



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Finding Our Way Home: **Housing Options in Inner-City Winnipeg**

WINNIPEG—If you are poor and living in Winnipeg's inner city and are Aboriginal and disabled, odds are that you are living alone and isolated in substandard, unsafe housing.

A study that sought to listen to and hear the voices of those living with disabilities and experiencing end of life transitions in Winnipeg's core was undertaken collaboratively by researchers at the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies in partnership with First Nations disAbility Association and Fokus Housing Inc. Funding for the research came from the Winnipeg Inner-city Research Alliance (WIRA), at the Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg. WIRA is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

The study, ***Finding Our Way Home: Housing Options for People with Disabilities who are Dying***, takes us through a world where poverty, alienation, inaccessibility, and health risks are—more often than not—the norm.

In ***Finding Our Way Home***, researchers Deborah Stienstra and Rhonda Wiebe examined three pertinent social issues for people living in Winnipeg's core area: the lack of safe, affordable, available, and accessible housing; the lack of supports available for people experiencing end of life transitions; and the barriers encountered by people living with disabilities.

Among their findings:

- People living in unsafe neighbourhoods have spent a lifetime exposed to more health risks than those with adequate incomes.
- If you are of First Nations descent and you live in the inner-city, you are more likely to be poor, to have a disability, to live isolated and alone, and to die sooner than someone of European descent.
- People with disabilities living in their own homes dwell in unsafe, inaccessible, and inappropriate housing
- Women with disabilities in end of life transitions struggle with inadequate, unsafe housing and

distinct support issues.

- People living and dying with disabilities in downtown Winnipeg do not know whether they will have accessibility to appropriate housing or palliative care services

Stienstra and Wiebe also called on government and other agencies that provide housing and support services “to increase accessible housing stock for persons with disabilities living in the core areas of Winnipeg.”

They recommended independent living settings for end of life housing, accessible transitional housing for people with disabilities and their families, and increased palliative care options for people with disabilities in core areas.

In ***Finding Our Way Home***, the co-authors also advocated high standards of conduct by professionals providing services to First Nations persons with disabilities.

The study may be downloaded at http://ius.uwinnipeg.ca/wira_publications.html For more information, please contact Deborah Steinstra at 771.8208 or 474.9971; or Rhonda Wiebe at 797.0201 or 779.4493.

Located within The University of Winnipeg’s Institute of Urban Studies, Winnipeg Inner-City Research Alliance was formed in 1999 by academic and community partners who came together to combine their strengths and resources in promoting the development of sustainable inner-city neighbourhoods. WIRA serves as both a forum to exchange ideas about inner-city issues and as a body to lead initiatives to respond to these issues. The WIRA research program pairs community groups with established researchers to undertake action-oriented research that meets community needs.

Located in the heart of downtown, The University of Winnipeg is a compact, diverse, multicultural academic community committed to access and excellence. Ranked by our graduates in Maclean's magazine University Graduate Survey (November 15, 2004) in the Top Ten of all Canadian universities when asked about their “Entire Educational Experience,” UWinnipeg is home to more than 8,700 full- and part-time students.

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