



Press Release – For immediate release

Val-d'Or, a City United against Racism

Val-d'Or, March 3, 2016_ The 16th Week for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination organised by the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre will be held from March 21 to 24, 2016 under the theme of **“Val-d'Or, a City United against Racism”**. This campaign is part of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and gives all citizens the opportunity to reiterate their commitment to fight racism, prejudices and intolerant attitudes in our society.

The **Val-d'Or Declaration**, endorsed last December 15 by the Town of Val-d'Or, the Cree Nation Government and the First Nation Councils of Kitcisakik, Lac Simon and Abitibiwinni, reflect the communities' determination to join efforts to eliminate racism, enhance dialogue and work together to build a fair and just society.

The process to join the UNESCO's **Canadian Coalition of Municipalities against Racism**, initiated by the Town of Val-d'Or, translates the municipal authorities' intentions into actions in the fight against racism and discrimination. To this end, the municipal council created a committee that is currently working at developing an action plan that will allow responding to the important challenges of a peaceful coexistence that will benefit each and everyone. In this context, the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre wishes to highlight this promising initiative by selecting Val-d'Or's **Committee for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination** as the spokesperson of the 16th Week for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination¹.

This 16th Week will open with a demonstration of solidarity between peoples with the **Gabriel-Commanda Walk**, Monday, March 21 at 1:00 pm. Many activities are organised by partners such as UQAT, the *Centre l'Horizon*, the DIALOG Research Network and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The full activity program is available on the Friendship Centre's website (www.caavd.ca) and Facebook page.

A central gathering place and public forum, the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre advocates for the individual and collective rights, interests and well-being of the Aboriginal people faced with the reality of an urban environment.

- 30 -

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¹ In addition to Ms. Syvie Hébert, municipal councillor, the committee includes nine members: Ms. Johanne Fournier, director general, Commission scolaire de l'Or-et-des-Bois; Ms. Mary Louise Rodgers, principal, Golden Valley School; Mr. Sylvain Plouffe, assistant CEO, Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de l'AT; Ms. Sharon Hunter, advisor, Community Relations, Strategies and Partnerships, Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre; Ms. Janet Mark, citizen; Ms. Frédérique Cornellier, citizen; Mr. Doris St-Pierre, citizen; Mr. Habib Sylla, citizen; Mr. Paul-Antoine Martel, project manager, Rural and Community Life Coordinator, Town of Val-d'Or.