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## MEDIA RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release**

### CEW & UWinnipeg Launch Restorative Justice Learning Project

WINNIPEG- The Centre for Education and Work (CEW), together with The University of Winnipeg and in partnership with Manitoba Justice and the Manitoba Keewatinook Ininew Okimowin (MKO) First Nations Justice Strategy, announces a new initiative funded by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

The CEW will receive \$396,406 through a contribution agreement with the Government of Canada over the next three years for the *Developing a Community Justice Link* project.

The three-year project will build a learning community among community restorative justice workers in 10 Northern Manitoba First Nations communities. A technological framework will allow the sharing of resources and expertise, mentoring from Elders, and development of a peer support system.

“Office of Learning Technologies projects are designed to increase understanding of how adults learn and how technologies can best support their learning needs,” said the Honourable Reg Alcock, President of the Treasury Board, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and Member of Parliament for Winnipeg South, on behalf of the Honourable Belinda Stronach, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and Minister responsible for Democratic Renewal. “The Government of Canada is proud to support the Centre for Education and Work and The University of Winnipeg in their initiative to provide technical resources, mentoring and learning opportunities to 10 Northern Manitoba First Nations communities.”

“Restorative justice is an important concept within First Nations communities,” explained Dr. Robin Millar, Executive Director of the CEW. “We are eager to begin this project which allows us the opportunity to work with community justice workers in a collaborative learning endeavour.”

Aboriginal communities are leaders within the restorative justice movement. The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba underscored the problems created by the application of the Euro-Canadian justice system in First Nations communities and concluded that in order to address these issues, First Nations communities should attain some level of control over the administration of justice in their communities. Community justice workers play an essential role in this effort.

“We’re pleased to support a program that recognizes the need to find better ways to deal with Métis and First Nations people who come in contact with the justice system,” said Attorney General Gord Mackintosh. “Restorative justice models provide the justice system important tools in many cases to build bridges between those who are in conflict with the law, victims, and communities affected by their actions.”

One of the issues faced by justice workers in remote communities is the need for ongoing professional contact with other justice professionals to stay up-to-date on current developments in the justice field. Through communicative technology, from interactive radio to computer conferencing, the *Developing a Community Justice Link* project will connect the most remote communities.

“This is a great initiative and opportunity for the Community Justice Workers working on Restorative Justice in the MKO Region, by using technology; the resources are given an opportunity for training, development and recognition for the diverse work that they do in the area of community based justice,” said Dr. Sydney Garrioch, Grand Chief of MKO.

"The University of Winnipeg is committed to Aboriginal education and to innovative partnerships with the Aboriginal community," said Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, President of The University of Winnipeg. "The launch of this restorative justice project is another example how we can explore new solutions together."

As partners with the University of Winnipeg, the CEW will develop a range of options for delivering learning. As well, in partnering with Northern communities, the CEW will identify learning outcomes and options for learners and their needs.

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*The Centre for Education & Work is a not-for-profit organization incorporated in 2001 in affiliation with The University of Winnipeg. The CEW is board-governed with representation from post-secondary institutions, business, labour, and other interested groups. The CEW partners with industry, educational providers, and governments to recognize learning in the workplace through research and project development. Visit [www.cewca.org](http://www.cewca.org)*

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