



Vancouver's Downtown Eastside is Site of Sacred Smudge Ceremony.

For Immediate Release: Vancouver, December 4, 2007
WAWAW Media Advisory and Backgrounder below.

This Thursday December 6, is National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. WAWAW (Women Against Violence Against Women), along with the Squamish Nation, the Musqueam Nation, the Tsleil Waututh Nation, Aboriginal groups, and multicultural organizations, will join other women's anti-violence groups in a Sacred Smudge Ceremony of the Downtown Eastside.

Vancouver's Downtown Eastside neighbourhood is tragically infamous for missing and murdered women. "The women living here are exposed to acts of violence on a daily basis," states Singing Thunderbird Child/ Twice Standing Women (Darla Laughlin), Aboriginal Outreach Counselor for WAWAW. This sober reality is brought horribly to mind as the trial concerning the Missing and Murdered women (Pickton Trial) concludes. "This ceremony will cleanse the negative energy from this troubled area so that the healing process can begin. It is a time to honour Clan Mothers as leaders and sacred life givers, and pray for an end to violence against all women," adds Laughlin.

WAWAW is a community leader in supporting survivors of violence. This ceremony represents their parallel commitment to ending violence through partnerships which raise awareness and work to heal and prevent. This important ceremony in the DTES has generated parallel projects in Prince Rupert and Prince George.

WAWAW is also working with youth from Kitamaat Village, BC and across Vancouver, on "The Super Power Project", which will launch in February of next year. This new media project is a partnership with Good Company Communications, funded through a Partners in Prevention grant from the Ministry of Community Services. The campaign engages youth to create and distribute video, through interactive online activities, and comics that will reach hundreds more youth online and in communities across BC with their violence prevention messages.

"As we remember women we have lost to violence it is also important to empower the younger generation, and to help youth build their skills to avoid, and prevent violence as well as to support each other," says Katherine Dodds, creative director of the Super Power campaign. She adds, "And we need to be online, it's where they hang out, it's the

new teen “scene”. We just held a workshop with youth from Kitimat and Vancouver and I am inspired by their ideas, energy and creativity.”

Sacred Smudge Event Details:

The December 6, 2007, Day of Remembrance Smudge Ceremony in Vancouver is open to all. Join us in prayer to honour women as sacred life givers, clan mothers, and leaders of our communities. The ceremony will be conducted by 40 Aboriginal Elders and Spiritual Advisors and with the four races from around the world.

Date: Thursday December 6, 2007
Media check in: 10:30 am Victory Square, corner Hastings and Cambie
Event Time: 11:00 am – Formal Start of Smudge Procession (From four locations)
11:30 – 1pm Meet at Hastings and Main for speeches, dancing and drumming.

Procession:

10:30 -Those who are able to attend the smudge procession are invited to self-identify, and present yourself at one of the following areas representing one of the Four Sacred Directions of the Medicine Wheel:

Yellow Race: Princess and Hastings Street
Black Race: Union and Main Street
Red Race: Cambie and Hastings Street
White Race: Alexander and Main Street

11:00 formal start of the smudge, proceed to Hastings and Main.

Sponsored by Women Against Violence Against Women, Helping Spirit Lodge, United Native Nations, Urban Multipurpose Aboriginal Youth Centre, Native Education Centre, Crab Tree Corner, Healing Our Spirit, Squamish Nation.

For more information on the December 6 event call Darla Laughlin at (604) 255-6228 ext. 231. For information on the Super Power Project call: (604) 251-5567

-30-

