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**"We All Work
Together to Help
One Another"**

MEDIA RELEASE:

NEW EMERGENCY CARE HOME OPENS DOORS TO SUPPORT FEMALE YOUTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: OCTOBER 30, 2002

WINNIPEG--An innovative program designed to establish supports and provide a home environment for at risk female youth will officially open its doors today - **Wednesday, October 30/02**, to community and government organizations, human service providers and members of the media from **1:00 - 3:00 p.m.** Located at **610 Spence Street** (Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre) the program is among the first of its kind to provide culturally relevant emergency care services for youth in Winnipeg.

Who: Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc. - Circle of Care

What: Community Launch

Where: 610 Spence Street

When: 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Called ***Circle of Care***, the program is designed as a short-term home, with a 45-day maximum stay for female youth ages 14 – 17 in the care of Winnipeg Child and Family Services. The program provides a culturally specific alternative to emergency/hotel placements, with the primary goal being the safety, well being and return of youth to their immediate or extended family environments as early as possible. Funded by the department of Family Services and Housing, the program is designed to be of particular assistance to Aboriginal youth.

"Through alternative care models such as the Circle of Care program, young Aboriginal women at risk can now receive services which target their cultural and developmental needs," states Josie Hill, executive director of the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre. "Consultations with our community have long confirmed the need for specialized services for inner city Aboriginal female youth. This program will offer our young women an opportunity to experience caring, support and encouragement in a safe and nurturing environment, while building supportive networks to ensure personal health and well being" she continued.

The Circle of Care program is a 10-bed facility that will operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, offering a full range of assessment and support services.