

THE VILLAGE *Voice*

VOLUME 13 NO. 1 • WINTER 2025/2026

MHV Celebrates 500 Years of
Anabaptism with Gareth Brandt's
“Radical Roots” Exhibit PG. 4

VISITOR EXPERIENCE AT MHV PG. 6



Cover Photo - Bronze sculpture of Dirk Willems, the Anabaptist martyr, in the Dirk Willems Peace Garden. Created by sculptor Peter Sawatsky.

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WINTER HOURS
October 1 - April 30
Sunday & Monday: CLOSED
Tuesday - Saturday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
**Outdoor buildings are closed.*

WINTER IN THE VILLAGE HOURS
December 13 - Februtary 28
Sunday & Monday: CLOSED
Tuesday - Saturday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday & Saturday: 9 a.m - 8 p.m

WINTER ADMISSION RATES

Adults	\$7.50
Seniors (65 & Older)	\$6.00
Students (ages 13-22)	\$6.00
Children (ages 6-12)	\$4.00
Children (ages 5 & under)	FREE

MEMBERSHIP
Membership entitles you to vote at our annual general meeting & gives you FREE or reduced admission to other Signature Museums in Manitoba.

Annual Individual Membership	\$45.00
Annual Family Membership	\$85.00
Lifetime Individual Membership	\$600.00

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MHV SPARKS IMPORTANT CONVERSATIONS

BY ROBERT GOERTZEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

When our guests visit the museum and we get a chance to speak with them, whether at the admission desk, at the restaurant, on the grounds or in the gift shop, it is always fascinating to hear their stories and their perspectives. Mennonite Heritage Village (MHV) aspires to be the premier interpretive centre for the Russian Mennonite story and this vision for the museum helps us to create a setting which finds ways to connect with visitors in a variety of ways.

Many museum guests have a direct family link to the stories of the 1870’s Mennonites who emigrated from Ukraine to establish their new communities in southern Manitoba. They explore the early pioneer houses at MHV and recall stories from grandparents and great grandparents depicting the struggles of family life and community life in a new country. They compare stories with relatives and appreciate the efforts taken by previous generations, to provide for present and future descendants.

Mennonites and descendants of Mennonites from many traditions often visit MHV. They are interested in learning about their ‘brothers and sisters in the faith’ who decided to migrate to Manitoba in the 1870’s. There is a commonality of Anabaptist faith that encourages conversations of comparison to the various Mennonite traditions. The hope is that understanding the different perspectives on how to live out the Mennonite religious faith, also increases the acceptance of other points of view. MHV encourages guests to put themselves into someone else’s shoes, rather than judging those who have chosen different ways to express their faith.

For newcomers to southern Manitoba, the museum provides opportunities to share stories of



REMEMBERING THE PAST

BY ANDREA KLASSEN, FORMER SENIOR CURATOR

One of my favourite things to do at the museum, especially on a nice summer afternoon, is something I learned from one of the past executive directors, Barry Dyck. I don’t know what the official name for it is, but I call it doing a ‘walk-about’ and it consists of walking through the village for a general review - to see what’s going on, inspect the state of the exhibits inside the buildings, admire past work that is - happily - still looking good, and keep an eye on the upcoming projects.

The Lichtenau Church is the first heritage building that was painted when I arrived here, which means it’s now almost ready for another coat of paint. But there’s also a personal connection to this building because it’s the church where my husband, David, and I were married, in June 2020. I take a look around and linger a bit just inside the doors to the sanctuary, smiling to myself as I remember how I was almost hit square in the face by the swinging doors as I entered the sanctuary before walking up the aisle with my dad. As the curator, you’d think I’d know which way the doors swing! But it made for lots of laughter (and happily no bloody noses).

The Reimer Store always seems to smell like peppermint, thanks to the Reimer descendants who give it a thorough cleaning for us every spring. It makes me smile every time I walk in and gives me the sense that all is well with the village.

Beside the Reimer Store is the Printery, now known as the Steinbach Post Printery, a change in title we made after its major restoration in 2023. Although it’s a replica, it was built to represent the building that housed the Steinbach Post, a newspaper started by Jacob S. Friesen in 1913. I studied the Steinbach Post for my Master’s thesis, so this building is another one that has a special connection for me.

migration, family, community life, and establishing a home in a new land.

Newcomers are interested in how early Mennonite communities established themselves, grew, and became the foundation for our contemporary neighbourhoods, towns, and cities. When we share the 1870’s stories, we are also inviting newcomers to share and compare their experiences with starting over in a new country. We become more understanding and more empathetic as we listen to each other.

Many travelers, who visit MHV from around the province, or from around the world, are interested in the human experiences of the past in all contexts and our museum is one of many places where they can learn about what people value in family life, in community life, and in their religious life. In our case, the museum depicts life as a Mennonite in Manitoba, 150 years ago. Inevitably, our conversations lead to comparisons with other people groups in other parts of the world and often the similarities are surprising, and occasionally, the differences are acute. However, we become fascinated as both the hosts and the guests grow in knowledge and understanding, as history is shared.

No matter what the reason is for visiting MHV, the conversations that happen are important. They are born from walking into the Semlin, visiting the General Store, imagining a newcomer family and their cow living in a mud structure, or from hearing the windmill gears turning wind power into ground up wheat. Experiences are recalled, perspectives are shared, acceptance and understanding are encouraged, and at the end of a visit, we are all better people because of our interactions with each other. Mennonite Heritage Village has many stories to tell, and we make space for other stories to be shared.

It brings me great joy to see how level and trim and tidy the building is now, given the poor shape it was in a few years back. The building and its contents had begun to sink on the west side, as the building’s entire foundation underneath had rotted away.

In 2023, we received funding from the Province of Manitoba’s Building Sustainable Communities grant program to replace the rotten foundation with one of reinforced concrete. We also installed brand new hardwood floor throughout, added a large double door for any future large equipment moves, and re-imagined the interior for a better visitor experience.

Just down the street is the Livery Barn Restaurant, which, shortly after I arrived at the museum in 2014, was starting to look a little faded. Eight years later, it was looking downright pink and had become quite an eyesore on main street. Today, after a full repainting in 2023, it’s back to its shining barn-red colour, complete with a new hand lettered sign out front, beckoning weary travelers for a hearty meal and a cup of coffee.

Right across the street is the Chortitz Housebarn, a building that also received major foundation work, extensive renovation to the exterior walls of the barn, and a complete re-painting in 2021 and 2022. One of the symbols of this restoration that stands out to me is the massive, re-built, custom double doors on the west side of the barn.

When David and I got married at the museum, we took a great wedding photo inside the barn, in front of the old door. The door was so full of missing boards where the wood had rotted out that it made a great backdrop for a photo, because it let all the light shine through. But of course, historic barn doors aren’t primarily meant to be romantic photo backdrops.



AUXILIARY REFLECTIONS

BY LINDA SCHROEDER, AUXILIARY PRESIDENT

The snow flurries are falling outside as I am writing these reflections of the Auxiliary activities in the past few months. A hot summer is just a pleasant memory! Rollkuchen and watermelon sales are a fun memory and we soon forget the hard work over the winter months. It's always enjoyable to see familiar faces enjoying this old time treat on a hot day.

Visiting with guests in the summer kitchen during special events is a highlight for Auxiliary members. It is especially enjoyable serving the fresh bread and rhubarb jam to visitors from near and far.



Gudi D. and Carol K. checking the waffles - delicious!

A highlight for 2025 has been planning a 60's celebration. It is hard to believe that MHV was only a dream some 60 years ago. Special thanks to MHV archives, City of Steinbach archives, The Carillon, Ralph Friesen, and Jim Peters for helping to create a memorable slideshow depicting Steinbach during those years and the people responsible for creating what we now call the Mennonite Heritage Village.

"Remembering the Past" - Cont'd from P. 2

So as much as I enjoy the photo, it pleases me to see the new, solid door in good order for a long time to come.

Across the yard from the Chortitz Housebarn, the 1876 Waldheim House was the first heritage building moved to the museum and our oldest on site. It's also the biggest and most complicated restoration project I had the privilege of working on. In 2015, this building stank of mould and damp each time you walked inside and indeed, even had fungus growing out of the interior walls. We knew we needed to act - and fast. So, in 2016 and 2017, we received a large federal grant and began.

The building was completely gutted. Through the skillful work of Myron Hiebert and his crew at Walls That Speak, the rotten logs were replaced with nearly identical (but sound) oak ones from an 1870s building that had recently been torn down. Moisture issues in the building were addressed and mould remediation was completed. This work took a good portion of the winter of 2016 to complete and in spring, the attic structure was reinforced to withstand the substantial weight of the next step of the project: a brand new roof thatched by a Master Thatcher with phragmite reed harvested that winter near Dauphin Lake, Manitoba. The semi trailer full of reed arrived a few weeks later, and by June, the thatcher had arrived and the second phase of the project began. It was completed on Canada Day 2017, just in time to celebrate Canada's 150th, allowing visitors to witness the roof being finished by the thatcher and his team. This was a unique heritage demonstration that hadn't been seen at the museum in a generation - and won't be again for another one! This project was recognized by the Association of Manitoba Museums with its Award of Excellence in 2018.

And last, but certainly not least, we come back to the Village Centre itself, the hub of all the activity that happens at MHV. One of the first things I think of, in terms of the Village Centre, is the roof replacement project we completed in 2019. That year, we realised the roof was failing and contend-ed with major water leaks throughout winter and spring. It was the generous and overwhelming support we received from our community, at that very first fundraising gala dinner we hosted six years ago,

Another special thanks to the 9 local businesses that donated pies for a fun-filled pie auction, and John Peters who so tactfully helped us raise considerable funds to support our projects! Auxiliary members also managed to find retro 60's fashions still in their closets and thanks to the models who graciously reminded us of how stylish we must have all been-at that time! Thanks also to Norm Wiebe for parking his 1964 VW at the front door -in the rain- as guests arrived for the evening!



Becky K. working hard at the waffle iron.

On Friday, November 8th, MHV hosted the Christmas Market and the Auxiliary was pleased to serve waffles and white sauce for the brunch. We will probably do this again as guests certainly appreciate this old time favourite!

All the events the Auxiliary plans, as well as the food we serve at functions, provide us with funds we use to support MHV. We often fund some of the projects, as well as purchase supplies for the Livery Barn Restaurant and the Village Center. Our funds this year have gone to upgrading the stage, painting and flooring in the Village Center, new linens for the Pavillion, and much needed dishes for the Livery Barn Restaurant. We also support the Education component of the Programs offered at MHV and provide funds for the Curatorial Department.

that helped us raise the approximately \$115,000 needed to replace all the flat roofs on the Village Centre. This protected the building that houses the museum's operations as well as the invaluable artefact collection for years to come.

For the curatorial department, the Village Centre is home to some of our biggest projects, including the first one I - together with my predecessor, Roland Sawatzky - was involved in, publishing A Collected History, a book celebrating MHV's legacy in its first 50 years. The Village Centre is also home to our largest annual projects, creating temporary exhibits in the Gerhard Ens Gallery, several of which have been the recipients of the Association of Manitoba Museums Award of Excellence, including 2018's "The Art of Mennonite Clocks," 2019's "The Russlaender," and 2022's "Leaving Canada: The Mennonite Migration to Mexico." These projects give us an opportunity to showcase a broad range of the collection and allow us to engage the public in challenging and interesting ways.

But work in the curatorial department is not just confined to heritage buildings and exhibits. We're all about the details and that means our artefact collection of over 17,000 items plays a major role in our daily work. Not just the item itself, but the trail of data each artefact holds - stories about its history, facts about its owners, notes about its condition, and information tracking its location wherever it is at the museum - also needs to be cared for. This information is contained in our artefact database. Seeing that our old database was running on software that was no longer supported, we welcomed the opportunity to join the Musetoba project in 2020, a state-of-the-art, web-based collections management software made available through the Association of Manitoba Museums. Since then, we have been busy standardizing and cleaning the data. This has been a monumental project for our department, and a huge step forward in our ability to care for the collection and its data, even if this work has been almost completely invisible to the public. The end goal with this project is that it won't just serve MHV's curatorial department, but will end up being open to the public to research our artefact collection online.



Anna L. - Winner of the 2025 Quilt Raffle!

We as an Auxiliary are so proud to be partners of the work at MHV. We are an energetic, passionate group of volunteers and we welcome anyone interested in joining us in contributing to this world class museum!

We look forward to another great year of events in 2026 and hope to see you there!

This brief walk-about through the museum highlights some of the types of projects that we undertake not just to keep the village running and looking its best, but to continue to fulfill our mission to preserve the past for future generations. The truth is though, keeping up with what needs to be done in the village and for our collection is a never-ending job that can often feel overwhelming.

The best advice I've heard about working in museums, where the work is always greater than the human and financial resources are, is that you will never be able to get everything done, so do your best to leave things better than how you found them. That has been my aim. As my eleven years of being privileged to lead the curatorial department came to an end this summer and I reflect on my time here, I don't know if that is the case in all areas of my work, but I do know this: where it is true, it's because I've been able to stand, as they say, on the shoulders of giants. I know that there isn't a single project or exhibit that would have happened without MHV's community: the expertise of the local contractors; the generous funders of these projects; the artefact donors who entrust us with their histories; my colleagues who graciously lent a hand when it was needed; and the volunteers who generously gave of their time and expertise to help this history graduate learn things you don't study in university. If there are areas that are better in the curatorial department today than they were when I arrived eleven years ago, it is because of all of you and your investment in MHV. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity I've had to be part of this community.

MHV is an exceptional place. As I walk through the village, each building is woven through with memories, both professional and personal, that hold a special place for me - some of which I've shared with you today. The extraordinary thing about MHV though is that I'm not unique in this at all. MHV preserves Russian-descendant Mennonite history, but it's also a place where we come together as a community - to work, gather, celebrate, and remember. So as we remember the past and consider the future, please join me in supporting MHV's operations to ensure it can continue to rise to meet the unique challenges of the present, in order to pass along our collective past to future generations.



MHV CELEBRATES 500 YEARS OF ANABAPTISM WITH GARETH BRANDT’S “RADICAL ROOTS” EXHIBIT

BY GARTH DOERKSEN, SENIOR CURATOR



Gareth Brandt, local-born author and artist.

In June 2025, Mennonite Heritage Village commemorated the 500th anniversary of Anabaptism with a series of events featuring local-born artist, scholar, and poet Gareth Brandt. Known for his deep engagement with Anabaptist history and theology, Brandt shared his creative reflections through a temporary art exhibit and a series of thought-provoking lectures.

The exhibit, titled Radical Roots, ran from June 18 to June 28 and featured Brandt’s original paintings and poetry. His work focused on the formative years of the Anabaptist movement, specifically between 1522 and 1527, capturing the radical spirit and theological diversity that defined its early days. The exhibit invited visitors to engage not only with historical events but also with the enduring questions of faith, identity, and community.

At the exhibit’s opening night, Brandt delivered a keynote lecture titled “What Happened 500 Years Ago and Why It Still Matters,” in which he explored the concept of “polygenesis” — the idea that Anabaptism emerged from multiple sources

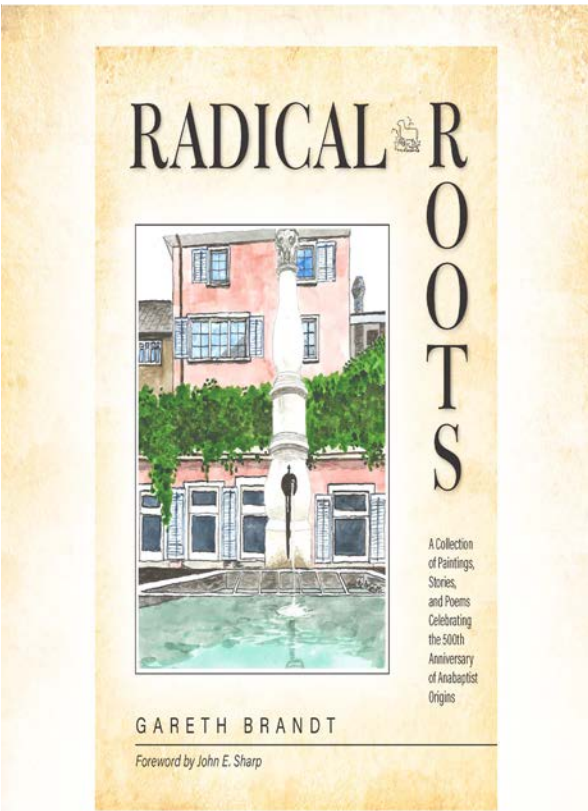
and influences rather than a single origin. He argued that this diversity of beginnings continues to shape the movement’s varied expressions today. Attendees were also treated to poetry readings from Brandt’s new book, Radical Roots, a collection of paintings, stories, and poems that was made available in the MHV gift shop.

Brandt, who has served as a pastor in several provinces and taught Anabaptist history and theology, describes himself as a freelance artist, speaker, and scholar. His multidisciplinary approach—blending art, poetry, and historical insight—offered a unique and accessible way to engage with Anabaptist heritage. The June 18th event was free and open to the public, with coffee and refreshments served afterward, allowing guests to mingle, explore the exhibit, and reflect on the different themes presented.

Brandt’s involvement with the Mennonite Heritage Village extended beyond the exhibit. He returned for Gala Night on June 27th, where he offered another address and generously donated one of his paintings for auction.

Later in the summer, during the Pioneer Days long weekend, Brandt presented a five-session lecture series titled “From Münster to Menno” in the tranquil setting of the Dirk Willems Peace Garden. The series examined how the traumatic events of the Münster uprising profoundly influenced Menno Simons’ theology and helped shape the spiritual direction of the Mennonite tradition.

Through art, storytelling, and scholarship, Gareth Brandt’s contributions offered a meaningful lens through which to reflect on five centuries of Anabaptist faith and witness.



Cover page of Gareth Brandt’s book “Radical Roots” – a collection of paintings, poems, and stories of Anabaptist origins and events.



“ON FIRE FOR CHRIST” TRAVELING EXHIBITION

BY GARTH DOERKSEN, SENIOR CURATOR

Mennonite Heritage Village hosted the “On Fire for Christ: 500 Years of Discipleship, From the Anabaptists to Us” travelling exhibit between August 6th and September 6th. Created by the German Mennonite Brethren Church, in collaboration with other local churches, the exhibit offers a journey through 500 years of Anabaptist discipleship, illuminating the enduring legacy of faith, conviction, and community. The exhibit presents a tapestry of historical moments and spiritual milestones that have shaped the Anabaptist movement from its inception to the present day.



Book scale from Exhibit Room 1.

Room One: “Taught and Corrected by the Scriptures”



Organized into four thematic “rooms”, the exhibition begins with “Taught and corrected by the Scriptures,” which emphasizes the foundational role of the

Bible in guiding believers toward truth and transformation. This section highlights how early Anabaptists sought a return to scriptural authority, often in defiance of prevailing religious norms.



Model of Zürich’s Grossmünster Church from Exhibit Room 1.



Adversity theme from Exhibit Room 2.

Room Two: “Pressed to Baptism - Gathered to the Congregation”

The second room, “Pressed to baptism – gathered to the congregation,” explores the radical commitment to believer’s baptism and the formation of intentional Christian communities. It showcases how baptism was not merely a ritual but a declaration of discipleship and a step toward communal life rooted in shared values and mutual accountability.

Continued on P. 5

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SUMMER 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

BY JAYSA THIESSEN, PROGRAM COORDINATOR

When I look back on the past summer, I am filled with gratitude! This summer was marked by well attended events, enthusiastic visitors, dedicated volunteers, great weather, and continued story-telling. MHV's mission is to preserve and exhibit the story of the Russian Mennonites who settled in Manitoba, and we were able to achieve this during the summer months.

Visitors this summer were incredibly enthusiastic about coming to the Mennonite Heritage Village! We had excellent attendance at all of our events and festivals, and it continues to be a joy to showcase what the Mennonite Heritage Village does to thousands of visitors from around the globe. How humbling it is that we are in a position to display and explain the intricacies of our own history to the curious visitors who set foot in our Village.



Family enjoying the petting zoo on Canada Day weekend.

**"On Fire for Christ" Traveling Exhibition
Continued from Page 4**



City of Augsburg diorama from Exhibit Room 3.

Room Three: "Discipleship as a Witness Against Oppostiion"

"Discipleship as a witness against opposition" delves into the challenges faced by Anabap-tists, including persecution and martyrdom. Through powerful imagery and stories, this part of the exhibit honours the courage of those who stood firm in their convictions despite immense pressure to conform.



Ausbund - the oldest hymnal of the Anabaptists from Exhibit Room 3.

Our events and festivals will continue to be a place to remember and reflect on the past, and keep alive the tradtions and stories that shaped Mennonite faith and culture.

At our Canada Day event, we celebrated the wonderful country that we are blessed to live in. Visitors enjoyed the beautiful weather while explor-ing the museum grounds and exhibit, enjoying live entertainment, visitng the petting zoo, and so much more! The Country Classics Car Club Show 'n Shine offered visitors the chance to see hundreds of classic cars lined up and down our Pioneer Vil-lage. Pioneer Days focused on showcasing pioneer demonstrations and steam-powered work, as well as offering guided tours to visitors around the grounds.

The Tractor Drive and Peace Trek were both fundraising events focused on raising money to support the ongoing work at Mennonite Heritage Village. We appreciate everyone who attended those events, came to show support, and donated!



Visitors enjoying Canada Day festivities on the museum grounds.

Room Four: "Jesus Christ – The Everlasting Standard?"

The fourth and final room, "Jesus Christ – the everlasting standard?" invites reflection on the relevance of Christ's teachings in contemporary life. It challenges visitors to consider how the example of Jesus continues to inspire and guide believers in a rapidly changing world.



Cross from Exhibit Room 4.



Red river ox cart located beside the general store on main street.

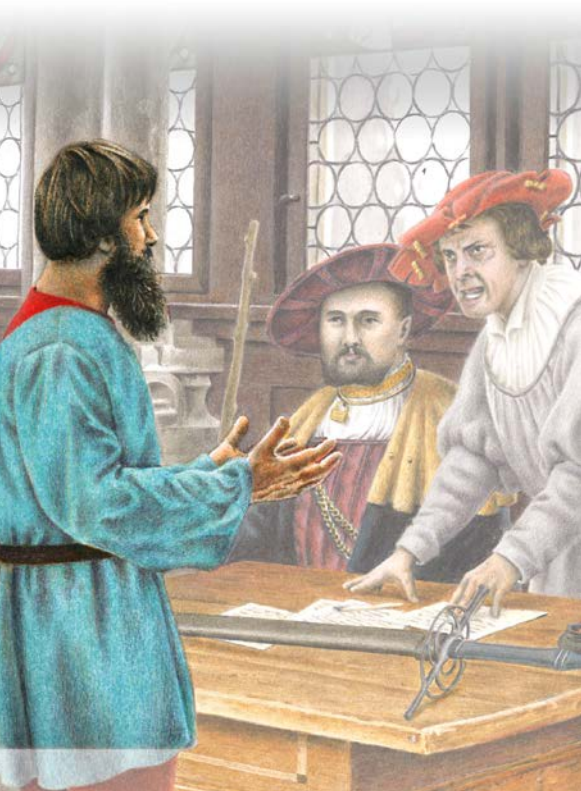
Fall on the Farm was a celebration of the harvest season featuring threshing, horse powered field work, and fresh corn on the cob. This is just a sample of the events that happened at MHV this summer. If you attended or participated in some way, we are grateful that you came!

All of this could not be possible without the time and talent of our many volunteers! The group of volunteers that serve here at the museum are wonderful, dedicated, reliable, and passionate. They care about MHV and the story that we tell, and they are willing to pitch in and give of themselves to partner with us. Such dedication is greatly appreciated, and I look forward to continuing to work with our amazing volunteers, both returning and new!

The close of the 2025 summer season brings with it an abundance of satisfaction and joy! The summer was a success in many ways, and I am thankful to all who partnered with us to achieve that. Thank you!

Throughout the exhibit, visitors encounter historical artifacts, personal testimonies, and displays that bring the Anabaptist story to life. Whether one is familiar with the tradition or encountering it for the first time, the exhibition fosters a deeper understanding of what it means to live a life of discipleship.

The "On Fire for Christ" Traveling Exhibition is more than a historical showcase—it is a call to reflect, engage, and be inspired by a legacy of faith that continues to burn brightly across generations.



Early Anabaptist Michael Sattler.



VISITOR EXPERIENCE AT MHV

BY JO-ANN FRIESEN, VISITOR EXPERIENCE ADMINISTRATOR



Jo-Ann Friesen, General Store Coordinator and Visitor Experience Administrator.

Having worked within the nonprofit sector for many years, I was elated at the opportunity to be hired as Reception, Gift Shop and Office Manager for Mennonite Heritage Village in the fall of 2015. With a genuine love for people from all walks of life, retail sales, and customer service excellence, I entered my new role here at the museum with a teachable spirit as well as enthusiasm on how we can excel around the area of our visitor experience.

What exactly is a “Visitor Experience Administrator” you may ask? Well, let me see if I can explain this position adequately. This role brings all front-end facets under one position. This leadership role oversees several areas: Memberships, Tourist Information, Admissions, Reception, Gift Shop, Online Retail, Facilities, General Store, Retail Events (Markets, Writers Workshops, Author Reading Events, etc.) and Health & Safety.

Visitor experience is key to how MHV delivers various functions to our local and international communities. My role here is to ensure that we review and enhance all aspects of MHV’s interactions, safety protocols, Village Center as well as grounds presentation, and communication within the building and to the greater public. My role is responsible for maintaining a positive, welcoming and inclusive environment for all to explore the power of storied places while engaging in hands-on experiences.

Reception

Upon arrival at the museum, MHV’s Reception team is the first point of contact. Our team is quite knowledgeable and, as a concierge, we assist visitors to get to where they need to go at the museum or within our southeastern communities.



GROWING TOGETHER

BY SHAQUEL ZACHARIAS, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

In many neighbourhoods, community gardens are becoming more than just places to grow vegetables. They’re becoming spaces that encourage connection, learning, and wellbeing. These gardens offer a welcome escape from daily life, providing the chance to slow down and enjoy nature.

Community gardens give social benefits by bringing people together. Neighbours who may never have met before share tools, advice, and laughter while working side by side. Gardeners are often found in conversation with one another, exchanging tips for better produce and new recipes to try. These small green spaces build a sense of connection, whether it’s with others in the community or with the outdoors.

Gardens also offer families a chance to learn through hands-on experiences. Working together in the garden helps children discover where their food comes from and improves their understanding of nature, from planting seeds to harvesting fresh produce. It’s a living classroom that teaches responsibility, sustainability, and patience in a fun and engaging way. For families, spending time in the garden creates shared experiences away from

Reception is one of the key elements to a successful shopping experience, meeting, or an event. We endeavour to foster a safe, inclusive environment for all.

As the Visitor Experience Administrator, I strive to encourage all staff to deliver a world-class visitor experience by engaging fully with our guests and telling the stories of our collection and exhibitions. I am confident that our remarkable team endeavors to offer a warm welcome to all visitors to the Museum, from school groups and tourists to museum aficionados and visiting scholars.

I appreciate being a part of a unique, extremely talented, and fun team who truly care about our local and global friends, the museum’s success and each other as individuals. From festivals to smaller events, our team works collaboratively to ensure each event is brought to fruition smoothly. Our large extended base of volunteers is simply priceless. Their endeavors help MHV present our stories as well as preserve the past.

Memberships

Memberships are great for gift giving and they are a wonderful way to support your local heritage, not just at Christmas, but any time of the year! Some of the many perks of our membership include:

- 10% off purchases in our Gift Shop
- 10% discount in our Livery Barn Restaurant
- 10% off facility rentals
- In-store member features throughout the year
- The ability to receive discounts at six other Signature Museums across Manitoba

Village Books & Gifts

Village Books and Gifts is a wonderful boutique to pick up that hard-to-find unique item for that special someone on your list, or just for yourself. MHV’s experienced staff strives to find merchandise that fits within our mission statement. Our storekeeper Nita Wiebe is a tremendously talented employee who can sleuth that certain item you might be looking for, whether they are out-of-print books, vintage items, and everything in between. Stop by today and check out our shelves for vintage petit point, German texts, cards, cookbooks, artwork, puzzles, clothing, souvenirs, and so much more! Items arrive on a regular basis and our staff, as well as our valued volunteers, are quite knowledgeable.

Keep an eye out on our website and social media as new products arrive. As a nonprofit, when you shop locally, you support MHV’s efforts to keep history alive!

The General Store

The General Store is open seven days a week during the summer season, May to September. As you enter the building you will immediately experience that back in time mercantile feeling. The atmosphere signals the brain while embracing the heart, as the invitation to explore escorts you to storied places of long ago.

For so many folks, the General Store triggers a plethora of childhood memories. You will see a wide array of artefacts on display (some still in use around the world today), and a unique selection of handmade merchandise from local artisans. The General Store endeavors to offer a unique selection of merchandise of souvenirs to choose from as well. To the delight of visitors, like a page from the past, the variety of old fashioned candy literally induces smiles and tickles the sweet zone.

Please note: The General Store has a few openings for vendors of homemade merchandise looking to sell their products for the 2026 season. If you are interested, please contact Jo-Ann at the museum.

The General Store is one of the most popular stops in the Outdoor Village. The Storekeepers are knowledgeable, and very welcoming. We continue to have great conversations with folks who express how much they appreciate the work MHV has done to preserve history for present and future generations, and how “at home” they feel here. Working alongside seasoned staff and volunteers during the regular season is a true highlight for me.

Health & Safety

MHV takes the health and safety of our visitors and community very seriously, and endeavors to provide and maintain a space where families can enjoy a relaxing heritage experience in a safe, accessible, inclusive, and friendly environment. Our grounds invoke a peaceful inner wellness reflection. With walking paths by beautiful gardens kept up by the Steinbach and Area Garden club in the summer, and a wonderland of lights, groomed paths and a bonfire maintained by MHV staff and volunteers in the winter. MHV preserves and shares the story of the early Mennonite settlers journey to Manitoba and our hope is that every time you visit us, you think of reasons to come back again soon!



Beautiful hollyhocks blooming in the MHV Garden.

Each garden plot becomes a tiny but powerful contributor to a healthier environment and the surrounding community.

Community gardens continue to improve our surrounding communities by growing social connections, creating a place for learning, and building a healthier future for gardeners and their surrounding neighbourhood. If you are interested in our community garden plots, please call 204-326-9661 to register for our 2026 waitlist!





MHV EDUCATION SCHOOL PROGRAMS

BY HAILEY SIGURDSON, EDUCATION COORDINATOR



Barkfield public school classroom.

Thinking about booking a field trip?

The Education Program at the Mennonite Heritage Village offers an immersive experience centered around Mennonite History for all students. Our program strives to provide a type of learning that cannot be achieved in the classroom. At the Mennonite Heritage Village, students learn the history of the pioneers through storytelling and hands-on experiences. All of our buildings at the museum hold a rich history and tell a unique story of what pioneer life was like at home, in the village, at work, and at school.

The Education Program runs for the duration of the year and provides schools and children's groups from across the province the opportunity to come and experience the Village!

We offer a variety of School Programs, including Self-guided tours, Guided tours, an Interpretive Program, a Hands-on Program, and a Winter Program. Each program offers a valuable opportunity for students to step into the past, explore the village, and learn about Mennonite history. One thing that makes MHV unique is that many of our volunteers who are interpreters share their own stories about their past and personal experiences. This makes each experience unique and personal. We at MHV are incredibly blessed to have such wonderful volunteers who continue to share their deep knowledge and stories in our buildings.

All of our Education Programs run from 10:00 am-2:00 pm. Our programming starts in the morning and then we provide a space for everyone to enjoy lunch together. After lunch, we give you and your students a chance to explore the museum grounds!

Our Interpretive program runs in September and May-June. When booking this program, we provide you with a schedule, which includes a few interpreters in select buildings, activities such as scavenger hunts, trivia, and other self-led activities.

Our Hands-on Program runs from May-June, and we provide a schedule for your group! This program includes a couple of interpreters in select buildings and hands-on activities. Some of the activities that we offer include schnetje baking, butter churning, old-fashioned laundry, making kodda pups, rhubarb picking, learning fraktur, and more. Our Hands-On Program encourages students to ask questions, get creative, and interact with many of the materials and tools that Mennonites would have used long ago, while learning the origins and history behind them!

When booking a guided tour with us, we provide you with one of our amazing tour guide volunteers. A guided tour takes about an hour and a half and what makes the tour especially unique is that it tells the fascinating history of the Mennonites immigration to Canada. The guided tour goes through how Mennonites migrated to Canada, what early settlement life was like, what school was like, and what living at home and in the village looked like.



Kids enjoying a ride on the firetruck during day camp.

During the Winter Season, from December-March, we run a winter program. In this program, students are invited into the indoor gallery, auditorium, and multipurpose room, for interpretive sessions/storytelling, and hands-on learning experiences.

Our Education Department at MHV strives to give all schools and children's groups the best learning experiences. Our museum gives students the unique opportunity to learn history through storytelling and historically accurate, engaging activities. We would be thrilled to have you join us during the school year!



HANDS-ON, STORY FILLED EXPERIENCES AT MHV!

BY ARIA KLASSEN, EDUCATION ASSISTANT

The Education Program at the Mennonite Heritage Village seeks to provide kids with a hands-on, immersive experience centered on our Mennonite history. What is so unique and what we, the Education staff, have grown to love about Mennonite Heritage Village, is that its history lies in storytelling and in a very special way, allows visitors to step back in time.

Mennonite Heritage Village is not simply a museum; it is a story told through our buildings and our wonderful volunteers. It is from this experience that we centered our Education Program, hoping to provide children with a type of learning that cannot be achieved in a classroom alone. One that allows them to step into the shoes of pioneers and experience what life was like for our ancestors.



Learning life skills in the summer kitchen!

Our Education Program ran in two main forms this year. In Spring, we ran our School Program and provided immersive tours of the Village with the help of our wonderful volunteers. In Summer, we ran our Pioneer Day Camps which were filled with hands-on activities, demonstrations from volunteers, and special themed days!

School Programs

Mennonite Heritage Village's School program runs for the duration of the year to provide an opportunity for schools and children's groups to come and experience the Village. The School program has a variety of options to choose from, including guided tours, a hands-on program, an interpretive program, and many more. The hope with all of these programs is to transport students back into the past and be able to find a way to put themselves into the story the Village tells.

In our Hands-On program, students are able to actively participate in some of the things Pioneer children would have done, including Schnetje baking, butter churning, making kodda pups, and rhubarb picking.

This is an experience that is hard to find elsewhere, as much of our museum involves active learning and encourages students to interact with many of the things that Mennonite ancestors had long ago. Many of our volunteers also bring their own stories to the Village, making each experience unique and personal. We are incredibly grateful for our volunteers who invest their time, thought, and care into providing each group with an engaging, fun-filled experience!

Pioneer Day Camps

Our Pioneer Day Camps run from the beginning of July to the end of August. This camp has different weeks for a variety of ages so that everyone has the opportunity to learn about our history, build friendships, and participate in hands-on activities throughout the museum grounds. Our weeks featured themed days ranging from "Life at Home" to our "Career Day".



Kids enjoying barrel train rides on the museum main street.

A few of our favourite days were the life at home and our career day. Our special themed days brought so much life into the village, with volunteers at many stations such as butter churning, schnetje baking, the windmill, the blacksmith, and many more. We like to think that these were the days that the kids loved the most as they really were able to step into the shoes of the pioneers, ask questions, and participate in activities and chores that they would never get the chance to do.

Pioneer Day Camps also allow us to encompass the personable and unique aspects of the Mennonite Heritage Village, share stories about the various buildings, and take the children on a journey through our history.

We are a bit biased in saying that our Education Program is something you cannot find anywhere else, but it proves itself in our hands-on, story-filled experience.



PRIVATE EVENTS

BY ELISE PLESSIS, PRIVATE EVENTS COORDINATOR

Planning an event? Whether it's a wedding, fundraiser, meeting, or family celebration, it starts with one big decision: choosing the right venue. At the Mennonite Heritage Village, we offer more than just an event space. We provide an experience shaped by history, community, and genuine hospitality.

MHV blends modern amenities with the timeless charm of our historic village. Whether guests gather in our beautiful Auditorium, enjoy the fresh air on our picturesque grounds, or experience the gorgeous industrial architecture of the Peter Barkman Summer Pavilion, every event is surrounded by a sense of place and story. Our museum is a backdrop that elevates any occasion.

From intimate micro-weddings to large corporate functions, MHV has flexible indoor and outdoor spaces that adapt to your needs. Our Auditorium offers comfort and versatility year-round, while our seasonal outdoor areas create unforgettable settings for summer events. No matter the vision, our team helps bring it to life!



Guest round table decorated for a late summer wedding.



The Peter Barkman Summer Pavilion offers a modern open space concept with 6 overhead glass doors and hosts up to 250 guests.



Wedding head table in front of rustic backdrop.

As a nonprofit, MHV is dedicated to creating meaningful experiences for our community. When you book with us, you're not just securing a venue, you're supporting local heritage, education, and programming. Our events team is guest-focused, detail-oriented, and dedicated to helping every client feel welcomed and cared for.

Event dates fill up quickly, especially during peak seasons. Whether you're planning something small and cozy or something big and unforgettable, now is the perfect time to secure your date.

As the Private Events Coordinator I would love to hear from you and give you a free tour of our event spaces and grounds. Feel free to email me at elisep@mhv.ca for more information or to set up an appointment for a tour.

You can also find us on Instagram @ [mhvweddings](https://www.instagram.com/mhvweddings) and find more information on booking rentals on our website @ www.mhv.ca!



LOOKING FORWARD TO 2026!

BY JAYSA THIESSEN, PROGRAM COORDINATOR



Exhibit room focused on the history of the Anabaptist church.

While it feels like the 2025 summer season just ended, the programming doesn't stop at MHV! Throughout the fall and winter season, we are busy hosting events to engage the community, even while our heritage buildings are closed.

December 1st marks the beginning of Winter in the Village at MHV! This event is a celebration of the winter season and will run through February 28th. We are open Tuesday-Saturday, but Saturdays from 9:00 am-8:00 pm are when most of the Winter in the Village programming will happen.

Bring your own skates and try your hand at Crokicurl – or feel free to just skate around on our rink. Don't have a pair of your own skates? No worries, we offer skate rentals! Skate your way down the skating path that will snake through our Village. Try your hand at snowshoeing by renting a pair here and enjoying the beautiful, snow-covered grounds. Warm up by a roaring bonfire and grab a hot drink and freshly baked pastry at our Winter in the Village Café before hopping on a sleigh ride. Make sure to stay past 4:00 pm when our light display turns on and walk through the Village aglow with thousands of twinkling Christmas lights. Experience winter in our beautiful, picturesque pioneer village!

Throughout the winter months, we will be hosting "Exhibit Explorers" – a bi-monthly drop-in craft and story hour in the Gallery for parents and their children! Children will enjoy story time right in the heart of the Gallery and have the chance to make a craft afterwards. The dates for this are December 4th and 18th, January 8th and 22nd, and February 12th and 26th. If you want to try a new location for story time, we'd love to have you!



A snowy winter day on the museum main street.

As always, MHV strives to provide programming and events that benefit the community! If you have questions regarding programming, feel free to head to www.mhv.ca, call 204-326-9661, or email jaysat@mhv.ca. We look forward to welcoming you through our doors in the months to come!



THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING HAPPENING AT MHV!

Keep up to date with all our programming at www.mhv.ca

Contact us

- @mhvillage
- www.mhv.ca
- info@mhv.ca





UPCOMING EVENTS!

Saturday, February 7, 2026 | 9:30am-12:00pm | “Storied Places” Writer’s Workshop

More info at www.mhv.ca.

Thursday, February 12 & 26, 2026 | 10:00am-11:00am | Exhibit Explorers Craft & Story Hour

Join us for a free, drop-in craft & story hour in the Gallery!

Saturday, February 14, 2026 | 9:00am-8:00pm | Winter Carnival

Winter activity day at the museum including skating, tobogganing, sleigh rides, snowshoeing, indoor game tournaments, crokicurl, and a hot food canteen!

Friday, February 20, 2026 | 7:00pm | Low German Evening

Enjoy a fun evening of music, reading, and skits in Low German! Featuring special music by Heischraitje & Willa Honich.

Thursday, March 12 & 26, 2026 | 10:00am-11:00am | Exhibit Explorers Craft & Story Hour

Join us for a free, drop-in craft & story hour in the Gallery!

Saturday, April 4, 2026 | 10:00am-2:00pm | The Great Easter Egg Scramble

Enjoy a family activity day including a chocolate eggs toss, free coffee, and crafts for children!

Tuesday, April 14, 2026 | 7:00pm | Annual General Meeting

Presentation of reports, approval of financial statements and election of board members. Open to the public.

Thursday, April 23, 2026 | 7pm | Volunteer Orientation

An informational evening for new and current volunteers. Come learn about volunteer opportunities at MHV!

Saturday, April 25, 2026 | MHV Spring Market

Details to follow. Check website.

Friday, May 1, 2026 | 9:00am | Village & Livery Barn Restaraunt Open

Outdoor village and Livery Barn Restaurant open for the season.

May 2026 | New Exhibit – Mennonites and Medicine

Explore the new exhibit in the Gerhard Ens Gallery called “Mennonites and Medicine”.

Saturday, May 9, 2026 | 9:00am-5:00pm | Manitoba Day Celebration

Come celebrate MHV’s summer kick-off and Manitoba’s birthday with a Manitoba Day ceremony, free cake and coffee, pioneer demonstrations, and family carnival games!

Sunday, May 10, 2026 | Mother’s Day Lunch Buffet

Take mom out for a Mennonite feast at the Livery Barn Restaurant.

Friday, May 22, 2026 | MHV Gala Fundraising Banquet

Details to follow. Check website.

Saturday, June 13, 2026 | Tractor Drive

Join MHV’s 17th annual Tractor Drive fundraiser! Register your tractor, join in the ride, or support a driver by donating!

Friday, June 19 – Sunday, June 21, 2026 | Summer in the City Waffle Booth

Enjoy fresh homemade waffles at the MHV booth on Steinbach’s Main Street. Get to know the history of our city and region at the Heritage Tent.

Sunday, June 21, 2026 | Father’s Day Lunch Buffet

Take dad out for a Mennonite feast at the Livery Barn Restaurant!

Wednesday, July 1, 2026 | 9:00am-5:00pm | Canada Day

Celebrate Canada Day at MHV with a Canada Day ceremony, free cake and coffee, guided tours of the Village, pioneer demonstrations, entertainment, rides, and lunch at the Livery Barn Restaurant.



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