



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

UWinnipeg's Wii Chiiwaakanak Centre Partners with Community to offer Homework Help

WINNIPEG—"Giving students a helping hand with homework can provide the building blocks for a successful future," said Inonge Aliaga, Executive Director of the Spence Neighbourhood Association (SNA), just days before a unique **Newcomer Youth Homework Club** gets underway at The University of Winnipeg's **Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre, 509-511 Ellice Avenue**.

"If newcomer kids are not successful in school, they will not succeed in society. If we want to welcome new communities to our city and country, we need to find a way to help them succeed in school."

The Newcomer Youth Homework Club, focused on newcomers but open to all youth in the community aged 12 to 16, will provide invaluable homework help to students. Young teens will receive hands-on homework assistance by UWinnipeg Faculty of Education student mentors and volunteers from the University's Collegiate high school as well as by SNA staff and volunteers.

The weekly **Newcomer Youth Homework Club** begins **January 21, 2006** and runs until the end of June every Saturday from **1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. in Wii Chiiwaakanak's RBC Community Learning Commons**. The RBC Community Learning Commons, equipped with 18 computer workstations, is currently open to community members Tuesdays to Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (Extended hours are planned for the Spring.)

"It is wonderful for our community's children to have access to so many computers and it's exciting for us to use the Wii Chiiwaakanak space," said Aliaga. "I understand that one of the goals of Wii Chiiwaakanak is for our community members to begin to think about The University of Winnipeg as a place where they belong—and this is another step along the way."

UWinnipeg President Lloyd Axworthy said, "The University of Winnipeg and Wii Chiiwaakanak are committed to reaching out to the community and bridging the digital divide—leveling the playing field for young people in this community as they engage with today's technological world."

Christine Boyes, the new Community Learning Commons Coordinator, added that Wii Chiiwaakanak is also developing an after-school Homework Club with UWinnipeg Faculty of Education student mentors and high-school volunteers from The Collegiate. The new club will offer hands-on homework assistance and access to the RBC Community Learning Commons computers.

Collaborating with the Spence Neighbourhood Association (SNA) to launch the Newcomer Youth Homework Club is just one of Wii Chiiwaakanak's community partnerships. Wii Chiiwaakanak (WCWKN) also provides space to the International Centre for an English Class for Newcomer Kids and to a Métis organization for its monthly meetings. Last November and December, WCWKN partnered with SNA to host inner-city women's healing circles.

Boyes, formerly the Inner City Aboriginal Neighbours (I-CAN) Coordinator at SNA, brings vital experience in outreach and community development in the inner city, with a focus on Aboriginal issues. Her education includes undergraduate studies in Politics at The University of Winnipeg and a Community Development/Community Economic Development certificate from Red River College.

"We have a great opportunity to connect with members of our community at the grass-roots level and break down barriers," said Boyes. "By networking with the community to find out what kinds of programs they want and how we can meet their needs, we are discovering creative ways to share the resources of the University and Wii Chiiwaakanak with our neighbours."

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