

Eagle's Eye News



www.UnitedWayWinnipeg.mb.ca

Profile of ARC Member Dr. Jino Distasio: Director of Urban Studies at University of Winnipeg

As one of the founding members of United Way of Winnipeg's Aboriginal Relations Council (ARC), Dr. Jino Distasio's commitment to the Aboriginal community runs deep. "I am genuinely glad to be a part of something so positive and my experience has enhanced my work at the Institute of Urban Studies. By reaching out to the Aboriginal community, I am convinced that United Way will continue to build a better, stronger Winnipeg for us all."

Born and raised in Winnipeg, Dr. Distasio is the Director of the Institute of Urban Studies (IUS) at the University of Winnipeg, a position he has held since 2003. As parents of two sons Nico aged 5 and Dante, 4 and daughter Chiara 1, Jino and his wife Dayna are proud Winnipeggers who believe this city is a wonderful place to live and raise children.

As a professor and urban expert, Dr. Distasio still teaches in the classroom and is often called upon as a media spokesperson on such issues as urban change, poverty, transportation and inner city renewal. He is also the co-director of the Urban and Inner City Studies program and an adjunct professor of City Planning.

Dr. Distasio's relationship with United Way of Winnipeg began in 2004 when the Aboriginal Task Force produced the Eagle's Eye View—a comprehensive snapshot of the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg. After reconnecting with a Task Force member, Jino was invited to join ARC. It was an offer he simply couldn't refuse.

"I always take the time to talk to United Way staff about urban issues and to learn



from the shared experiences from my fellow council-members," Jino continues. "Because we hold our meetings in the community, I am in regular contact with staff at United Way-supported agencies and marvel at the many positive changes they're making at the neighbourhood level...and that's a very good thing, indeed."

At present, Dr. Distasio is hard at work creating the first-ever, urban Aboriginal housing plan for Winnipeg slated for late 2007. Amazingly, he still finds time to advise and assist

the West Broadway neighbourhood in developing its own housing plan while providing his assistance to update Winnipeg's Federal Homelessness plan.

Dr. Distasio continues to work on an ongoing examination of urban Aboriginal housing and mobility in our city. He reviews and studies both the problems and the potential solutions for rooming houses and single room occupancy hotels.

In May 2007, when University of Winnipeg President Lloyd Axworthy unveiled plans for the U of W to become the first choice for post-secondary Aboriginal students in Manitoba, Jino was right behind him. Then on September 8, 2007, the University announced Canada's first-ever Master of Arts degree program in Aboriginal Governance would commence in the fall of 2008.

In Jino's eyes, "Education is the key for the future of Aboriginal people. It's a way to gain greater independence, escape poverty, end racism and to ultimately provide a greater say for the Aboriginal community as a whole in Winnipeg."

A Message from the Director, Aboriginal Relations Council

Welcome to our fall 2007 edition of Eagle's Eye News—which is packed with great stories and informative features all about the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg.

First of all, there's our feature-length profile of Dr. Jino Distasio (Please See Page 1) who has been one of the most active members of our Aboriginal Relations Council since it was established in 2005. There's also another Aboriginal Agency Snapshot (Please See Below); which spotlights the great work done at Oyate Tipi Cumini Yape.



Carla Kematch

Be sure to check out our story of how United Way and SEED Winnipeg helped make Colleen Simard's dream come true on Page 3. And finally, don't miss our other regular feature More Great Things to Know about Our Aboriginal Community on Page 4.

If you have any comments or suggestions, I'd love to hear from you. You can do so by Email at Ckematch@UnitedWayWinnipeg.mb.ca or by telephone at 477-5360. Watch for our winter edition coming in January 2008. Remember: copies of Eagle's Eye News are available online at www.UnitedWayWinnipeg.mb.ca

Aboriginal Agency Snapshot: Oyate Tipi Cumini Yape

Oyate Tipi Cumini Yape is a Winnipeg-based, Aboriginal-led, non-profit organization supported by United Way of Winnipeg. In the Dakota language, its name roughly translates as "Where the community lives, sharing and recycling." Year round, the agency accepts donations of gently used essential household goods and furniture. All items are then distributed to women and children who are in the process of escaping poverty and/or abusive situations.

"Family violence is an unfortunate fact of life for so many and it hurts everyone involved--especially the women and children who are often unable to defend themselves," says Mandy Richard, manager of Oyate Tipi. "Our staff listens, supports and helps people find their own solutions. We enable and facilitate women and their families to move forward under their own power so ultimately, they can re-establish self-care, self-esteem and true independence."

Besides providing direct shelter and opportunities to strengthen and grow, Oyate Tipi provides essential household furnishings and also new and gently used warm winter wear which it receives through donations including United Way of Winnipeg's Coats for Kids drive



(from October 15th to January 31st each year). In addition, United Way supports Oyate Tipi's volunteer program, which provides basic skills for participants that will lead to employment and/or furthering their education.

To qualify for Oyate Tipi, women must be participating in one of the following 10 partner agencies: Alpha House, Elizabeth Fry Society, Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, L'Entre Temps des Franco Manitobaines, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre (residential sites only), Native Women's Transition Centre, North End Women's Centre, Osborne House, Wahbung Abinoonjiiag, and W.I.S.H. (Women in Second Stage Housing).

United Way of Winnipeg's support of Oyate Tipi Cumini Yape is an integral part of its strategies to reduce poverty, encourage successful children and youth and build strong, safe neighbourhoods through Aboriginal-led organizations. For more information, please visit our website at www.UnitedWayWinnipeg.mb.ca or telephone 477-5360.

How Colleen Simard's Dream Came True Thanks to United Way and SEED Winnipeg

In 2005, Colleen Simard joined the Individual Development Account (IDA) program at SEED Winnipeg—one of the nearly 100 agencies, services and programs supported by United Way of Winnipeg. Why? Because her dream was to own her own home. This spring, Colleen did just that. Here's how it all happened in Colleen's own words:

Owning my own home felt like winning the lottery. I was amazed how everything took on more meaning. Just gazing at my windows, doors and walls makes me feel so happy and proud.

I've never owned something that could make such a huge difference in my life. It took months for me to get used to actually being a homeowner. "Me?" I kept asking myself. "A homeowner?"

Yet not everyone thinks they can own their own home. Well, if I can; so can you. Lack of home ownership in the Aboriginal community, I think, has more to do with economic barriers like stable, gainful employment and the concept of just believing you can do it.

For me, the final obstacle was saving for a down payment on the house. Like many, I lacked the money and the



Colleen Simard, son Storm and dog Bigfoot

know-how to own a home. But thanks to SEED Winnipeg and United Way of Winnipeg, I began saving for the down payment. At SEED, I learned all about budgeting, tools that I could apply to my own personal lifestyle and needs.

Granted, it's not the most modern house in Winnipeg. It's over 100 years old and definitely needs some upgrades. But the price tag was modest. And you know what? The mortgage payments now are a lot less than any rent I've ever paid.

Now, we're a permanent part of this diverse neighborhood. We know our neighbours and we all keep an eye out for one other. I can also offer my relatives a safe place to stay whenever they come to the city

from up north. My son Storm and I plan to put in a garden next spring.

Our life is better than ever. I'll always be grateful for the support I received from United Way of Winnipeg and SEED Winnipeg. You helped make my dream come true.

The IDA program provides a 3-to-1 match for every dollar saved by low-income earners like Colleen. Thanks to SEED Winnipeg and with United Way's support, thousands of Winnipeggers have learned vital money management skills, acquired assets and the confidence they need to effectively transition out of poverty.

When you support United Way of Winnipeg's 2007 Annual Campaign, you make programs like these possible and help make Winnipeg a better, stronger city for us all. For more information or to make a donation to the 2007 Campaign, please contact 477-5360 or visit www.UnitedWayWinnipeg.mb.ca

United Way of Winnipeg's Coats for Kids Donate from October 15th to January 31st

Starting October 15th, you can donate gently used children's winter outerwear to United Way of Winnipeg's Coats for Kids.

Since 1989, Coats for Kids has distributed over 100,000 items of warm winter outerwear to Winnipeg children. Right now, you can donate gently used children's winter outerwear and drop them off at any Perth's location or Winnipeg Fire

Paramedic Station.

Coats for Kids is a partnership of United Way, Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service, Perth's Services Ltd., the Winnipeg Sun, CTV Winnipeg, CFRW radio and Oyate Tipi Cumini Yape. For more information, please contact the Coats for Kids Hotline at 586-KOAT (5628) or visit www.UnitedWayWinnipeg.mb.ca

UNITED WAY OF WINNIPEG'S ABORIGINAL RELATIONS COUNCIL MEMBERS ARE:

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Chair, and member of United Way of Winnipeg's Board of Trustees, Director of Government (Manitoba Region), Indian & Northern Affairs Canada

DR. JUDITH BARTLETT
Past Chair, United Way of Winnipeg's Board of Trustees and Aboriginal Task Group which produced the Eagle's Eye View environmental scan, and Associate Professor, University of Manitoba, Director, Health & Wellness Dept., Manitoba Métis Federation

DANIEL PAUL BORK
Owner/President, Cook Consulting & Associates and Member of the Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce

HAROLD COCHRANE
Partner, D'Arcy & Deacon LLP

DR. JINO DISTASIO
Director, Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg

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We.

Each one of us brings something special, something necessary to making Winnipeg a better place to live. When "We" work together, our individual contributions multiply into the strength and confidence of "We". And "We" all benefit. United Way makes "We" happen.

More Great Things to Know about the Aboriginal Community

1 Aboriginal people make up over 4 per cent of Canada's population – that's over 1.3 million people. This is the fastest-growing segment of our nation's population, with 50 per cent under the age of 25 years old.*

2 "Igniting the Fire" -- The 2nd Annual National Elders' Gathering returned to the sacred Manitou Api site, Bannock Point in Manitoba's Whiteshell Provincial Park September 11-14, 2007. The purpose: to unite Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples to share their knowledge and wisdom concerning the health and well being, reclamation of a way of life of Manitoba's Aboriginal ancestors, and protection from drugs and technologies that reflect violence. This year, topics included the environment, health and wellness, balance in life and a return to a more natural and spiritual way of life. For more information, please visit their web site at www.theturtlelodge.com or email turtlelodge@mts.net or contact Sabina Ijaz (204) 756-3608

3 About 50 per cent of Aboriginal peoples in Canada lived in urban areas, according to Statistics Canada in 2001.** That number may rise when updated data from the 2006 Census specifically about Canada's Aboriginal population is released Tuesday, January 15, 2008. To receive a copy of the release, please contact Barbara Katic, Aboriginal Communications Officer at Statistics Canada by Email at barbaraY.katic@statcan.ca or 983-7218

4 The 14th Annual Manitoba Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards (MAYAA) will be hosted by Anishinabe Oway-Ishi Inc.



and held at the Winnipeg Convention Centre October 18, 2007. Since it began in 1994, 175 Manitoba Aboriginal youth have been honoured with these awards. Last year, the MAYAA expanded the tribute to include a \$1,000 scholarship for each recipient in the categories including academics, arts, athletics, business/entrepreneurship, community involvement, culture, personal achievement and traditional employment. For more information, visit www.mayaa.ca

5 The Manito Ahbee Festival in Winnipeg Now Runs 10 Days starting October 26 to November 4, 2007. This year's expanded event includes an international powwow competition, craft and trade show, traditional teachings workshops, a Manitoba social, the Manito Ahbee Music Fest and the Aboriginal People's Choice Music Awards to be co-hosted by TV's Corner Gas co-stars Lorne Cardinal and Gabrielle Miller. A new addition to the roster is the 3rd Annual First Nations Youth Summit which brings together youth from across Canada to discuss issues of concern to Aboriginal youth. For details, please visit www.manitoahbee.com or please contact 956-1849 or Toll Free 1-866-449-0251, or via email at info@manitoahbee.com

6 The 6th Annual Winnipeg Aboriginal Film Festival will once again be held in Winnipeg from November 15 to 18, 2007. Volunteer applications will be accepted effective October 1, 2007 For more information, please visit www.aboriginalfilmfest.org contact 774-1375 or via email at info@aboriginalfilmfest.com

*Say magazine, 2007 **Statistics Canada



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