

To Sisters In Spirit Supporters

It's not over yet.

The Native Women's Association of Canada's (NWAC) Sisters In Spirit initiative 2005-2010 was denied the renewal of its special project status and are now parceled under one portfolio under Status of Women Canada. This change has negatively affected the activities that NWAC can undertake and will hamper our ability to maintain focus on resolving the epidemic of violence that threatens Aboriginal women. A strategic, long-term approach is needed to sustain our high quality of work and effectiveness on this issue.

Sisters In Spirit began out of a dire concern shared by many groups, including the Aboriginal community, social service agencies, churches and international groups such as Amnesty International. These organizations were alarmed by the large number of cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls; they supported NWAC and our application for funding for the Sisters In Spirit initiative to address this issue.

Five years forward, Sisters In Spirit is no longer just a project - it has become something much larger. International, National, local and grass roots groups and individuals now have a connection to the name Sisters In Spirit as a global movement and brand. Sisters In Spirit is recognized in Europe, Latin America, Australia and North America as a symbol of the commitment of not only the community to ensuring the safety of Aboriginal women but also as a way to honour the missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, their families and their communities.

The Sisters In Spirit logo "Grandmother Moon" is also recognized in conjunction with the initiative and as a connection to the nearly 600 known missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. The families of Sisters In Spirit trust the name and logo and feel a strong affiliation with them as a beacon of hope for change.

Sisters In Spirit has outgrown project status. It demonstrates NWAC's success in conducting research, policy development and community engagement on this difficult issue. NWAC is recognized by both governmental and non-governmental organizations as a leader in this activity and an expert voice on this issue – a voice that brings forward the concerns of families who have lost a loved one as well as all those in the Aboriginal and wider communities who share a commitment to reducing violence and improving the circumstances facing Aboriginal women.

NWAC is concerned that the difficulties surrounding ongoing funding are not only curbing the success of the movement but also causing unnecessary pain to the families directly affected by this issue. NWAC hopes that the federal government will recognize this unique situation and work with the organization to make the right decision. NWAC looks forward to further

collaboration with the government on new, ongoing and additional projects that will enable us to continue the work we began almost six years ago.

How you can help:

We would recommend the following actions:

- a. Sending a letter to the federal government stating your support of NWAC's Sisters In Spirit and urging them to make ongoing funding to this activity a priority
- b. Posting support of NWAC's Sisters In Spirit on your websites or other locations you feel would be beneficial
- c. Communicating with your affiliates and members to also pledge their support to NWAC's Sisters In Spirit.

Our doors are always open to family members and communities. Our doors are always open to develop new partnerships and relationships. We would also like to put your letters and supporting documents on our website located at www.nwac.ca

Please feel free to contact us if you have any further questions, comments, or ideas.

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