

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

### *11<sup>th</sup> promotion of Life Week: Back to Our Roots*

**Val-d'Or, November 14, 2014** \_ For its 11<sup>th</sup> Promotion of Life Week, the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre offered to the Aboriginal community members wishing to get back to the essence of things a program based on traditions and cultural heritage. The theme ***Ki8etan – Going back where we come from*** has really appealed to the members as demonstrated by the 600 people who attended the activities. The week-long activities focused on the four dimensions of human nature to make health and wellness a common priority for individuals and the community.

#### **A meaningful program**

The three-day workshops, attended by hundreds of people, consisted in traditional activities and Anicinabe teachings delivered by traditional leader and medicine man Dominique (T8aminik) Rankin and Marie-Josée Tardif, aspiring medicine woman. A participant in the ceremonial welcoming of children on the sacred land explained the importance of this activity in her life as a young woman: "I greatly appreciate the fact that the Friendship Centre demonstrates this openness to traditional teachings. I would like my unborn child to experience this ceremony." About 100 people viewed the documentary "Une lueur d'espoir" (a glimmer of hope) by Diomède Niyonzima, a survivor of the burundais genocide who delivered a message of peace and attachment to one's roots. Following his testimony tinged with resilience, Mr. Niyonzima answered the participants' questions with an inspired tone, as if to give people something to believe in, a necessary motivation to face the most difficult moments in life. Among the other high points of the week, let us mention the community supper, the flu vaccination campaign, the prevention games, all aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles.

#### **Human warmth in a cold night**

The Night of the Homeless opened with a sacred fire ceremony. This activity, the first of its kind in Val-d'Or, was the result of the dynamic involvement of homeless persons, community members and employees of the Friendship Centre and La Piaule de Val-d'Or. The highly successful activity has allowed addressing homelessness from a new perspective. "It was their night, our night. We learned more about each other, we shared and developed relationships; the homeless were our guests of honour and the expressed their pride" a participant said. The Friendship Centre wishes to acknowledge and commend the Val-d'Or people for their generosity, donations and support. It demonstrates a great sensitivity to this still ill-known reality.

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.

- 30 -

Source: Édith Cloutier, Executive Director  
Contact: Nadia Lagueux, Communication & Special Events Officer  
819 825-8299 ext. 236