



MEDIA RELEASE
for immediate release



AT-RISK SASKATOON YOUTH INVITE PUBLIC TO REMEMBER VICTIMS OF THE SEX TRADE
Milestone 10th Annual Day of Mourning honours victims of exploitation, murder, suicide, overdose, and disease, remembering the lives lost while building awareness about sex trade exploitation and dangers.

(11 AUGUST 2009—SASKATOON) It all started a decade ago, with the murder of a young girl involved in the sex trade in Calgary and a group of at-risk Saskatoon youth who shared the desire to honour this victim—and all the victims, who are lost on and to our streets. Every year since, on August 14, the Youth Committee invites the community to join them for the Day of Mourning, to honour the children, women, and men who have lost their lives through involvement in the exploitation that is the sex trade. The **10th Annual Day of Mourning** events begin on **Friday, August 14 at 6:30pm in Pleasant Hill Park**, at 21st Street and Avenue U South in Saskatoon.

The 10th Annual Day of Mourning is made possible through the ongoing dedication of the volunteer Day of Mourning Youth Committee: “We are youth who have all been touched by the people whose lives have been lost—our sisters and brothers, mothers and fathers, aunts, uncles, friends. For us, EGADZ is a home, and over the past decade, we have shared our lives, dipping into each other’s memories of pain and loss we have each experienced, helping one another make it through our days of pain, our days of mourning.” Through the efforts of these committed young people, August 14th is officially recognized by the Government of Saskatchewan as the **Day of Mourning** to honour those who have lost their lives to murder, suicide, overdose, and disease related to the sex trade. The Youth Committee organizes this event every year to remember the victims, to support the families left behind, and to give strength back into the community. The Day of Mourning also helps to educate people about the root causes of the sex trade, while warning other high-risk youth about the very real dangers involved.

EGADZ and the Youth Committee invite the public to join us in marking this occasion with memories, prayers, blessings by Elders, drumming, dancing, and singing, and a candlelight vigil down 20th and 21st Streets, where the sex trade is most prolific. The ceremony features a haunting original Day of Mourning-inspired performance by two talented members of Youth Committee, Mike & Jessica (available at <http://www.myspace.com/dayofmourning2009>), the soulful drumming of the Sweetgrass Singers, the vocal stylings of Wanita Bird, enigmatic dancer Leslie Paul, and fiddling sensation Dallas Boyer. Member of Parliament Kelly Block, Minister of Social Services Donna Harpauer, Chief Clive Weighill of the Saskatoon Police, and City Councillor Charlie Clark will bring greetings at the event, and the Youth Committee will read letters of commendation from Governor General Michaëlle Jean, Premier Brad Wall, Lieutenant Governor Gordon Barnhart, and Beverly Jacobs, President, Native Women’s Association of Canada. The evening culminates in a communal meal of Beth’s homemade soup and Nora’s famous bannock.

The 10th Annual Day of Mourning is a **public event** proudly sponsored by Affinity Credit Union and EGADZ Saskatoon Downtown Youth Centre. We invite one and all to join us in honouring the victims on this very important occasion. Together, we can create a feeling of hope, dignity, and self-respect out of these tragedies by affirming our commitment and concern for the victims, making sure that they and their families know they are part of a caring community.

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EGADZ Saskatoon Downtown Youth Center Inc. is a community based inter-agency organization that provides resources and actively supports services that empower youth at risk to help themselves to reach their full potential. EGADZ provides a safe acceptable place for youth at risk with links to the families, and has the support of the community. EGADZ has youth involved in expressing their needs and determining services they require meeting them.

MEDIA INQUIRIES: Day of Mourning Youth Organizing Committee
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