



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Native Friendship Centre Earns Cultural Achievement Award

Friday, January 23, 2015 _ The Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre was moved and proud to receive the prestigious Jeanne Lalancette-Bigué Award, given by Val-d'Or's *Commission de développement culturel* at their annual Cultural Awards evening. The Jeanne Lalancette-Bigué Award honours a person, an organisation or an event that stood out during the year by the quality of their commitment and accomplishments, and that benefited the community.

In 2014, the Friendship Centre's cultural achievements included, among others, the semi-permanent exhibition "Because Urbanity is Also Anicinabe" presented at the Val-d'Or Exhibition Centre, the Centre's 40th anniversary celebrations, National Aboriginal Day and the development of its cultural and tourist site project. For the Friendship Centre's president Oscar Kistabish, "this award is a recognition that deeply moves us, one that acknowledges the work accomplished by the Friendship Centre to promote the rich culture of a multi-thousand year-old people. We feel recognised". The promotion of First Peoples' culture ranks high on the Friendship Centre's priorities. Throughout the years, the Centre has lead many cultural initiatives including film festivals, handicraft fairs, publications, radio and TV chronicles, editing of the Centre's Notebook, show production, etc. This is the second time the Friendship Centre receives this honour, the first time being in 2002. For the Friendship Centre, culture is a matter of identity as well as an essential tool that brings people together and reconciles them!

The Friendship Centre decided to award the "Coup de cœur" grant to Ki8etan, a group of women drummers who carry on Aboriginal culture and traditions with dignity and honour. The group is made up of Lisa Gagné, Roxane Mianscum-Lizotte, Éliane Kistabish and Pascale Josée Binette.

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. Its services cover different development sectors addressing education, culture, community health, recreation, economy and social issues. It is recognised by the community as a bridge builder between peoples.

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