

## HONOURING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Summer, 2022

by Strini Reddy

Since the children and youth in our partner communities have had a very challenging 2 school years, we decided to do as much as we can to enable the communities to provide as many fun learning and recreational activities as possible over the summer. We consulted with the communities to determine how best we could do this.

We initially tried to work in partnership with other like-minded organizations so that we could increase our capacity and impact. In particular, we wanted to collaborate with MFNERC. Unfortunately, after a promising beginning, our efforts at collaboration failed. However, we were able to get Wpg Aboriginal Sports Achievement Centre (WASAC) to offer summer programs in two of the communities, Lac Brochet and Shamattawa.

S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math)

I sought the assistance of one of my former students, a teacher who is now a widely recognized, award winning leader in this field, to help us offer S.T.E.A.M. activities in 2 of our partner communities over the summer. Consultations were held with local leaders about program and needs. Unfortunately, they were not able to offer the program this summer but plans are being made to do this in the fall.

### SUMMER LITERACY PROGRAMS

We worked with our partners, Frontier College, to enable the offering of fun literacy development activities in Red Sucker Lake, St Theresa Point and God's River. Two instructors have been hired for 5 weeks in each community and training is being provided. All necessary materials and resources are being sent into the communities.

#### Manto Sipi (God's River)

We were able to send life jackets, crocs and water shoes so that the children could enjoy the water. We have already received some beautiful pictures and "thank you" notes.

We also sent board games and a variety of supplies for arts and crafts activities. This community lost their dock last winter and requested help to have a new one built. We are collaborating with a funding partner in Ontario to see if we can help make this happen.

*Children from Manto Sipi (God's River) happily holding up their water shoes to say "Thank You"*



#### St Theresa Point

The community had purchased boats for water and land-based activities but were in need of life jackets which we have provided. We have also sent all books and supplies needed for the Recreation and Reading Program. In addition we have sent board games, arts and crafts supplies and soccer equipment.

This year, for the first time, we will be sponsoring 2 students from the community to attend our Rotary Adventures in Human Rights.

#### Red Sucker Lake

The community had acquired canoes for their water and land-based programs but were in need of life jackets and paddles which we have provided. We have also sent board games, and are in the process of responding to a request for baseball and soccer equipment.



#### Tadoule Lake

This is the only community (population of approx. 400) located in the Seal River Watershed, an indigenous protected area. The Chief expressed an interest in educating the youth in his community about this pristine area. He would require canoes. We are in the process of purchasing and shipping 2 canoes for this purpose.

*Students and adults from Tadoule Lake crossing the lake to summer camp in one of the canoes we sent.*

#### Split Lake

We have worked in partnership with Indigenous Youth Mentorship Program to enable the offering of their 6-week fun program of summer physical activity and literacy program.

We are also working with the community to support the development of a baseball league. We will be helping to procure the necessary equipment, etc.

We have just connected with Rylee Nepinak, the young man who rode his bike across Canada to raise funds to support the development of youth suicide prevention initiatives. We will be working with him to see how we can support these initiatives.

UPDATE : August, 2022

1. We have purchased 2 canoes and shipped by air to Tadoule Lake.

The canoes arrived safely and we have just been informed that they are being used for their summer camp.

2. Working with Basketball Manitoba we sent basketballs to 5 of our partner communities. Received the following acknowledgement from one of our friends:

"I was very surprised and thrilled to receive a box of basketballs for our youth in . . . Cree Nation. Feels great not to be forgotten when one gives up. I wanted so much to have a baseball league of some sort and more basketball games for our youth during the summer. Only had one tournament of 10 teams so far and they were only permitted one ball to warm up with. Thank you for your help."

“July 1/22 was a one-year memorial for our late son who passed from suicide as did many others in the last year. Sports is one way to prevent more tragedies from occurring in our community. Thank you for your kindness and generosity.”

3. We worked with our friends in Split Lake to obtain a substantial amount of sports equipment from MB Aboriginal Sports and Rec Council. They sent a school bus down to Winnipeg to collect the equipment.

4. We have just received the great news from our partner organization in Ontario that funding for a new dock in Manto Sipi (God's River) has been approved! They are in the process of having the paper work completed. The community is hoping to have the dock built by fall.

5. We sent \$2000 worth of new books with indigenous content for the Poplar River School library for the beginning of the new school year.

6. Both St. Theresa Point and Red Sucker Lake requested ball hockey equipment so that the students could enjoy this activity in the fall. Equipment has been ordered from a supplier in Ontario and will soon be on the way to the communities.

7. As noted above we sent paddles and life jackets to Red Sucker Lake. The water activities were enjoyed so much by the students that the community wants to continue the activity in the fall with even more students involved. Number of participants is limited by the fact that they have only 2 canoes. We are looking for funding to enable us to provide 2 more canoes when able.