

## **Our Children – Our Future...**

Our Elders tell us that we have entered a time period in our traditional teachings known as the **Seventh Generation**. This is a time when our youth will become our leaders, **when we are to look to our young people for guidance, strength and direction**.

Our youth today are living in the seventh generation. Many in our community truly recognize and appreciate the impact that our youth will have as the leaders of tomorrow. And yet, each day across this country, we continue to lose many of these children - **our future leaders**, to tremendous despair and hopelessness that too often results in youth suicide.

Recently, we lost yet another young member of our community to such tragedy. Jessica Michaels, a talented young Inuit woman, took her own life after years of neglect, abuse and anguish. Those that knew Jessica were left wondering how this beautiful child could have sunk to the depths of such sorrow and pain. How despite our best efforts, we had failed her.

Jessica was born on March 23, 1894. Given up for adoption at birth, she lived with her adopted Mom until the age of eight (8) when she was apprehended from her home. For the rest of her childhood, Jessica was moved from home to home to home, never staying long enough to develop any real bond.

Sadly, Jessica's story is one of many in which children are left without the needed supports to grow as healthy, happy individuals. As a community, **we must work together** to ensure that such tragedies never happen again.

Each of us has a responsibility to ensure the well-being of our children. *Mothers, fathers, grannies, grandpas, aunts, uncles and cousins* – together, we can support our families and our communities. Together, we can ensure that all children are raised in healthy, happy homes and that families have the resources they require to meet their children's needs.

Think about the many ways that **you** can make a difference in the life of a child. The creator has bestowed upon each of us many gifts to share – our time, our knowledge, and our skills.

**Many opportunities exist in our community to support positive change in youth and in families by passing on our gifts and traditions.** Working together as a community ensures children and youth are our priority as a nation.

Every child born is a precious gift of our Creator. It is our sacred trust to embrace children from all walks of life because we are part of the same family. We must remember that children are not only our links to the history and traditions of the past – ***they also hold the knowledge and vision for the future.***

In Friendship,

Board & Staff  
Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre

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*The Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre was established in 1984 by the Aboriginal community to create preventative, supportive services and resources for Aboriginal families living in Winnipeg. The name Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata translates from the Ojibwa phrase "we all work together to help one another". These words reflect our Vision of the concepts of collective responsibility and reciprocity toward helping each other. Our actions are based on the belief that the entire community has responsibility to support and nurture future generations. **To become a volunteer**, please contact Joanne Beauchamp @ 925-0369. Please also visit our website @ [www.mamawi.com](http://www.mamawi.com)*