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The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan and Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways Host Walking With Our Sisters Memorial Installation

Mt. Pleasant, Michigan – Over 1,181+ native women and girls in Canada have been reported missing or have been murdered in the last 30 years. Many vanished without a trace with inadequate inquiry into their disappearance or murders from the media, the general public, politicians and even law enforcement. This is a travesty of justice.

Walking With Our Sisters is by all accounts a massive commemorative art installation comprised of 1,781+ pairs of moccasin vamps (tops) plus 200 pairs of children's vamps created and donated by hundreds of caring and concerned individuals to draw attention to this injustice. The large collaborative art piece will be free and open to the public at the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways from April 23 – May 7 (excluding Sundays) from 10am-6pm. The work exists as a floor installation made up of beaded vamps arranged in a winding path formation on fabric and includes cedar boughs. Viewers remove their shoes to walk on a path of cloth alongside the vamps.

The vamps (or "uppers" as they are also called) represent missing and/or murdered Indigenous women. The first call-out for vamps was accomplished through social media in 2012 – generating an overwhelming response from all over the world. The unfinished moccasins represent the unfinished lives of the women whose lives were cut short. The children's vamps are dedicated to children who never returned home from residential (boarding) schools. Together the installation represents all these women and children; paying respect to their lives and existence on this earth. They are not forgotten. They are sisters, mothers, aunties, daughters, cousins, grandmothers, wives and partners. They have been cared for, they have been loved, they are missing and they are not forgotten.

Walking With Our Sisters has been traveling to various communities in Canada since 2013 and is scheduled to continue touring through 2019. The Ziibiwing Center is hosting its only appearance in the United States. The Saginaw Chippewa community has been holding bi-weekly Community Conversations since January 7, 2016 in preparation to honor this ground-breaking memorial and movement. The Grand Opening Ceremony and supporting events will take place on Saturday, April 23 at 10am.

A Media Event will take place at the Ziibiwing Center on Friday, April 22 at 4pm. At this time, photographs and video can be taken of the installation. Founders and members of the Walking With Our Sisters National Collective will be present for quotes. This will be the only time that cameras will be allowed in the memorial. Press may contact the Saginaw Chippewa Public Relations Department for more information at (989) 775-4096.

For more information about Walking With Our Sisters visit www.walkingwithoursisters.ca or the Ziibiwing Center's website (www.sagchip.org/ziibiwing), Walking With Our Sisters – Ziibiwing Facebook page or call the Ziibiwing Center's main line at (989) 775-4750. A flyer is attached outlining a Schedule of Events to support the installation's visit while at the Ziibiwing Center.

The Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways located at 6650 East Broadway in Mount Pleasant, Mich. is the Midwest's Premier American Indian Museum. Established in 2004, the Ziibiwing Center is a distinctive treasure created to provide an enriched, diversified and culturally relevant educational experience through its award-winning Diba Jimooyung (Telling Our Story) permanent exhibit, changing exhibits, research center, Ojibwe language immersion room, gift shop and meeting rooms. The Ziibiwing Center is a non-profit cultural center and museum belonging to the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan who also owns the Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort and the Saganing Eagle's Landing Casino located in Standish, Mich.

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