



NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO WOMEN'S CENTRE

EMPOWERING WOMEN BY PROVIDING A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT TO EXPLORE THEIR NEEDS

184 Camelot Street, Thunder Bay, Ontario P7A 4A9 807-345-7802 www.nwowomenscentre.org

MEDIA ADVISORY

Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre announces a digital storytelling and community-arts based project: Honouring Our Stories

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 12, 2016

Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre in collaboration with Community Story Strategies announces funding from Ontario Arts Council and Ontario Women's Directorate Creative Engagement Fund to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment for *Honouring Our Stories*-- a two-year digital storytelling and community arts-based project for survivors of sexual violence and Thunder Bay Police Service on **September 16, 2016 at 10:00 am at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery.**

Who:

Gwen O'Reilly, Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre

Sharon Godwin, Thunder Bay Art Gallery

Chris Adams, Thunder Bay Police

Crystal DePeuter with remarks from Minister of the Status of Women , Honourable Patty Hajdu

Vicki Plouffe for Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Honourable Micheal Gravelle

Where:

Thunder Bay Art Gallery

1080 Keewatin St, Thunder Bay

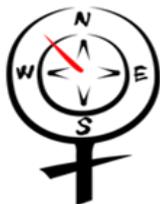
Accessible facility with free parking in the adjacent lot.

When:

September 16, 10:00 am

What:

Honouring Our Stories is an arts-based project to address sexual violence against women.



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September 12, 2016

Honouring Our Stories: a digital storytelling and community arts-based project for women survivors of sexual violence

Thunder Bay, ON-- On September 16, 2016 the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre announces a two-year digital storytelling and community arts-based project for women survivors of sexual violence, funded by the Ontario Arts Council and Ontario Women's Directorate Creative Engagement Fund to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment in Ontario.

Honouring Our Stories is coordinated by the Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre in partnership with Community Story Strategies, Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Thunder Bay Police Service with the goal to shift the public understanding of sexual violence. Participants will share their experiences through a series of art workshops led by local women artists and the creation of digital stories, facilitated by Community Story Strategies. The digital stories and artwork by women and police officers will form an interactive public exhibition focusing on the resiliency, dignity, and human rights of survivors. The community curation of this art will help reframe the public conversation on sexual violence and challenge victim-blaming.

Sexual violence is pervasive in our society and takes many forms: rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse, exploitation, and harassment. It is inextricably linked to and perpetuated by gender and race inequity in our society. National victimization surveys indicate that crimes of violence against women are typically not reported to police. Statistics Canada in 2009 captured that just 30% of women assaulted by intimate partners and less than 10% those who were sexually assaulted reported these crimes to police (Sinha, 2013). One in three women will experience some form of sexual assault in her lifetime and one in five women will be assaulted while attending a post-secondary institution. Indigenous women are 3.5 times more likely to experience sexual violence than non-Indigenous women. The police-reported rate of sexual assault against women aged 18 to 24 is twice the rate for women aged 25 to 34, and four times higher than women between 35 and 44.

Art and the media have the power to shape conversations, engage, educate and inform responses to sexual violence in our community. Personal narratives are powerful and can speak directly from one person to another across differences of identity and social position. We hope to use these digital stories to engage police, the public and other service providers as allies against gendered violence, and bring the Thunder Bay community together to take action against sexual violence and harassment.

For more information, please contact:

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