

COVID-19 Response Issue 3 – May 11, 2020



MA MAWI WI CHI ITATA CENTRE
We all work together to help one another.

“Our first teacher... is our own heart.”

We have been gifted so many teachings these days. Not only are we learning about our frailties, we are also discovering strengths within ourselves and in our community. In the midst of a global health pandemic, we witness firsthand the potential pitfalls of isolation, loneliness and poverty. We also see the challenges manifesting for our children and families who are experiencing unprecedented difficulties in their domestic situations.



Be assured that Ma Mawi’s executive, staff and volunteers continue to work tirelessly to alleviate as many of these strains as possible. We are continuously creating human connections and hope with the people we serve. All of us are precious and together, we will emerge stronger by always listening to our *hearts*.

We begin our weekly report with a summary of our emergency kit deliveries. These kits are assembled on a daily basis and contain vital food and hygiene items. Some of the numbers that stand out to us from the week of May 1-8 include:

- **5722 Emergency Kits Delivered in Total**
- **2858 Kits Delivered to Youth**
- **81 Kits Delivered to Homes With Infants**

It cannot be overstated, the level of teamwork and engagement that are required from everyone at Ma Mawi to achieve this kind of outreach. Our team’s efforts have not gone unnoticed by our partners. Christine Schroeder from the Bethania Group in Winnipeg recently shared an observation with one of our team members: ***“I am so impressed and it truly touches my HEART to see how you and your organization are reaching out to others. Thank you SO much for all you are doing!!”***

While our emergency response has been effective, we still need much more in the way of unique items to add to our kits. Our community members have asked us for items such as **baby shampoo, men’s hygiene products, laundry soap, hand sanitizer, peanut butter, noodles and garbage bags** to name a few.

One of our core mandates at Ma Mawi has truly been put to the test during this time of isolation and quarantine. Strengthening children and families forms the basis of much of our work. Like so many households during this pandemic, the strains have become almost unbearable for families in our care. That’s where our **Spirit of Peace (SOP)** program comes in. The program was developed to provide counselling, advocacy, and referrals along with cultural and spiritual healing practices which allow in-depth examination of the reasons behind violence in the family and against our women.

We’ve been hearing a consistent theme from our **SOP** participants. They tell us that stress levels are markedly higher and many are having an especially difficult time managing isolation. Since we commenced our pandemic response, we have been able to admit four new participants into the program. We have also maintained responsible, safe and regular contact with all of our participants through phone calls, emails and social media.

Strengthening Children and Families... Investing in Our Future

However, we needed to do more to help our men with their stress and physical tension. So our team made the decision to take some of our **SOP** participants back to the land at our **Windy Hill Community Training Healing and Learning Centre** location north of Winnipeg.

They worked extremely hard cutting and clearing trees at the site for the new centre. Participants expressed *how much they enjoyed themselves and that they were looking forward to going back to do more.*

Fittingly, when completed the new Windy Hill Centre will be for all community members to heal, renew and rebuild. Even without a finished building, the centre is already fulfilling its' intended purpose.



All of our staff in every department has stepped up in creative and remarkable ways during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are also *heartened* by the response of our **volunteers**. Without their dedication and commitment, we would not be able to carry out our life-saving work.

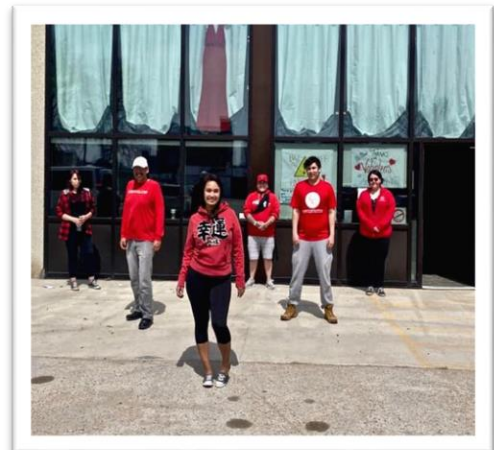


This week, we acknowledge the efforts of **Darren Ellison**. Since the coronavirus crisis hit our community, Darren has gladly taken on the role of volunteer driver. Our community members see Darren almost every day as he completes emergency kit deliveries in the Tyndall, Maples and Weston neighbourhoods. Our Team Lead from **All Relations Lodge**, **Tammy Hamelin** informs us, that *Darren shows up each day with a warm smile and genuine happiness.* Darren, we know you didn't join our outreach efforts for accolades. We just want you to know how much we appreciate you and your kind *heart*.

Our *heartfelt* thanks goes out to everyone who has partnered with us during this time of crisis. To our funders and partners, you need to know what an enormous and positive difference your support is making during these unprecedented times.

When it comes to teachings from the *heart*, no one exemplifies that approach to life quite like our **Mothers and Grandmothers**. We are so proud that Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata is seen as a **Grandmother** in our community's family of service providers. By listening and learning from our women, we continue to find strength and love in the most difficult circumstances.

Despite the all-encompassing demands and focus on the COVID-19 pandemic, Ma Mawi staff still took the time on **May 5th**, to honour our **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)**. **Red Dress Day** is part of our community's tribute to



the more than one thousand missing and murdered Indigenous Women in Canada. Even in times like these, we must never forget our lost relatives and we can never cease our efforts to draw attention to the gendered and racialized nature of violent crimes against Indigenous women.

Finally, we sincerely wish, that moms everywhere were made to feel extra special this past Sunday on **Mother's Day**. We know this was quite likely, one of the most unusual Mother's Days you will ever experience. What we hope has not changed, is that it was a day to feel appreciated and that your *hearts* were made to feel full.

Miigwetch, Ekosani, Wopida, Thank you and Merci!