

# Eagle's Eye News



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## ARC Member Lisa Meeches Receives National Aboriginal Achievement Award

United Way's Aboriginal Relations Council members (ARC) are true multi-taskers. A prime example is Lisa Meeches—a 2007 recipient of a National Aboriginal Achievement Award as telecast by Global and APTN on Saturday, March 31, 2007. Lisa was honoured for her media work on residential school survivors and contributing to Winnipeg's popularity as a location for Hollywood productions. She is president of a pair of Winnipeg film production firms, as well as producer and co-host of the award-winning *The Sharing Circle*—one of the longest-running series in Canadian TV history.

A film-maker with a social conscience, Lisa has been a member of ARC since it began in 2004. "When United Way asked me to join the council, I was delighted," she says. When the Aboriginal Relations Strategy was introduced in December 2005, Lisa hosted the event. "Like so many in the Aboriginal community, I appreciate that Aboriginal agencies in Winnipeg like Ndinawe and Oyate Tipi receive funding support from United Way."

An Ojibwa from Manitoba's Long Plain First Nation, Lisa is a trained herbalist with a degree in Broadcast Arts and a Diploma in Business Administration. Her career began in 1986 when she compiled radio reports for an Aboriginal talk show in Winnipeg. Later, she worked as a reporter in Manitoba and Alberta. In 2002, Lisa completed the Banff Television Festival's Executive Program, sharpening her skills and



Lisa Meeches

becoming one of the top names in Canadian film production.

Movie fans know Lisa's company co-produced the Oscar-winning *Capote* starring Philip Seymour Hoffman which was filmed in Manitoba in 2006. Lisa also produces a TV series for pre-school children. Now in its third season, *Tipi Tales* won a Parents Choice Gold Award in 2003. The series focuses on four Ojibwa cousins who learn

about life from forest animals who embody the seven ancient Aboriginal laws—love, respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility and truth.

The role Lisa enjoys most is that of mother to her two sons Billy and Earl. In fact, if she wasn't involved in film production, Lisa would love to be a full-time mom. In the meanwhile however, she is hard at work on her next project *White Buffalo*—a miniseries based on her award-winning research with residential school survivors—slated for TV audiences in 2009.

As for United Way, Lisa remains committed to creating a better community and looks forward to continuing her ARC involvement for quite some time. "The fact that Winnipeg is home to the largest urban Aboriginal population in Canada is not only recognized by United Way, it is embraced—and that's a good thing," Lisa continues. "By reaching out to First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Winnipeg, United Way is investing in the future of both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities—and that's even better."

## A Message from the Director, Aboriginal Relations Council

Welcome to our spring 2007 edition of *Eagle's Eye News*—which is packed with great stories and informative features about the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg.

Congratulations to ARC-member Lisa Meeches (See Page 1), one of this year's 14 recipients of the 2007 National Aboriginal Achievement Awards. You will also enjoy our profile of Ronda Garrioch whose refreshing attitude has worked wonders



Carla Kematch

for neighbourhoods in Winnipeg's North End. Don't miss our snapshot of the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre below plus our regular feature *More Great Things to know about the Aboriginal Community* on Page 4.

If you have any comments or suggestions, I'd love to hear from you. You can do so by email at [ckematch@UnitedWayWinnipeg.mb.ca](mailto:ckematch@UnitedWayWinnipeg.mb.ca) or by telephone at 477-5360.

Watch for our summer 2007 edition coming in June. Remember: copies of *Eagle's Eye News* are available online at [www.UnitedWayWinnipeg.mb.ca](http://www.UnitedWayWinnipeg.mb.ca)

## Aboriginal Agency Snapshot: The Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre

Established in 1984 by the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg, the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre is one of nine Aboriginal agencies that receive funding support from United Way. Since it began 23 years ago, Ma Mawi has created over 140 jobs, mobilized over 500 volunteers and continues to deliver over 30 programs annually.

As many of you know, the name Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata means "we all work together to help one another." The Centre works as a bridge between the community and the "systems" that interact with it and offers preventative and supportive services and resources of, by and for Aboriginal people in Winnipeg. United Way supports Ma Mawi's capacity building opportunities in the Volunteer Program, Youth Program and Community Training and Learning.

With a focus on understanding and working directly with the community that it serves, Ma Mawi strives to continuously create solutions to ensure personal, family and community well-being. It operates three open community care and three private residential care sites in Winnipeg.

Each community care site offers a wide range of supportive programs and activities for community members.

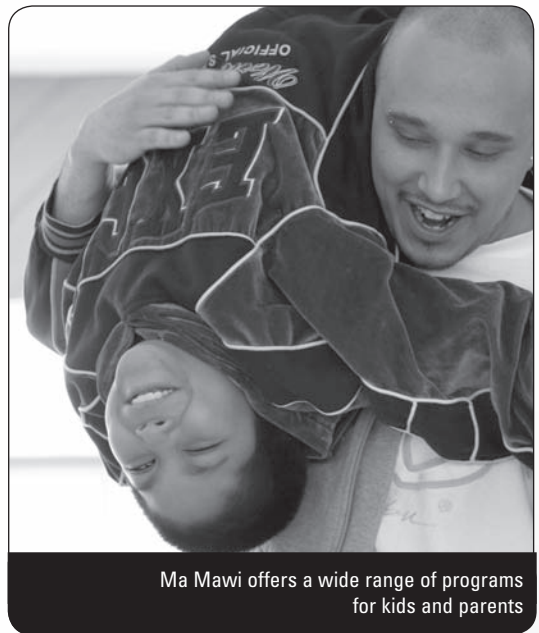


Photo by Scott Stephens

Ma Mawi offers a wide range of programs for kids and parents

United Way's support of the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre in Winnipeg is an integral part of its strategies to reduce poverty, encourage successful children and youth and build strong, safe neighbourhoods. For more information, please visit our website [www.UnitedWayWinnipeg.mb.ca](http://www.UnitedWayWinnipeg.mb.ca) or telephone 477-5360 or visit [www.MaMawi.com](http://www.MaMawi.com)

**United Way Winnipeg extends its sincere condolences to the entire Ma Mawi team on the tragic passing of Tannis Bird and Isabelle Monkman—two very special individuals whose commitment and spirited humanity will truly be missed.**

## How a Commitment Led to a Career: The *Can Do* Attitude of Ronda Garrioch

**I**n 1996, Ronda Garrioch decided to take her life in a new direction. She was in her 20's, single, Métis and a stay-at-home mom. In preceding years, Ronda and her young daughter were among those who had received support from the Andrews Street Family Centre (ASFC) – one of almost 100 Winnipeg agencies which receive funding support from United Way of Winnipeg.

Ronda felt she was now in a position to “return the favour” by volunteering her skills as a nutrition cook at the Andrews Street facility. It wasn't long before her involvement grew from making healthy snacks for kids before and after school to becoming a strong advocate of ASFC's successful Parents Helping Parents Program by 1998.

Two years later, Ronda was one of a team of outreach workers who supported local residents through a variety of programs and services including pre-natal and child care, clothing exchange, computer training, even landlord and tenant issues.

“The sense of accomplishment I feel from this kind of work is



Ronda and her daughter Joey

overwhelming,” Ronda is quick to point out. “And in the process, I've learned a lot about what it means to be a parent and a kid, and what it takes to bring the two together today.”

In 2005, Ronda became Community Development Coordinator at the Community Education Development Association (CEDA)—another United Way agency. Here, she quickly gained a reputation as someone who listened and got things done. Ronda's infectious Can Do attitude worked wonders whenever CEDA needed to recruit volunteers

for its youth employment or seniors' projects and its Street Stroll program which combats vandalism and street crime.

According to Betty Edel, CEDA's Executive Director, “Ronda has done a wonderful job helping Dufferin Avenue's neighbours build a stronger community for themselves.”

Today Ronda has three children: Rosa, Stephanie and Joey aged 16, 14 and 6. As for her commitment to “return the favour”, Ronda recently extended it to include the entire province. As Intensive Support Supervisor with the Manitoba Corrections Justice Department, she now confronts the root causes of crimes committed by young female offenders. Not only is the program a success, but in Ronda's eyes, “It gives youth—especially Aboriginal young women—a true second chance.”

“I'm thrilled and happy at how my career has taken off,” says Ronda. “But I'll always remember that it all started with my volunteering in my own neighbourhood. To me, that's what it's all about—caring enough to make a difference since so often, that's all you really need.”

### UNITED WAY WINNIPEG'S ABORIGINAL RELATIONS COUNCIL MEMBERS ARE:

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#### CARLA KEMATCH

Director, Aboriginal Relations United Way Winnipeg

## How Would YOU Reduce Poverty in Winnipeg?

Your response to questions like this is what URBAN EXCHANGE is all about. If you want to have your say about your city, you're invited to join URBAN EXCHANGE now!

URBAN EXCHANGE is a United Way of Winnipeg Advisory Panel that provides an opportunity for people from all facets of our population to share

their thoughts and ideas to build a stronger, more vibrant city. Here, you can effectively guide and drive United Way as it addresses poverty, personal and neighbourhood safety, youth at risk and other social issues.

And please spread the word: Ask your family, friends and colleagues – anyone who you feel may be interested in voicing their views and support positive social change in Winnipeg. For more information, please visit [MyCityMySay.ca](http://MyCityMySay.ca), or contact Pat Harper, Director of Strategic Management at [patharper@UnitedWayWinnipeg.mb.ca](mailto:patharper@UnitedWayWinnipeg.mb.ca) or telephone 477- 5360, ext. 260



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## GET EAGLE'S EYE NEWS BY EMAIL

For details, please contact  
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or 477-5360

# We.

Each one of us brings something special, something necessary to making Winnipeg a better place to live. When "We" work together, our individual contributions multiply into the strength and confidence of "We". And "We" all benefit. United Way makes "We" happen.

## More Great Things to Know about the Aboriginal Community

**1** Aboriginal students will be better equipped for high-demand jobs in Manitoba's aerospace, manufacturing and construction industries now that funding has been allocated for the Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development's (CAHRD) Neeginan Institute of Applied Technology in Winnipeg. Within a year, over 150 Aboriginal students will graduate with certified training for jobs in the aerospace, manufacturing and construction industries. Firms committed to hiring Neeginan graduates include Boeing, Border Glass, Standard Aero, Custom Steel and Carlson Composites.

**2** Coming May 1-3, 2007 is the 3rd Annual Aboriginal Education Research Forum: Shawane Dagoiwin – being respectful, caring and passionate about Aboriginal research. The event will be held at the Victoria Inn and Convention Centre in Winnipeg and is co-sponsored by United Way of Winnipeg. This year's theme is "Visioning in Aboriginal Education for 7 Generations: Honouring and Living Vision through Research." 2007 Keynote Speakers are Dr. Gregory Cajete and Diane Hill. For more information, please visit [www.AERF.ca](http://www.AERF.ca) or contact Shannon Barry, Forum Coordinator at [Shannon@Plannerslus.ca](mailto:Shannon@Plannerslus.ca) or by telephone at 253-8623

**3** Established in 1996, the Urban Shaman Gallery is Winnipeg's first Aboriginal contemporary art gallery. Located on the 2nd floor of 290 McDermot Avenue, Urban Shaman presents cutting edge Aboriginal art rooted in diverse Aboriginal cultures. To take a virtual tour of the gallery, visit [www.UrbanShaman.org](http://www.UrbanShaman.org)

**4** Winnipeg-based Aboriginal Peoples' Television Network (APTN) is the first national Aboriginal television network in the world. It features programming by, for and about Aboriginal Peoples to share with all Canadians and viewers around the world. APTN is available in over 10 million Canadian



households and commercial venues with 56 per cent offered in English, 16 per cent in French and 28 per cent in Aboriginal languages.

**5** Canada's National Aboriginal Achievement Awards were established to encourage and celebrate achievements of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples across Canada. The Awards were created in 1993, in conjunction with the United Nations' International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples. For more information, visit [www.NAAF.ca](http://www.NAAF.ca)

**6** Last year's Manito Ahbee Aboriginal Festival in Winnipeg attracted 20 000 people with a healthy economic impact that totalled \$2.5 million. The name Manito Ahbee means "where the Creator sits" and refers to a sacred site in Manitoba's Whiteshell Provincial Park—where First Nations traditionally gathered to share wisdom. This year's Manito Ahbee Festival will be held in Winnipeg November 1-4, 2007.

**7** Manito Ahbee has launched a provincial talent search called Star Catcher. Winners from across Manitoba will compete in the finals at the Red River Exhibition in Winnipeg on National Aboriginal Day, June 21, 2007. Next location for the Star Catcher Talent Search: Winnipeg Convention Centre on Tuesday, May 15, 2007. To register, visit [info@ManitoAhbee.com](mailto:info@ManitoAhbee.com) or telephone Toll-Free 1-866-449 0251 or 956-1849.



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