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Faculty of Architecture
Caring for those who once cared for us:
Dementia friendly planning for a Winnipeg, Manitoba winter
Project Backgrounder for prospective study participants

My name is Lea Rempel, and I am a student in the Master of City Planning program at the University of Manitoba. I am currently completing my Major Degree Project, which aims to explore the potential of the built environment to improve the cognitive health of those suffering from mild/early dementia through inclusive urban design and planning. The Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba has approved this research, and I am now looking for volunteers to participate in this study. I am looking specifically for pairs of participants that include one person with early or mild dementia who is still living at home, and their primary caregiver.

As a potential study participant, the following information is intended to provide you with background information on my Master's Major Degree Project in the Department of City Planning at the University of Manitoba. The research is being supervised by Dr. Rae Bridgman in the Department of City Planning.

The purpose of this Major Degree Project is to explore the potential of the built environment to improve the cognitive health of those suffering from early or mild dementia. While a number of inclusive urban design and age-friendly movements are beginning to address the needs of the physically disabled, those with cognitive impairments have been largely ignored in planning and environmental design. Studies have shown that access to the outdoor environment is directly related to quality of life and the built environment has the potential to promote independence and wellbeing. Living an active lifestyle has incredible benefits for aging adults that can lead to extended independence; regular mild to moderate physical activity can shield people with dementia from further cognitive decline. Through various informed design interventions that facilitate physical activity at the neighborhood scale, this research will uncover the potential of the built environment to improve cognitive health, resulting in continued independence and ability to age in place. These interventions have the potential to generate an urban landscape that is both mentally and physically stimulating, and easy to read -- an engaging environment, not only for people with dementia, but for the population as a whole. This research aims to illuminate some of the barriers and

facilitators to active living that older adults with dementia experience when attempting to go outdoors during the winter in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Three pairs of participants (a community dwelling person with dementia and their primary caregiver) will be given a digital camera and a journal, and asked to document barriers and facilitators to going outside in their community through photography and correlating journal entries. Each pair of participants will then be asked to participate in one post-photovoice semi-structured interview to further discuss the contents of their photographs.

There are no direct benefits of taking part in the study however it does provide participant with a platform to share their valuable insights that may help researchers better understand the relationship between people with dementia and their outdoor environments.

If you are interested in taking part in this study, or have any additional questions or comments please feel free to contact me.

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Thank you for your time,

Lea Rempel

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