



-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

**Indigenous Young Women Speak Their Truths and Build Their Strengths in
Saskatoon. November 18-21 2011**
**Presented by the Native Youth Sexual Health Network and Girls Action
Foundation**

As part of the Indigenous Young Women: Speaking Our Truths, Building Our Strengths project, a national gathering is taking place in Saskatoon November 18th to 21st bringing together self-identified Indigenous young women including those who identify as trans, Two Spirit, and gender non-conforming between the ages of 16 to 25; seeking to meet young women where they are at.

"It is a critical time for young Indigenous women to come together and make our voices heard through these important community leadership initiatives, on our own terms," says Executive Director of the Native Youth Sexual Health Network.

A partnership between the Native Youth Sexual Health Network and Girls Action Foundation, this national gathering focuses on Indigenous young women's leadership, empowerment, solidarity-building, and ending violence. Lead by a peer Advisory of ten Indigenous young women from all across Canada, it will also provide opportunities to learn teachings from Elders and other traditional teachers and mentors. Indigenous women's strength has always existed in Indigenous communities, and it continues to grow.

"I'm honored to be a part of such a unique gathering that brings young Indigenous women from across Canada together. NWAC strives to support the advancement of Indigenous women and I feel this gathering is a fundamental opportunity for youth to come together and share their ideas for change," says Brittany Jones, Youth Coordinator at the Native Women's Association Canada.

The 4+ days are jam-packed with peer-lead activities and workshops ranging in everything from sexual health, skill sharing around photography and suicide prevention as well as collective art projects and diverse cultural teachings from Elders and mentors. Local Indigenous community partnerships and community members have been integral to the planning process and will be present at the gathering including the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation and the Saskatoon Two Spirit Society. Local Indigenous hip-hop artist Lindsay "Eekwol" Knight will be performing, as will Indigenous young women performance artists from the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company. Participants will also spend a day at Wanuskewin Heritage Park celebrating, feasting, learning and dancing with local community members.

A new zine written by Indigenous young women and edited by the Native Youth Sexual Health Network entitled "Indigenous Young Women LEAD: Our Stories, Our Strengths, Our Truths" will also be released at the gathering and available for download next week.

In addition to the gathering, participants will have the opportunity to plan and shape 10 community actions, an important part of this project's sustainability. "Girls Action Foundation is proud to be a partner in this important event because it invests in the strength and knowledge of Indigenous young women, who must be leading efforts for change," states Tatiana Fraser, Executive Director of Girls Action.

The gathering is taking place at the Saskatoon Inn and Wanuskewin Heritage Park

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For more information about the project, please visit:

<http://girlsactionfoundation.ca/en/special-projects/indigenous-young-women-speaking-our-truths-building-our-strength>