



The importance of **MAKING PLAY** part of our **EVERYDAY**

Our alumni are serious about play, and for good reason: an active lifestyle contributes greatly to our quality of life. In this edition of *On Manitoba*, we explore play from a variety of perspectives.

In our cover story, we examine the dangerous side of play. Recent headlines chronicling the tragic effect of head injuries involving professional football and hockey players are focusing new attention on concussions in sport. While the impact on elite athletes is troubling unto itself, the effect on children playing contact sports may be even more concerning.

University of Manitoba alumnus Jeff Leiter is the director of research at Pan Am Clinic. His recent survey of children playing hockey indicates that more than 100 students missed 10 days of activities as a result of concussion symptoms. This research has moved Leiter to work towards creating a nationally recognized centre to treat concussions at the orthopedic and sports medicine clinic in Winnipeg.

We also share the story of innovator and alumnus Ron Blatz, who is breaking down barriers at Discovery Children's Centre, a Winnipeg daycare centre. He believes that children will live happier, healthier lives if they are allowed to get their hands dirty—literally. By creating dedicated spaces that encourage children to spend more time outdoors, he's leading the way in Manitoba towards adopting an outdoor teaching model inspired by the forest schools movement in Europe.

Complementing Ron Blatz's efforts are a duo of landscape architects. Professors Dietmar Straub and Anna Thurmayr from

the Faculty of Architecture created Folly Forest, an innovative outdoor space for play at Strathcona School using repurposed materials from the demolition site at Canad Inns Stadium.

While some work to enhance play environments for our children, others are dedicated to eradicating a staple of the playground experience: bullying. No longer confined to the schoolyard, bullying is also a workplace hazard that seems virtually inescapable due to the immediacy and invasiveness of social media and the Internet.

This edition features a continued discussion around one of our award-winning Visionary Conversations events held earlier this fall. Brian Bowman, an attorney and alumnus, discusses the legal ramifications of bullying; while Professor Sandy Hershcovis from the Asper School of Business addresses workplace implications of this issue.

For those whose play involves instruments, we introduce you to members of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra—including alumna Merrily Peters—who will live out the dream of many musicians when they play New York's venerable Carnegie Hall on May 8, 2014.

We're excited to share these stories and many more in this edition of *On Manitoba*. We're also proud to let you know that between issues, you can also connect with your alma mater through our new mobile-friendly news site, UM Today, at news.umanitoba.ca.

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