

Article for September 2021 Anglican Montreal

## **Fund-raising with Respect: PWRDF Montreal Diocesan Project 2021-2022**

Why do we donate money from our precious funds to what we perceive as worthy causes? There are many reasons, but for us, as Christians, the answer is simple; Jesus taught us to do this in a way that reflects Jesus' love for all, especially for those who are marginalized.

Those who give reflecting Jesus' love try to find out where help is most needed. This coming year, Montreal PWRDF will focus on ways to help our Indigenous relatives. How do we do this in a respectful manner, as we seek to de-colonize from the "we know best" attitude which we have perpetrated for so many generations?

As usual, PWRDF is ahead of the game in creating partnerships and fund-raising for this cause. PWRDF is launching an Indigenous-led fund to which Indigenous organizations and communities will be able to draw from. The Indigenous communities will identify both the needs and the solutions and PWRDF will support in partnership as needed. The best kind of gift is one given with no strings attached. Imagine receiving a car and being told that you can only drive the car if Aunt Suzy is sitting beside you!

This approach means PWRDF Montreal won't be walking to raise funds - for example - for water in Pikangikum. We won't be in control of where the funds go and we won't be raising funds for specific projects or partners. We don't need to be in control. Rather, we will acknowledge that Indigenous communities know what they need and trust PWRDF to do what they do best: partner with communities in their decisions and recognized needs. Are we ready and willing to commit to this extremely worthwhile project without knowing precisely how our funds will be used?

With the tragic discovery of the children's bodies buried at residential schools it's difficult for Indigenous communities to know immediately what they will require. We can help by making sure the funds will be available as communities identify

their needs. We do know there are four likely areas of application: Community Health, Climate Action, Youth Engagement, and Safe Water.

Government actions have too often ignored the importance of loving relationships/partnerships that respond to true needs. The plight of the children in the residential schools shrieks at us today. Not only is there the horror of the past but, even today, children living in Indigenous communities are not treated as equal to the children in the rest of Canada. Failures on the part of government have crossed, and still cross, party lines – having continued for over 100 years in what we now recognize as genocide.

Many settler people have the mistaken understanding that Indigenous people cannot manage their funds. Indigenous peoples face difficulties, even when funding is available. The amount of paperwork required to apply for funds and to account for their use frequently places an unreasonable burden on small communities. The auditor general noted that innocent administrative errors may give the impression, or even be used to give the impression, that funds have been misallocated and/or mismanaged. (*Archived - Aboriginal Auditor General*)

PWRDF Montreal looks forward to sharing more information and fund-raising ideas in the near future and we would love for you to share your ideas with us. Meanwhile, as we wait for the start of our fundraising season, we would like you to consider the following: (links **to the resources** are provided on our website)

1. Government funding for schools on the reserves is approximately 30% less per child than that received by the off-reserve schools.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-education-funding-gap-1.3487822>

<https://twitter.com/cblackst/status/1402553596001099776?s=20>

2. Child and Family services for First Nations issues/failures are well documented

<https://fncaringsociety.com/i-am-witness-background>

3. In 2020, Auditor General Karen Hogan, noted that the government continues to provide inadequate support and funding for clean drinking water in First Nations.

<https://www.watercanada.net/many-first-nations-communities-lack-reliable-access-to-safe-drinking-water-auditor-general/>

We also encourage you to watch and learn from the following: (Links on website)

A Generous Futures: Indigenous Perspectives Decolonizing  
Ryerson University, June 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAIVVE8aiWA>

*B Stolen Lands, Strong Hearts* Anglican Church of Canada video on the  
repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery

<https://www.anglican.ca/primate/tfc/drj/doctrineofdiscovery/>

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