organizers, we wondered why us? Did we have unique experiences? What did we have to say about partnerships and collaborations that might be helpful? We were forced to think about how we got started and grew over our first 12 years. We have concluded that although we are young, we have experienced a lot that we hope you will find useful.

Pinawa is a small community of 1,500 on the western edge of the Whiteshell Provincial Park in eastern Manitoba. It was originally built in 1963 to house the employees of a new research facility being built by Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL). Every road and building were built by the company. All the homes, the schools, a hospital, golf course, pool, arena, gas station, hotel, and marina were funded by AECL. Pinawa was the definition of a company town. In the early 1990s, AECL decided to start the decommissioning of the research facility. This forced everyone to ask how Pinawa was going to survive and grow after our largest employer left Manitoba.



Whiteshell Nuclear Research Establishment - 1965

Most people believe their community is special; usually because of the people or the beautiful scenery or the clubs and special events that make their town a home. Pinawa is no exception. Back in 2009, a small group lead by Lynn Patterson and Jane Sargent began meeting to reflect on the best way to leave a legacy to the place we have lived and experienced both the routine and the extraordinary events that life can bring; births and funerals; the first day of school or a graduation; a wedding, a first job to a retirement celebration, family picnics at the beach or walking along our river trail. As we reminisced, the question of what makes Pinawa special was asked repeatedly.

Some of the answers were thoughtful and surprising:

- it takes an hour to get the mail because everyone wants to visit.
- the comfort you feel when you go to the birthday dance and see long-time Lions club members volunteering their time as they did last year and the year before.
- you just know you are going to get wet watching our parade.
- if your child falls and skins her knee, she will be comforted and walked home by a helpful neighbor.



Some answers made us say "I love that about Pinawa":

- when you travel you almost always meet someone from Pinawa or they know someone from Pinawa, or they were from Pinawa and want to talk about the friends they had to leave.
- when you are out for a walk and the rain comes, someone always stops to offer you a ride home.
- doctors that offer to make a house call to check on an ailing child or an elderly parent.
- community events like fall suppers and concerts that are so often packed - you just want to be part of it.
- you can still meet and say thank-you to someone that helped build Pinawa; the first street, the first school, our hospital.

We are sure many of these comments can apply to your communities as well. We love where we live; how can we show this affection.

Getting Started

We assume that many of you are part of well-established community foundations. We did not have that luxury. We had the exciting and sometimes challenging wish to start a community foundation from scratch. It took 18 months to obtain our charitable status from CRA. The Pinawa Foundation (www.pinawafoundation.org) was incorporated in 2010. We chose a community foundation structure because donations would help Pinawa forever.

We had a lot of help getting started. The Winnipeg Foundation, the Local Government District of Pinawa, the Thomas Sill Foundation, Community Foundations of Canada, and Endow Manitoba were all

key partners, along with the local business community and the Lac du Bonnet and District Community Foundation. We would like to thank them all. *A key lesson we learned was to use the experts available to you.* If we had been better at trusting the help being offered, 18 months might have been 12 months or less.

In our first year, the Pinawa Foundation focused on bringing the local business community to the table. D'Arcy & Deacon, LLP, and Investment Planning Counsel, both of Winnipeg, and Granite Internet Services and Acision Industries of Pinawa, all became corporate friends of the foundation. Acision even started a payroll deduction plan and matched every donation that their employees made. We also met with everyone we could think of – local service groups, healthcare groups, government agencies, key community leaders. A benefit of a small town – you know everyone. We wanted them to know that we were a resource, not a competitor for funds. A challenge in a small town – everyone knows you. Being friendly, positive, and enthusiastic in public all the time can be challenging – sometimes you just want to be grumpy.

We wanted to start quickly, but we could not make any significant grants because we had limited endowed funds. Our solution - we volunteered our time to make a difference and to get the foundation's name out into the community. Anything we could do to help that did not cost us money was on the table. Some of our early projects included:

- Partnering with Transplant Manitoba to get residents to be organ donors.
- Identified a Foundation focus – community history.
- Volunteering to update our on-line cemetery records.
- Establishing and maintain our social media presence.

We are particularly proud of our partnership with Transplant Manitoba to promote a campaign to get 500 Pinawa residents to register on-line to be organ and tissue donors at SignUpForLife.ca.

Organ donation saves and improves the quality of life for thousands of Canadians every year. Registering your wishes to be an organ and tissue donor not only helps someone else, but it also helps your family. When you register your wishes, this information is made available to your family at the right time, ensuring that your donation decision is known and respected. You relieve your family of the burden to make this decision without your input.

Pinawa's "**Drive to 500 Campaign**" coincided with our 50th Birthday in 2013. We promoted this campaign as a great way for Pinawa to say thank-you to Manitoba for 50 great years. Over a two-year period, we attended blood donor clinics and community events to promote on-line registration. We went everywhere with our laptops to sign people up. We reached our target of 500 residents in time for our 50th birthday. Our first success.



Following our Progress at the Mall – 4.2% of Manitobans and 35% of Pinawa residents are registered organ donors

For more information: www.signupforlife.ca; www.facebook.com/transplantmanitoba; Twitter: @TransplantMB

What We Had to Offer Pinawa

An important event for our Foundation occurred in May 2011. Through the generosity of the Winnipeg Foundation, the Thomas Sill Foundation, the Wawanesa Mutual Insurance Company, and Acision Industries, we attended the National Conference of Community Foundations of Canada in Vancouver. The conference was attended by 675 delegates from the 178 community foundations in Canada, plus delegates from 22 other countries. The first impression was that the “movement” is huge (over \$3 Billion in assets) and in some ways should be considered “big business”. Many of the larger foundations have all the issues and challenges of any business (staffing; succession planning; growing bureaucracy). The smaller foundations have the same issues as we do (visibility; gaining community trust; how to demonstrate impact; limited volunteers).

The conference began with an inspiring presentation by the Governor General. Dr. David Johnston is an excellent storyteller. What was great about his presentation was his humour and humanity, asking us to be our best through the work that we do, to build on the assets and strengths of our communities and to look out for and care for one another. He told a wonderful story about how a friend and colleague “turned water into wine” – using red food dye to transform a glass of water into one resembling red wine. One simple drop. He likened this to our work building communities and challenged us to think about the impact that our work will have – how one small drop can spread.

The ideas/concepts that came from this presentation have been a focus for the Pinawa Foundation since 2011:

- **“Random Acts of Kindness”** – We ask our board members and our partners to always ask “How can we help”.
- Promote the foundation as the community resource. This idea came up because many corporations and funders need someone to call to figure out where their donations will have the largest impact. To be this resource, we coordinated an information collection activity – we met each charity and group in town and documented their current and anticipated needs.
- Our impacts should be shown publicly – we continually evaluate our communication strategy. A big success for us was our local Resource Guide (Thanks to our board member Cindy Litke). We have published this guide twice, giving residents and visitors a complete list of all things Pinawa (clubs, local services; contact names, telephone numbers and email addresses; etc.).
- **Board diversity:** we are always looking to broaden our board membership and skill sets. Recruitment of younger members



**Governor General -
Dr. David Johnston**



was particularly important. The Youth in Philanthropy program was started to engage with the local students. As you can image, this goal is challenging in a small town.

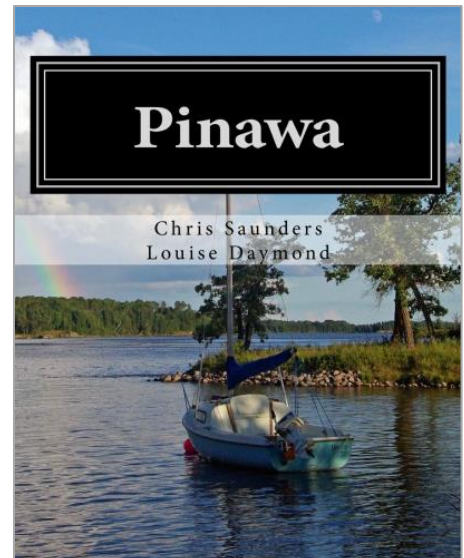
- *Make sure board meetings are not just about procedure. We need to take the time to talk about ideas, foundation plans, “big picture ideas”, etc.*
- Corporate partnerships are important, but the foundation needs to make the case that **“partnering with the Pinawa Foundation is good for your business because”**
- Naomi Tutu, daughter of Archbishop Desmond Tutu focused on one theme: **“In times of crisis, the wise build bridges, the foolish build dams”**. Our takeaway was the concept that we need to be a group of inclusion where we bring everyone together to tackle an issue.

The two defining sessions at the conference for us were:

- “With a Little Help from my Friends – The Power of Corporate and Community Partnerships”. This session focussed on the partnership between the Calgary Foundation and Telus. The theme was expanding the partnership beyond money. They focussed on joint projects to solve selected problems in Calgary. Just what we were looking for to promote for the Pinawa Foundation.
- “What is Your Waterloo” – a discussion on the partnership between the Waterloo Community Foundation and the local United Way. **The key concept here was “focus on our assets – not just our money”**. They recommended interviewing as many people as possible, asking what they think of Pinawa (issues; the good; the bad). We began to crystalize the idea that the Pinawa Foundation should be the resource on all things Pinawa.



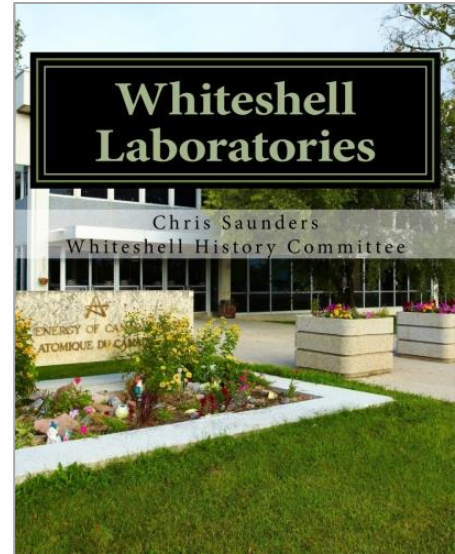
These ideas forced us to ask, “What are our assets and our interests?”. We discovered that Pinawa is unique because it is not very old. Pinawa was incorporated in 1963 and many of the first residents and their families still live in town. The community has a very proud in our history and the roles our family members played in creating the town. The Pinawa Foundation chose to honour this legacy by taking a lead role in documenting Pinawa’s history and archiving historical photographs. To celebrate Pinawa’s 50th birthday in 2013, The Foundation published two books on local history. As the first call for anyone interested in Pinawa’s history, we have made many friends and partnered with many groups looking for our help.



The Impacts You Do Not See

Dr. Johnston’s story about the impact that our work will have – how one small drop can spread, made us think of two incidents a couple of years ago.

- We had just funded an upgrade to the Wi-Fi and the telephone service at the local hospital, in collaboration with a couple of local groups. We wanted to make sure the patients and their families did not feel isolated or alone. A few months later we received a beautiful letter from a lady in Australia. Her family member had just passed away at the hospital. The WiFi upgrades allowed this woman to Facetime with their loved one and say goodbye. She was so thankful. These upgrades have continued to impact so many as Covid-19 forced the hospital to close and limit access to patients and staff.
- We partnered with the Pinawa Curling Club to raise funds rebuild the ice making equipment. At the time it was the largest project the Foundation had ever tackled. Last year we received the largest estate donation in our history. The donor stated that they wanted to help the Foundation because they loved curling and appreciated how we stepped up to help.



Partnerships that Have Defined Us

All our partnerships and collaborations matter, but three close relationships have played key roles in the development of the Pinawa Foundation over the past 12 years.

The first two relationships are common for all of us - the Winnipeg Foundation and Endow Manitoba. As a new foundation, they were key to getting us off the ground. They provided so much valuable information and lists of things we needed to do. We also hired the Winnipeg Foundation to manage our investments – an important step for us. Our new board members were just trying to understand how to survive and gain community momentum. We did not want the task of managing our investments as well.

Our biggest momentum driver came from Endow Manitoba. We were struggling to find our hook – that first idea that would bring the community together and drive home how the Pinawa Foundation could help. Then came Endow Manitoba’s Philanthropy Day. For those of you that do not know, Pinawa residents can be very competitive. When Philanthropy Day was announced in 2014, we promoted it heavily, telling everyone that would listen that, even though we were the smallest foundation in the province, we wanted to raise more donations in one day than anyone else. We found corporate sponsors to join the challenge. We advertised and planned a big event for the day. Year #1 brought excitement and a community desire to get to first place. We have continued to push Philanthropy Day in the community every year. To date, this one idea has accounted for over 65% of all the donations we have received. We are not sure the Pinawa Foundation would be here today if it not for Endow Manitoba and Philanthropy Day.

Our Relationships Matter

- Winnipeg Foundation
- [Endow Manitoba](#)
- Local Government District of Pinawa
- [Thomas Sill Foundation](#)
- Community Foundations of Canada
- [Other Community Foundations.](#)
- Pinawa Cancer Care and Hospital
- [Whiteshell School District](#)
- Pinawa Lion’s Club
- [Christmas Hamper Program](#)
- Pinawa Health Auxiliary
- [Survivor’s Hope Crisis Centre](#)
- Pinawa Club
- [Solo Store](#)
- Two Rivers Seniors Council
- [Children’s Place Daycare](#)







Chris Saunders and Carol Findlay Celebrating Philanthropy Day

The Local Government District (LGD) of Pinawa, including staff, the Mayor and Council, has been our most important partner since we began the Pinawa Foundation. It sounds strange today, but as a foundation representing such a small community, we were worried that we might struggle to find qualified groups to take our money each year. Many of the groups that we thought we could help were not charities. As a qualified donee, the LGD became our conduit to these groups. This partnership has been very beneficial for both of us. This year we will exceed \$1,000,000 in grants to the community and about 70% of these grants were flowthroughs that were made possible by our LGD partnership. The LGD benefits because they are now linked to so many successful projects around town. Their name is on thank-you signs and Facebook posts, in newspaper articles, and they are part of the various ribbon-cutting events. All this good will was possible and it did not cost the LGD any direct funds, just labour to accept our donation and send out cheques to the project teams.

The LGD Partnership has also made possible our most successful community partnership program – Community Project Month. Every Spring we partner with as many as 15 groups in town to help them raise funds for their specific projects. The Foundation collects donations for each project, issues tax receipts, and tops up each group's total by 40% (to a ceiling based on our available granting resources). The idea came from reversing Philanthropy Day in November. Rather than the Winnipeg Foundation collecting funds and flowing them to us, we collect donations for all the projects each year and flow the funds to the group participants. The benefit for each group is obvious; they raise more money because we issue tax receipts, top up their donations, and handle all the administration. We benefit because our grants are going to the projects that are supported by the residents. If you can raise \$5,000 in the month of May for your project, then the community must think is important. The Foundation wants to help the



Pinawa Foundation's 2017 Philanthropy Day



Help Us Raise \$100,000 in 24 Hours for Community Projects

For one day only, **November 18th**, gifts made to unrestricted endowment fund of the Pinawa Foundation will be stretched by:

- **Acision Industries: \$1 for every \$1 donated**
- **Winnipeg Foundation: \$1 for every \$5 donated**
- **Province of Manitoba: \$1 for every \$5 donated**

Gifts can be made:

- Online through www.endowmanitoba.ca on Nov. 18th.
- By phoning The Winnipeg Foundation's office on Nov. 18th; Phone 1-877-974-3631 toll free.
- By post-dated cheque payable to Winnipeg Foundation delivered to Pinawa Foundation, Box 100, Pinawa, MB R0E 1L0 by Nov 18th.

TAX RECEIPTS FOR DONATIONS OVER \$25

projects the community wants, so we add our \$2,000. It also important to note that we do not take a percentage of flowthrough funds as an administration fee. We believe that this service is part of our mandate.

Community Project Month has been running in May each year for the last 7 years. To date we have helped fund over 75 projects; everything from hospital equipment to repairs to the daycare building; playground upgrades to replacing the ice-making equipment for the curling rink. We have donated over \$315,000 to these projects, with virtually all this amount being distributed through the LGD.

Key Lessons Learned

1. A company demonstrates its commitment to its community and its residents by partnering with a community foundation. Employees are proud that their company is helping, and they become your biggest cheerleader.
2. It is not important who gets credit for a successful project, just that it was successful. The more you help, even quietly behind the scenes, the more your foundation will become the first call of every group looking to start a new project.
3. Sometimes partnerships just do not work. Do not force it. It is so much easier to work with your friends. If it becomes hard or stressful, step away gracefully and go on to the next project.
4. Your Foundation has so much more to offer your community than just grants. Find out what your local groups need and see if your board members or staff can help provide it, either internally or through your “Friends of the Foundation” network. Some examples include:
 - a. Writing grant proposals and project plans for third party funders.
 - b. Networking assistance – bringing various groups and companies together to help your community.
 - c. Financial advice and reporting.
 - d. Granting support (Christmas hampers; family funds; family scholarships; corporate grant programs).
 - e. Project Management – get the job done on time and within budget.
 - f. Community cheerleading – an undervalued service.
 - g. Volunteer labour.
5. Minimize bureaucracy/administration – make being a part of the community foundation family rewarding and fun.
6. Use the experts and resources being offered to you. This was our biggest mistake. We wasted time trying to learn how to do things from scratch. Help is available if you know where to look and Endow Manitoba and the Winnipeg Foundation should be your first call.
7. You will be surprised by the impact you will have.

Pinawa Foundation – Fast Facts

- > **100 projects** completed with our partners since 2011.
- > **\$1,443,000** endowed funds in 2021; **65%** of donations came from Philanthropy Day (Thanks Endow Manitoba)
- > **\$1,000,000** granted since 2011; over 70% as flowthroughs (Thanks LGD!)
- > **400** individual/family donors; 30% of Pinawa’s population; > **70** donors have donated 4 years or more.
- > **1,200** history books sold so far.
- > **1,400** Pinawa Resource Guides Distributed
- YIP Group** has granted over \$15,000 so far.

A Partnership Example

Local Companies Partner with Pinawa Foundation and Pinawa Cancer Care to Support PICC Program

Acsion Industries and the Prairie Isotope Production Enterprise (PIPE) have partnered with the Pinawa Foundation to help the Pinawa Hospital raise funds for their Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC) Line program. The goal of the **“Pinawa Cares”** Campaign is to raise \$57,000 to purchase ultrasound technology local patients can receive treatment in Pinawa rather than go to Winnipeg.

Acsion is a local company focused on isotope manufacturing technologies and radiation safety. PIPE is a Winnipeg-based corporation formed by Acsion, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and the University of Winnipeg, tasked with developing new radiopharmaceuticals to detect cancer.

For the “Pinawa Cares” Campaign, Acsion and PIPE will match all donations to the Pinawa Foundation from any Pinawa group, business, or individual up to a total of \$20,000. The Foundation can provide tax receipts for your donation.

Chris Saunders, President of Acsion and the Executive Director of the Pinawa Foundation believes this partnership shows how local businesses can get together to get the job done. “Acsion, PIPE and the Foundation are very proud that we can help support this important program. Our goal is to make cancer treatment a little easier for people in the region”. Reducing the number of trips to Winnipeg must be a help. We are hoping the community gets involved to get us to our goal” says Chris.

The Pinawa Foundation will accept donations and provide a charitable tax receipt for any donation over \$25. Acsion and PIPE will match all donations made until September 30, 2014. With the community coming together, we should meet our goal of \$40,000.

To donate to the Pinawa Foundation, please mail cheques to Box 100, Pinawa, MB, R0E 1L0. Please remember to include a note that the donation is to be used for the “Pinawa Cares” Campaign to support the “PICC” Line Program.

NOTE: Target met in two months

