

## **YWCA NWT Appoints In-House Elder to Guide Programming**

YELLOWKNIFE (January 13, 2025) YWCA NWT is proud to announce the appointment of Darlene Powder as the organization's first in-house Elder. Darlene will provide feedback and guidance as the organization works to put the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada *Calls to Action* in place.

"I'm proud to be working with YWCA NWT to help guide their work on Truth and Reconciliation. These are heavy, emotional topics that can be hard to talk about for many residential school survivors. I've seen true healing when people have the opportunity to connect with their culture and it's important to give people a chance to vent if they need to and provide programs for land-based healing and traditional activities, as that's where sharing happens and where healing for families and communities can begin," said Darlene, In-House Elder and Family Support Worker for Transitional Housing, YWCA NWT.

"For the past several years, YWCA NWT has been working internally to ensure our programs and services are aligned with the TRC Calls to Action and address the needs of the people we serve, many of whom are Indigenous and are living with the colonial legacy of residential schools," said Hawa Dumbuya-Sesay, Executive Director, YWCA NWT. "Darlene's experience and knowledge is a true gift to the organization and the women and families we serve, and we look forward to improving the lives of all northerners as we put the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action in place."

Darlene started working with the YWCA NWT in 2010 at the Alison McAteer House family violence shelter. In 2015, she moved to the Transitional Housing program and was instrumental in establishing the Indigenous Mental Wellness Program. Darlene has led the program since 2020 and works closely with program participants, facilitators, counsellors and Elders to ensure program activities are in line with participants needs. Program activities have included sewing and beading groups for adults and children, on-the-land activities with talking and healing circles, Elder storytelling, and learning about traditional plants, drum making, making tobacco ties and others. She also started the parent/toddler Kokum Korner at Gotłi kò, which includes storytelling and crafts. Darlene has delivered and co-facilitated workshops on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, Truth and Reconciliation, loss and grief, mental wellness, addictions and co-dependency, moving forward with trauma and Journey to my Best Self.

Darlene was born and raised in Uranium City, Saskatchewan, and after several trips to Yellowknife to visit family, moved permanently to the territory in 2009. Darlene has family members who attended residential schools, and she draws on their experiences to help guide programming. Darlene shares her Indigenous knowledge and teachings wherever she can and often visits other northern communities to do traditional activities and engage with community members.

**For more information please contact:**

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