



The Westlander | Fall 2024

The official newsletter of the Westland Foundation



President's Message

On behalf of everyone at Westland, we sincerely hope you are doing well.

This current year is becoming very busy as we transition the Foundation governance and grow the Westland Foundation Education Fund. I am proud to share with you several changes and developments.

For the 2024-25 academic year, Westland awarded forty-six inner Winnipeg students scholarships totaling approximately \$77,000.00.

I'm excited to share that to date, the Foundation has awarded 1,267 scholars more than \$750,000. As one of our students said, "The scholarship is undeniably a major factor in my educational growth."

I kindly ask you to reflect on the contribution the Westland Foundation is delivering to inner Winnipeg. Without Westland 1,267 students would be without the scholarship monies and their attention to their studies or even their enrollment at a post-secondary education school would have been restricted or unavailable. To the students, donors and volunteers, THANK YOU, none of this would have been possible without your participation.

THANK YOU to Robert Tessman's estate. Mr. Tessman bequeathed Westland its largest single donation. I, as a fifty-four plus year

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Meet Westland Scholar Bryan Iligan

When Bryan learned of the Westland Foundation Education Fund from a teacher at Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute, he looked at it as an opportunity he could not pass up!

"The Westland Foundation Education Fund benefits not only myself, but my whole family by alleviating the financial burden," says Bryan.

Bryan is currently enrolled at the University of Manitoba working towards a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Design with a focus on Architecture. Bryan dreams of becoming the first architect in his family and one day opening a firm that designs cabins in Manitoba.

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Robert 'Beaver' Tessman

The Westland Foundation thanks our dear friend, Robert Gordon Tessman. Mr. Tessman bequeathed \$210,000 to the Westland Foundation Education Fund (WFEF).

Robert "Beaver" Tessman was born in Winnipeg on October 1, 1935. A lifelong Winnipegger, Robert found himself working in the hospitality industry at the Northern Hotel beginning in 1967. 30 years later he met Keith Horn, who would become one of Robert's dearest friends.

"I first met Robert in 1997 when my business partner and I took over the Northern Hotel," recalls Keith. "Robert quickly let it be known that he preferred to be called Beaver and that is the name that everyone called him. Nobody called him Robert, and from then on, neither did I.

Beaver worked countless hours, and it was easy to see how much the customers loved him; "Beaver was always quick with a joke and a story," says Keith. "He would work hard but always make it fun. There was something about the man that you were drawn to."

Beaver worked at the Northern Hotel for 37 years until 2004 when his health began to decline. Even then Keith had to convince him to take it easy. "He didn't want to stop working as he didn't want to let us down," says Keith. "Even after he retired from the hotel he continued to reside there. He was a fixture there until the day he passed."

Having lived his life in Point Douglas, Beaver was aware of the incredible work of Westland Foundation, and when it came time to draw up a will, he knew what he wanted to do. "Beaver told me that he didn't have any family to leave his estate to and he wanted to do something good," recalls Keith. "I suggested that he leave the money to the Westland Foundation as we both knew of the impact it has on inner Winnipeg. He was happy with that suggestion and proceeded to do that."

Sadly, Beaver passed away on October 30, 2022, at the age of 87.

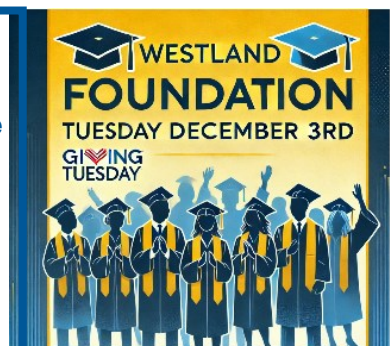
With his generous \$210,000 bequest, Beaver is responsible for the largest single donation in the history of the Westland Foundation. John Prystanski thanks Beaver, "words cannot express our gratitude for this extraordinary gift that will change countless lives for inner Winnipeg youth."

Support Westland Foundation this Giving Tuesday, Dec 3rd!

Donate this Giving Tuesday to empower the next generation and move us closer to our goal of equal opportunities in education.

Together, let's make a lasting impact. Give hope. Give opportunity. Give to the Westland Foundation this Giving Tuesday!

Visit westlandfoundation.com





Meet Westland Scholar Rafael Manangan

While a student at Ecole Secondaire Sisler High School, Rafael heard about Westland Foundation through a friend who was applying for the scholarship and decided to apply as well. It was a great decision!

“The Westland Foundation Education Fund allows me to focus directly on my studies without having to worry about paying tuition fees,” says Rafael. “This allows me more time to engage in extracurriculars and be able to connect and give back to the community through volunteer activities.”

Rafael is in his first year at the University of Manitoba hoping to major in genetics with a minor in chemistry.

With future goals that include a career in healthcare or research, travelling the world, and giving back to his parents, Rafael is filled with optimism and gratitude for Westland donors and volunteers.

“I want to say how grateful I am for your unwavering support and dedication to making education more accessible to inner Winnipeg youth like me,” says Rafael. “Your generosity and time are not merely a financial contribution, but an investment in the future of passionate individuals to pursue their academic dreams, allowing them to make positive contributions to the world. I want to say thank you for your time, effort and invaluable support. I truly appreciate it from the bottom of my heart.”

Meet Westland Scholar Zyrinne Tolentino

Zyrinne Tolentino learned about Westland Foundation from former students as well as her high school guidance counselors and knew a scholarship could help her with her goal of a degree in computer science.

“It will assist me and my family in paying my tuition fees,” explains Zyrinne. “I will also use it towards purchasing the necessary textbooks and materials for my courses.”

Currently enrolled at the University of Manitoba, Zyrinne hopes to one day work in software engineering, and maybe even get a master’s degree.

Wherever the road takes her, Zyrinne will always be proud to be a Westland Scholar.

“I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the Westland Foundation volunteers and donors,” says Zyrinne. “I truly appreciate the award and feel greatly honoured. I plan to continue working hard and making the best out of this opportunity so I can positively represent the Foundation.”



News and Events

The Westland Foundation thanks Walter Sillicz, who recently retired as a Westland Director, and Ian Clunie who retired as Westland's Secretary. We are forever grateful for your service.

Additionally, thanks to Allen Harasymuk who retires as Treasurer, and Bev Harasymuk who retires as Vice-President. Both Allen and Bev are staying on as Directors

Westland is thrilled to welcome 4 new members to our Board of Directors. Welcome Alex Mariano Jr., Chris Albi, Pearl Tamarakuro and Jill Latschislaw. As well as our incoming Officers: Vice President Adam Smoluk, Treasurer Alex Mariano Jr. and Secretary Chris Albi.

Westland also welcomes our new Executive Director, Caroline Hunter.

Welcome to Westland.....



Alex Mariano Jr., Treasurer

Alex was born and raised in Winnipeg, and is active in various community volunteer organizations. He attended the University of Manitoba, earning his commerce degree, majoring in accounting. He attended the Chartered Accountant Western School of Business where he earned his Chartered Accountant designation.

Professionally, Alex practices at Baker Tilly and has over 20 years of experience in public practice working in assurance, consultation, accounting, and taxation.

His clients include non-for-profit organizations, Indigenous communities and enterprise, publicly traded companies, small private corporations, and taxation.

Alex's other volunteer commitments include Holy Ghost School Inc. as it's Treasurer, The Manitoba Filipino Business Council Inc. as Director of Finance and has served as a volunteer at CPA Manitoba for the Financial Literacy Program.

Alex enjoys spending time with his family, travelling to various places around the world and watching all the local professional sports teams.



Chris Albi, Secretary

Chris's career journey has encompassed personal training, public relations, and teaching. Currently, she teaches in the Extended Education program at the University of Manitoba. She finds immense joy in her role as an instructor, stating, "I am privileged and honored to work with a diversity of students, learning more from them than I could have possibly imagined."

In 2015, Chris received the YMCA-YWCA Women of Distinction Award for Public Affairs and Communication in recognition of her work as a Public Relations and Communications specialist. Two years later, in 2017, she and her team at the non-profit Winnipeg Harvest earned CPRS Manitoba's Communicator of the Year award in the small campaign category.

Chris holds a bachelor's degree in physical education from the University of Manitoba and a diploma in Broadcast Arts from Media Arts and Education Communication College.



Pearl Tamarakuro, Director

Pearl is a dedicated professional with over five years of experience in client relationship management, customer success, recruitment and team leadership. Known for her warmth and problem solving skills, Pearl is passionate about building strong partnerships and helping others reach their full potential.

Pearl's hobbies are cooking, dancing, singing and painting.



Jill Latschislaw, Director

Jill has over 20 years working in post-secondary, having held roles including Senior Manager of Workforce Development and Community Initiatives and Work Integrated and Academic Coordinator with MITT, as well as Co-operative Education Coordinator with the Asper School of Business.

Currently Jill is at RRC Polytechnic in the role of Director, Business Development. Jill leads a team in the development and implementation of customized training programs designed to meet the evolving needs of industry partners. Jill has a proven track record of building strong relationships with businesses and organizations to deliver high-impact learning solutions that drive employee performance and organizational success.

One of Jill's passions is assisting First Nation communities, Indigenous Peoples, and newcomers in accessing training. She is a past Co-Chair of the Manitoba Collaborative Indigenous Education Blueprint Steering Committee, a Board Member with Film Training Manitoba, a Conference Committee Member with the Education Research Forum (Shawane Dagoziwin) and a Conference Board Member with the Manitoba Quality Network (QNET).



Caroline Hunter, Executive Director

Caroline has been a part of the Winnipeg media for more than 3 decades. With memorable stints on Q94, QX 104 and BOB FM Caroline has spent her career invested in the Winnipeg community.

A longtime companion through the radio, Caroline is thrilled to lend her talents to the Westland Team, and engage a whole new audience in the benefits and possibilities when we invest in inner Winnipeg youth.

President's Message

From page 1

North Point Douglas resident, personally knew Mr. Tessman for forty of those years. He always was a gentleman with a welcoming story and a warm friendly smile. Please read more about Mr. Tessman in this newsletter.

Our Board of Directors and Officers are changing. We welcome four new Directors, and say thank you to three officers and one director who are retiring. Please join me in welcoming Jill Latschislaw, Pearl Tamarakuro, Chris Albi and Alex Mariano Jr as Directors. Help me thank Bev and Allan Harasymuk as they retire from their respective Officer positions, and Secretary Ian Clunie. Our incoming Officers: Vice President Adam Smoluk, Treasurer Alex Mariano Jr. and Secretary Chris Albi.

Walter Silicz retires from the Board of Directors after 25 years. Thank you!

Join us to welcome Caroline Hunter as our Executive Director. Caroline comes to us from a career in radio, you may remember listening to her on QX-104 and Q-94.

As we continue to move forward, we anticipate undertaking a new capital campaign that will take the Education Fund to a new level. Our goal is to provide a full scholarship to every inner Winnipeg student who wants to earn a post-secondary degree.

Very best regards,

John Prystanski

President and Founder

Meet A Westland Scholar

From page 1

Thanks to support from volunteers and donors of the Westland Foundation, Bryan is facing the future with optimism and excitement!

"Chase your dreams," Bryan exclaimed, and he added, "setbacks are just a steppingstone on your journey. Don't let anybody or anything get in the way of what you want for yourself."

Westland Fun Fact

Allen and Bev Harasymuk were part of the original team that helped John create the Westland Foundation in 1993

In other news, the Westland Foundation moved to 1340-220 Portage Avenue. The office space is donated by Prystanski Law Office.



Westland Foundation

"Empowering Inner-Winnipeg Youth Through Education"

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