

## **Art exhibit for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women set to launch in Sault Ste Marie**

"Walking With Our Sisters" (WWOS), a Commemorative Art Installation for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women is set to open in Sault Ste Marie on May 5, 2014 at Algoma University. The exhibit is currently scheduled to tour to over 31 locations in the next six years across North America.

The art installation is made up of 1,726 pairs of moccasin tops that have been created by 1,372 caring and concerned people to honour and pay respect to the lives and existence of the missing and murdered Indigenous women across North America. Each pair of moccasin tops represents an Indigenous woman who is missing or murdered. They are not forgotten. They are sisters, mothers, daughters, cousins, grandmothers. They are been cared for and they are loved. But they have been taken.

This art exhibit will also bring attention to this issue as the numbers of Indigenous women going missing and becoming murdered continue to grow. According to research by the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), the numbers are currently estimated as being as high as 600 women and girls missing and murdered in the last twenty years alone.

This project is solely supported by thousands of Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and women across North America, who care deeply about this issue. WWOS has been successful in its use of social media as part of the growing trend called "crowd-sourcing" to fuel this international art installation. This support was most recently demonstrated through a successful on-line social media-driven auction that raised \$30,000 in 20 days.

In July 2013 Canada's Premier backed the call for a national public inquiry into this issue. So far, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has dismissed those calls and continues to ignore this issue of National importance.

**ADVANCE SPECIAL MEDIA ACCESS EVENT** on May 4<sup>th</sup> in order to allow the media to capture film and photographs. No photographs or footage of the opening or at any time following the opening is permitted. Although interviews, live and pre-taped can be scheduled throughout the duration of the exhibit, this will be the one opportunity for media to capture stills or footage of the exhibit itself. All TV and print media who intend to run stories at a later date are encouraged to attend this media event.