



GONZAGA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Changing Lives – Fulfilling Potential

Gonzaga Middle School and Community members in the Point Douglas and North End communities in Winnipeg announce Agreement to Encourage Reconciliation and Positive Relationships

(June 15, 2016) – In collaboration with neighbourhood community members, Gonzaga Middle School (GMS) announces an agreement to encourage reconciliation and positive relationships.

GMS is located on Treaty One territory, the original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples and the homeland of the Metis Nation.

Beginning in 2013, citizens of Winnipeg began a project to build a school that would break cycles of poverty by providing educational opportunities to those in economically challenged areas in their city. After a long feasibility and consultative process, the North East Downtown, Point Douglas and North End communities in Winnipeg were selected and a building was leased and renovated with plans to open the school in Fall 2016.

The school is overseen by a committed Board of volunteers and an Advisory Committee that consults with community leaders in the North East Downtown, Point Douglas and North End neighbourhoods and is currently hiring staff and accepting applications for students. One of the most important initiatives the school has undertaken has been its work with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and its commitment to a Statement of Reconciliation to “acknowledge the sorrowful legacy of residential schools with respect to Indigenous peoples, cultures, spiritualities and families” and ensure that “the decisions, policies and actions which led to the legacy of residential schools must never be repeated in this country” (see: <http://www.gonzagamiddleschool.ca/about-us>).

Another significant part of this consultative process has been to meet with a group of concerned citizens from the Point Douglas and North End communities led by activist and educator Larry Morrisette. From March 2016 discussions were held regarding the guiding principles of the school, its delivery model, and the relationship the school would have with the the Point Douglas and North End neighbourhoods. These discussions were extremely productive and the Board and these citizens are proud to announce the following Agreement to Encourage Reconciliation and Positive Relationships between Gonzaga Middle School and the Point Douglas and North End communities of Winnipeg.

- 30 -

For further information, please contact:

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Agreement to Encourage Reconciliation and Relationships between Gonzaga Middle School and the North East Downtown, Point Douglas and North End communities of Winnipeg

To encourage positive relationships between Gonzaga Middle School and the North East Downtown, Point Douglas and North End Communities of Winnipeg and foster an atmosphere of reconciliation, the Board, staff, and students of Gonzaga Middle School commit to the following four principles:

1. To collaboratively support educational institutions in the North East Downtown, Point Douglas and North End Communities of Winnipeg – and specifically Children of the Earth High School – to encourage success for all students in these neighbourhoods.
2. To utilize Gonzaga Middle School resources to hire individuals from and economically support businesses and organizations in the North East Downtown, Point Douglas and North End Communities of Winnipeg for school functions – and specifically Neechi Commons Co-operative Ltd. for meals and feasts.
3. To install a permanent art installation project commemorating the history and legacy of residential schools and reconciliation in Canada.
4. To work to benefit all members of the North East Downtown, Point Douglas and North End Communities of Winnipeg in a spirit of ongoing reconciliation.

About GMS:

Located at 174 Maple Street, Gonzaga Middle School will provide an enhanced, holistic, Manitoba Education approved, co-educational, culturally sensitive middle school education to Grade 6-8 students from low-income families in the Point Douglas and North East Downtown neighbourhoods of inner-city Winnipeg. It will use the unique middle school educational framework and best practices from Jesuit Nativity model schools and the NativityMiguel Coalition of Schools, adapting them to the community served in Winnipeg. GMS will lower barriers to educational advancement and success through its strong academic program, longer school day, before and after school programming, extended school year (including summer camp weeks), enrichment activities, and mentoring and graduate support programs. The school will also provide a nutrition program (breakfast, lunch and two snacks), transportation to and from school, technology and other supports.

For more on this, see: <http://www.gonzagamiddleschool.ca>.