

Suggestions for starting a Men Shed

Preamble:

Knowing that Canadians are living longer, 1/3 of their lives may be in retirement. Senior men especially have few if any options for activities or programs run by men for men. Men Sheds are growing worldwide with 2,200 sheds in existence.

In addition, “grey divorce”, divorce at age 65 and over, is increasing possibly due to added conflicts after retirement on the home front. The man may be “underfoot” in his wife’s domain.

One of the highest rates of completed suicide in Canada, are men 67 and over.

Objective:

To enable, facilitate or help find or provide a safe, comfortable place for mostly senior men to do various hands on activities, working shoulder to shoulder; for men to socialize and mentor other men. Young people as well.

Suggested steps:

- 1) Gather two or three men to discuss the challenges of isolation, loneliness and depression especially in smaller communities. Let the men have input!
- 2) After two or three meetings and discussions with the small group, plan a public meeting in the morning say 10:30 am or afternoon at 2:00 pm. Lead a discussion that may include the need for a Men Shed. Also, can people identify men in the community who may be in need of socializing? Gather contact information of those who attended the meeting. Note: Evening meetings may be a challenge for older eyes to drive to.
- 3) Publicize and hold a second public meeting. Note: Women should attend as they are a primary source of referrals and sometimes “push” their spouses to come and join in a group! “Why don’t you go out and do something!”
- 4) Be sure to invite other community workers or regional health persons to attend. Keep them informed as to what is happening. Tell them to come and observe. Many times they know of men who could/should attend a Men Shed.

- 5) Hopefully **funding** is not a main issue but does arise. Maybe a local service club will help out or an application to a Community Foundation. Federated Co-op, out of Saskatoon has Community Spaces Funds available in western Canada. Ask your local Co-op store, Co-op service station or Co-op Lumber yard manager for details.
- 6) **Space**: Does a local senior housing have a room that could be used once a week? Is there a Senior's Activity Centre with a room that can be used at the same time every week? Structure or a regular meeting time and place is important. Meet at a local restaurant for a congregate meal each week, same time, same place. Could be breakfast or lunch.
- 7) **Activities**: Cribbage or other card games, checkers, crokinole as well as other "table top" crafts such as Diamond Willow canes or walking sticks, Cottonwood Bark Carving, wood carving, stained glass. Other larger community projects will be determined by the men. A woodwork shop is desirable and hopefully will come in time. Many people will donate old or unused tools.

Liability Insurance: Mensheds Manitoba Inc, a registered non-profit Provincial company, purchases liability insurance and provides this group coverage for a nominal fee to Men Shed groups upon request.

Please see the Canadian Men Shed Association website www.menssheds.ca for a guide to start a shed. Also, Google any of the following, Men Sheds Ireland, Men Sheds Australia, Men Sheds UK. They have start up suggestions as well.

Copies of a suggested Constitution and By Laws, are available.

A Men Shed can be independent with a bank account, or "under the auspices" of an existing organization.

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1-204-832-0629 I can call you!

"We don't care who you were, we care who you are today." DHM

"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." Ralph Waldo Emerson