



TRUTH & RECONCILIATION AWARD STATEMENT

To our community:

On May 25th, 2023, the YWCA Saskatoon held our 41st Women of Distinction Awards – a ceremony to honour and celebrate women who demonstrate inspirational leadership & have made extraordinary contributions to our local community.

This year, we launched the first Truth & Reconciliation award category to shine a light on women whose resilience and activism are advancing efforts to foster this incredibly important work, and who are building bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples across Saskatoon on the path of reconciliation.

The YWCA Saskatoon is committed to Reconciliation and we have been working closely with the Indigenous community to determine how we can embed Indigenous ways of knowing and being in all that we do – which was part of the reasoning behind the addition of this particular award to our 40+ years ceremony.

In the spirit of transparency, we would like to share some insight into this award specifically.

Our intent with this award is to actively and inclusively profile the inspirational and extraordinary contributions of all women who are living the TRC's calls to action. We kept the award open to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous women because we believe that Reconciliation is the work of all people, and that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples need to walk together on this journey. Our intent is to both inspire and demonstrate through action the work that must be done in addressing the harms caused by residential schools and our shared responsibility in healing. All of the women nominated in this category have done remarkably impactful work in building bridges and moving Reconciliation forward.

It has come to our attention that some members of the community have felt harmed by the Truth & Reconciliation Award, considering the nature of the work done within this practice. The YWCA Saskatoon is saddened to hear that any harm may have been caused by what was intended to be an incredibly uplifting addition to our annual awards ceremony. It was never our intention to cause further harm to the Indigenous community. And while we never intended to cause harm, we apologise and take full responsibility for any harm the award and the YWCA caused, especially to Indigenous community members. We commit to doing better – not just with words, but with action.

Since the awards ceremony, we've been listening, reflecting and seeking guidance from elders and the broader Indigenous community on how to move forward in a positive way. We are in the process of reviewing all feedback and dialogue shared with us regarding this award, and are doing so with a lens to make any needed improvements to our processes and reflect on this within the lens of our organization's work on Truth and Reconciliation.

We encourage any feedback from our stakeholders and community on the work that we do, because we know that the path to reconciliation is long, arduous, and there will be many bumps along the way. We are using this opportunity to not only reflect about the meaning of Reconciliation, but to put into practice what we learn from all members of our community.