

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Local Film about the Challenges of Teen Suicide and Depression among Aboriginal Youth

(Thunder Bay, ON, September 10, 2007) A unique film involving local film makers and Anishinawbe youth is set to open the Bay Street Film Festival 2007. *Seeking Bimaadiziwin* is a 30 minute drama about the challenges of teen suicide and depression among Aboriginal youth in Northwestern Ontario. The film is a co-production of Thunderstone Pictures and Shebandowan Films and was directed by Dave Clement and Kelly Saxberg. Michelle Derosier, from Eagle Lake First Nation, wrote the script.

Dr. Paul Mulzer, a psychiatrist with St. Joseph's Care Group hopes *Seeking Bimaadiziwin* will speak to aboriginal youth. "I realized that most of our current educational resources are culturally insensitive. They were produced by mood experts with complex clinical explanations. It was clear these clinical tools would not impact this culture or generation."

Dr. Mulzer pursued and received funding from Eli Lilly to produce culturally relevant mental health videos for the Aboriginal population. Working with a panel of First Nation experts, Dr. Mulzer and scriptwriter/screenwriter Michelle Derosier developed a film dealing with common issues that take place in First Nation communities.

Seeking Bimaadiziwin, or 'Seeking the Good Life' in Anishanawbe, follows Kaitlyn, an Anishinawbe youth who is struggling with depression, through her recovery after a suicide attempt. Issues of alcohol abuse, depression, cultural identity and traditions, as well as mental illnesses are encountered and discussed as Kaitlyn realizes that others like her are facing many similar challenges. The four main characters in the film realize that though they are different, they find common ground as Anishnawbe youth. Humour, drama and authenticity combined with a talented cast result in a powerful story designed to help youth deal with these issues.

Seeking Bimaadiziwin is the first production in a two-part series regarding mental health issues among First Nations, and the issues they face when crossing cultural lines. The second portion, a documentary, is meant primarily for use among health professionals as a tool for achieving cultural competency when working with First Nations people.

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St. Joseph's Care Group is accredited with the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation and provides services in complex care, rehabilitation, mental health and addictions, long-term care and supportive housing. As well, community programs are provided at Frank Murphy Community Centre. SJCG has approximately 1700 employees, over 400 volunteers and an annual operating budget of \$115M and is the fifth largest employer in Thunder Bay. To learn more about SJCG, visit the web site at www.sjcg.net.