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Waterways launches to bring paddling programming to 1000 Indigenous youth this summer!

Indigenous youth are the fastest growing demographic in Canada and tragically suffer from some of the worst health outcomes in the country; but does it have to be this way? We certainly don't think so! Launching a non-profit during a global pandemic was not an easy process but the message from our communities was clear, Indigenous youth need us now!

Waterways Recreation Inc. is a new Indigenous lead Manitoba based non-profit that's youth focused and community driven. We rely on collaboration with our community partners to deliver canoe based outdoor-recreation programs that have the power to change lives! Our collaborative canoe programs are designed to empower youth, connect them with the land and their cultures while nurturing their mental, physical, emotional and spiritual well-beings. Paddling (canoeing or kayaking) layers the benefits of cultural connectivity with physical activity. Cultivating a higher sense of self-esteem, confidence and pride, giving Indigenous youth the tools they need to take on the challenges they may face in life.

"Being able to connect with nature through a traditional activity like canoeing can be phenomenally positive for youth." Says James Lavallée, Director of Waterways and former member of the Canadian National Canoe/Kayak Team.

Waterways was created by five individuals who've brought together a broad range of experience in Indigenous programming, competitive and recreational paddling, Indigenous knowledge, Manitoba wilderness knowledge, and a profound belief in the affirming power that recreation can have in young peoples' lives.

"We're excited in our first year to have programming scheduled in 9 Indigenous communities for 1000 youth this summer" Says Tristan Schneider, Director of Waterways and owner of Twin River Travel. "We'll be bringing programming to fly-in communities like Pauingassi and Little Grand Rapids and closer communities like Brokenhead and Berens River. Some programs will also run in Winnipeg.

While programming has been confirmed for 1000 youth, Waterways continues to seek private and public support. "We have several communities on our waiting list and hundreds of more youth who could benefit from this enriching experience this summer" Says Mo Crossman-Serb, Director of Waterways and Provincial Canoe/Kayak coach for the North American Indigenous Games.

We'd like to thank our partners: Southeast Child and Family Services, the Manitoba Paddling Association, Canoe Kayak Canada, Government of Canada (Canada Summer Jobs), the Manitoba Metis Federation, Sport Manitoba, Canadian Roots Exchange, and the Manitoba Aboriginal Sports and Recreation Council.

Today, Waterways launches an [online fundraiser](#) to support our programming!

For interviews and further information please contact Tristan Schneider at (204) 951-7964 or at tristan@waterwayscanada.com

