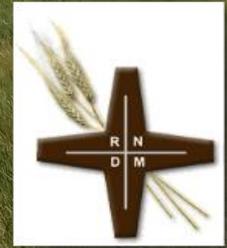


# Indigenous and Community Relations Circle



*Journeying together towards healing and reconciliation and right relationship with all*

*September -2025*



*Dear sisters and friends we are in the very important day and month of remembering and honouring the First Nations community. As we strive to walk with them in healing and Reconciling, let us unite with them in celebrating their life and their culture and their connection to the mother earth which leads all of us to be one with the creator. This end of the month, we bring to you our life experiences of learning and sharing with the First Nation community with these articles.*

## **Fruits of the earth**

**B**erry picking is more than just gathering the fruits; it's a sacred opportunity to connect with the Creator, immerse in nature's splendour, and bond with the community. In many indigenous cultures, this cherished tradition depends on roots to ancestors, the land, and heritage, nurturing a sense of belonging and reverence.

Before we picked the berries, one of the elders shared valuable teachings about their cultural significance, highlighting their importance in ceremonies and spiritual practices. She explained that berries are considered sacred, serving as offerings or symbols of abundance and gratitude in rituals. Some indigenous communities also use berries for medicinal purposes, reflecting the deep connection between nature and well-being.

We were reminded to pluck the berries with respect and gratitude towards the giver, honouring the web of life. Before picking the berries each one of us offered tobacco to the land as a gesture of gratitude and reciprocity. This simple act reminded me of the interconnectedness of all living things and the need to honour the land's bounty.



It was wonderful that I had the opportunity to learn from the elders and participate in this meaningful tradition. Guided by the elders' wisdom, I learned the importance of approaching this activity with consciousness and respect. Through this experience, I gained a deeper appreciation for the cultural significance of berry picking and the value of patience, mindfulness, respect, and gratitude that comes with it.

Berry picking also allowed me to connect with the natural world, appreciate its beauty, and understand the importance of sustainable harvesting practices. It's a reminder of our responsibility to care for the land and its resources. This tradition not only provides nourishment for the body but also nourishes the soul.

The experience was also a community gathering, sharing stories, teachings that highlighted the importance of preserving cultural heritage. The memory of it left a lasting impression, reminding me of the value of slowing down, appreciating nature, and honouring traditions.

***Binita Soreng RNDM***



On August 17, the Regina Catholic Myanmar Karen and Karenni community visited Lebret. Around 15 families, totaling about 35 people, came to spend the day with the Sisters and visit the Sacred Heart Catholic Church. They joined the 9:00 AM Mass, which was beautifully attended by many people. After the Mass, we gathered behind the church, where picnic tables were set up for a shared meal. Everyone had brought food, and we enjoyed a wonderful variety of traditional dishes together. Binita and I were happy to join them, and even the parish priest Fr Augustine spent time with us, adding to the joy of the gathering.

After the meal, groups took turns visiting our Lebret House, and they were filled with happiness and curiosity as they explored. The young people made their way to the Calvary, where they spent time in quiet prayer, admired the beautiful scenery, and enjoyed the fresh air. One family had brought a boat, so some of us had the opportunity to go boating on Mission Lake, which was a delightful experience. Meanwhile, the elders gathered to share stories, memories, and laughter, deepening their sense of friendship and community.

The group departed around 4:00 PM. For many of them, this was their first community outing—and it turned out to be a truly special and unforgettable day.

*Nwe Ni Oo RNDM*

## PICKING SAGE: A SACRED GATHERING OF LEARNING, HEALING AND CONNECTION



On July 28<sup>th</sup>, I had the privilege of joining a group from Regina for sage-picking. This was more than just a day in the field; it was a deeply educational and spiritual experience, rooted in respect for Mother Earth.

Before we set out, Kokum Susan Beaudin gathered us together and shared teachings about the importance of caring for the land. She reminded us that Mother Earth sustains us, providing food, herbs, fruits, and healing plants. In return, we must approach her with humility, gratitude, and responsibility.

Dressed in orange shirts and ribbon skirts, we stood in remembrance of the children who never made it home from residential schools. Our clothing symbolized both our collective mourning and our commitment to truth and reconciliation. Before entering the field, each of us was given tobacco a sacred offering to hold in prayer and connection with the Creator. This was our way of honoring the land and asking for permission to receive its gifts.

Kokum Susan gave clear guidance: we were to take only what we needed, never greedily. We learned to pluck the sage gently by hand or cut it carefully with scissors, taking only the leaves and leaving the stems so they could grow again.

As we moved through the field, picking sage, a song of gratitude rose from our group. Mrs. Phyllis Little tent sang a beautiful song to the Creator, expressing her joy and reverence for the earth and its sacred offerings. Her voice carried across the open space, lifting our spirits and deepening our sense of connection to the land and to each other.

Sage plays a central role in many ceremonies and traditions. We use it for smudging, prayer, and healing whether during church liturgies, circle gatherings, or personal reflection. When we returned home, we were told to begin the process of drying the sage, shaping it into small balls or hanging it carefully to dry on the wall. Sage can also be brewed as a tea, offering medicinal properties that nurture both body and soul.

This experience was a powerful reminder that we must be conscious of the Earth's resources. It is a precious gift, freely given to all of us. We left not only with sage but also with hearts full of gratitude and a renewed commitment to walk gently on this Earth. It was a lesson in respect, spirituality, and community, a gift I will carry with me. I conclude with a quote from Pope Francis: "We all have the duty to do good."

***Jacinta Dkhar RNDM***

## *Healing Drum*

What a beautiful summer it was to come together and heal in such a meaningful way at several park locations here in the North Central area of Regina. I was one of the people who came seeking a blessing, healing, and unity with others. Attending the healing drum was a deeply moving and enlightening experience. It was more than just an event. It was a sacred moment of learning, reflection, and connection. Hosted by Phyllis Little tent and her group, the gathering brought together community members from diverse backgrounds to share in Indigenous traditions, music, and teachings. They moved from one park to another, offering healing through the drum. I joined them with gratitude, my heart full of joy, encouragement, and respect.

The drummers beat their drums and sang at the same time. It wasn't just music—it was a heartbeat, a spiritual current that seemed to tie everyone together. I learned that in many Indigenous cultures, the drum is not just an instrument but a sacred object, representing the heartbeat of Mother Earth. Each beat carries intention, prayer, and ancestral memory. As we gathered in a circle, I could feel the energy of the drum echoing through the ground beneath us.

Listening to the drum made me feel connected to Mother Earth and to the people around me. I felt peace in both my mind and body.

I learned not just through listening, but through observing, the way they moved with intention, how they respected each one of us, and how they spoke with care. There was a strong sense of belonging and mutual responsibility—a kind of community that many people long for but rarely find. The event wasn't just about cultural sharing—it was about spiritual connection, healing old wounds, and building bridges of understanding. One of the most powerful moments was when Phyllis invited us to join the group in a shared rhythm. She encouraged us to stand up and dance together in one circle, especially those of us who felt shy. I will never forget that moment of unity—different hands, different histories, different colors—beating together as one. It will stay with me forever. I don't know how many rounds we danced. As I moved my feet to the rhythm of the heartbeat, I felt as though the whole universe danced with me. This experience taught me that learning from Indigenous communities requires humility, openness, and deep listening. It's not about taking knowledge, but about receiving it with gratitude and responsibility. The stories, songs, and teachings I encountered reminded me of the strength, resilience, and wisdom of First Nations people and how much I still have to learn from them. One of the teachings that struck me most deeply was the idea of healing not as a quick fix, but as a lifelong journey, one rooted in community, ceremony, and respect for the land and all living beings.



In the end, attending the Healing Drum gathering wasn't just a cultural experience, it was a spiritual one. I left with a renewed sense of peace and a deeper appreciation for the land, and the people. It was truly a blessing to be part of it, and I carry that blessing with me still.

***Thuong Thi Truong RNDM***



New T-shirt in honor of Every Child matters ,Regina Survivors circle and Circle of Allies

## *A time for Gathering and Sharing*

In the month of July we had a lovely year end barbeque with ANNRC and Allies group at Candy Cane Park in Regina. Before we could gather at the park we had a doubt whether we could make it or not because the weather was playing hide and seek. Anyhow, we collected all the necessary things for the barbeque. As we reached, and started bringing our stuff to the park, there was pouring rain; we thought that was the end of our barbeque. But patiently waited in the shade, hoping the weather would clear up.



Somehow the rain stopped after a while, and our faces lit up with joy because we knew the plan we had made would not go to waste. Fun part was burning the charcoal, after the rain, the fireplace was moist with water and we took almost forty five minutes to burn. We thought again that was the end of our barbeque but sisters Binita, Thien, Thuong and myself took turns to light the charcoal again and again. Somehow we were able to succeed in burning charcoal. What a relief we shouted. It was a little late for the barbeque but we were able to finish. Many joined us for the barbeque and everyone brought some snacks or drinks adding little more flavor to our gathering. Hamburgers and hot dogs turned out to be so good after pouring rain. Everyone one had enough and more to eat. After we ate, Phyllis Littlelent led all of us into Round us. Everyone was satisfied with the day, because we had blessings of rain, sunshine, fresh air and good food and a day to end with a beautiful round dance and one another's company.

***Pricilla Lugun RNDM***



Myanmar community sharing food and boat riding



Joy of collecting berries



Allies group picking sage



Sisters busy barbequing hotdog and hamburgers