Rivière Seine River

GrandPals

"Imagine a world in which every person, regardless of age, feels they belong and are connected to a caring community. A world where every person feels valued as a member of society. This is the essence of GrandPals."

The GrandPals program is an intergenerational program that connects an elementary school class with a small team of GrandPals (adults 55+) to engage in weekly open conversations providing a path for connection and learning through storytelling. The belief is that sharing stories between the generations has the unique power to build collective wisdom of local communities and support a sense of belonging.
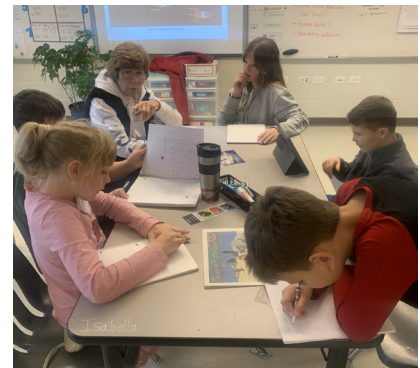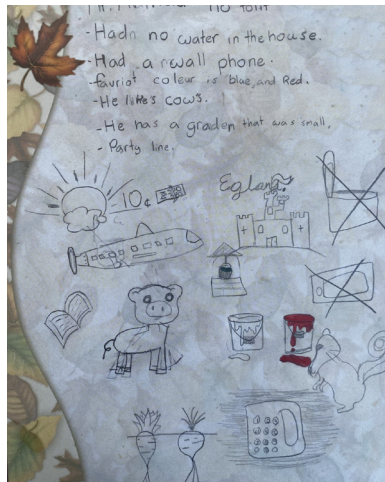
The six-week program, spearheaded by Joanne Vielfaure-Romaniuk, Divisional Social Worker, assisted by her Social Work student Rachel Schmidtke, began with Mrs. Foster's Grade 5/6 class at Arborgate School. They were able to cover weekly themes such as work, family, school, etc., telling stories of their youth and what life was like back then.

The grandparents would bring in old report cards, pictures, newspaper clippings and other items from their past for kids to see and ask questions. After every week's visit, each student produced a portfolio of stories and photos of what they learned that week creating comparisons of what life was like for the GrandPal then and how it is now.

The program culminated with a Grand Pals Gala celebration with students, their parents and the GrandPals who participated.

We are extremely grateful to Active Aging in Manitoba, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of active aging opportunities for all older Manitobans, who covered all costs incurred by running the program.

The first session was so incredibly successful that there are several other grade 5/6 classes signed up and ready to start their own 6-week GrandPals journey, engaging with different generations, learning from each other, and creating a world where every person feels valued as a member of society.

HONESTY

EMPATHY

RESPECT