Winnipeg | Indigenous Relations
Relations avec les Autochtones

JOURNEY OF RECONCILIATION
LES CHEMINS DE LA RÉCONCILIATION

WELCOMING WINNIPEG – Request Summary

NOTE: Request summaries are compiled by Indigenous Relations employees to ensure that identifiable, or potentially identifiable, third-party personal information or information of a sensitive nature is excluded from what is made publicly available. Indigenous Relations permits viewing of the full original submission by appointment through 311.

Request ID: 2022-006

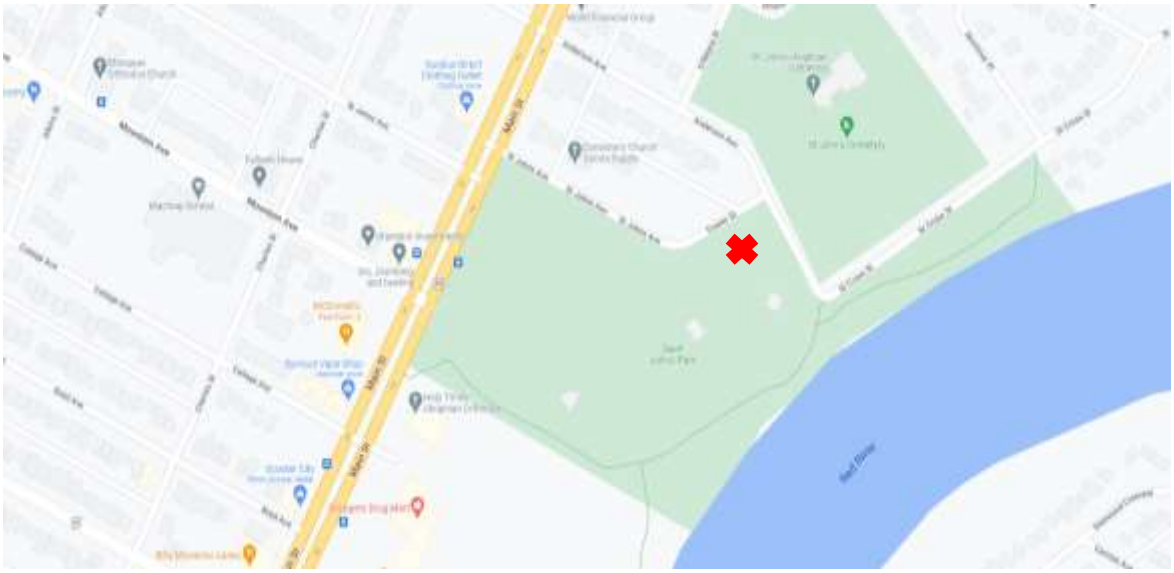
Name of Request: Naming Healing Forest at St. John's Park to Kapabamayak Achaak Healing Forest

Address: 1 Fowler Street

Demonstrated Community Support:

- Petition submitted: No. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and physical distancing precautions, the City has temporarily suspended this requirement.
- Letters of support provided: 1 letter provided

Project Details:



This is the first Healing Forest in Manitoba that is part of the National Healing Forest Initiative. https://www.nationalhealingforests.com/winnipeg-gallery

See Appendix A for additional details.

How does this naming contribute to a 'Welcoming Winnipeg', as defined in the policy and what kind of evidence/research can be provided to support this state

Kapabamayak Achaak Healing Forest (KAHF) is a living memorial to Indigenous children lost to or affected by the residential school system. It is located within St. John's Park in the North End of Winnipeg. The Healing Forest has its roots in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and is part of a network of Healing Forests to be developed across Canada that are responsive to the experiences of each local community.

KAHF is more than a memorial. This land is and will continue to be a gathering place for families and communities; a place for healing and contemplation; an open-air, land-based classroom for students; a place for Elders to share teachings and ceremony; it is a place for reconciliation by remembering the past and envisioning the future. This community-based project encourages meaningful dialogue by creating space to examine the differences between Indigenous and settler perspectives and heal past and ongoing tensions.

Does this site have historical significance to the Indigenous community? Research Support:

Yes. This land was a meeting place for Indigenous peoples, buffalo hunting grounds, a fur trading centre and the home of the first Settlers to farm on the Prairies. Above all, this site is historically significant in the present day.

If this application is not supported, what would the negative impact on the community be? (If applicable)

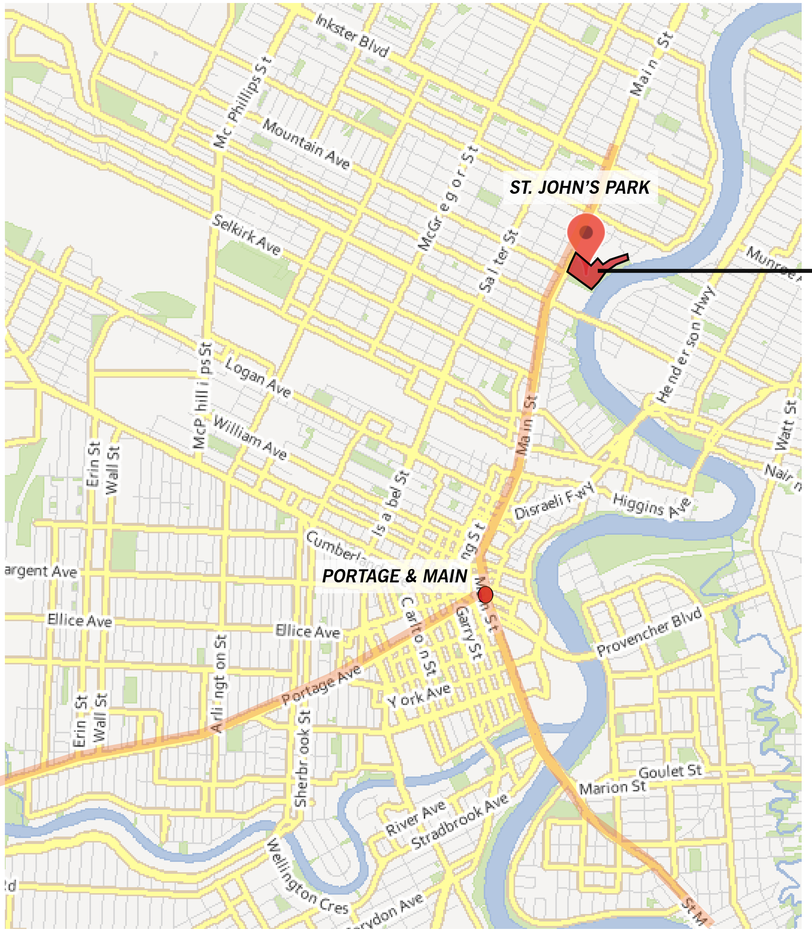
The Kapabamayak Achaak Healing Forest was named in the traditional way, gifted by Elder Peetanacoot in the summer of 2019. If the City is not in support of having this portion of St. John's park renamed, it sends a message to the community that the City of Winnipeg is not fully committed to recognizing local Indigenous place names. Granting this request for naming sends a strong message that the community is being heard and supported by the City, and that we will move forward as one.

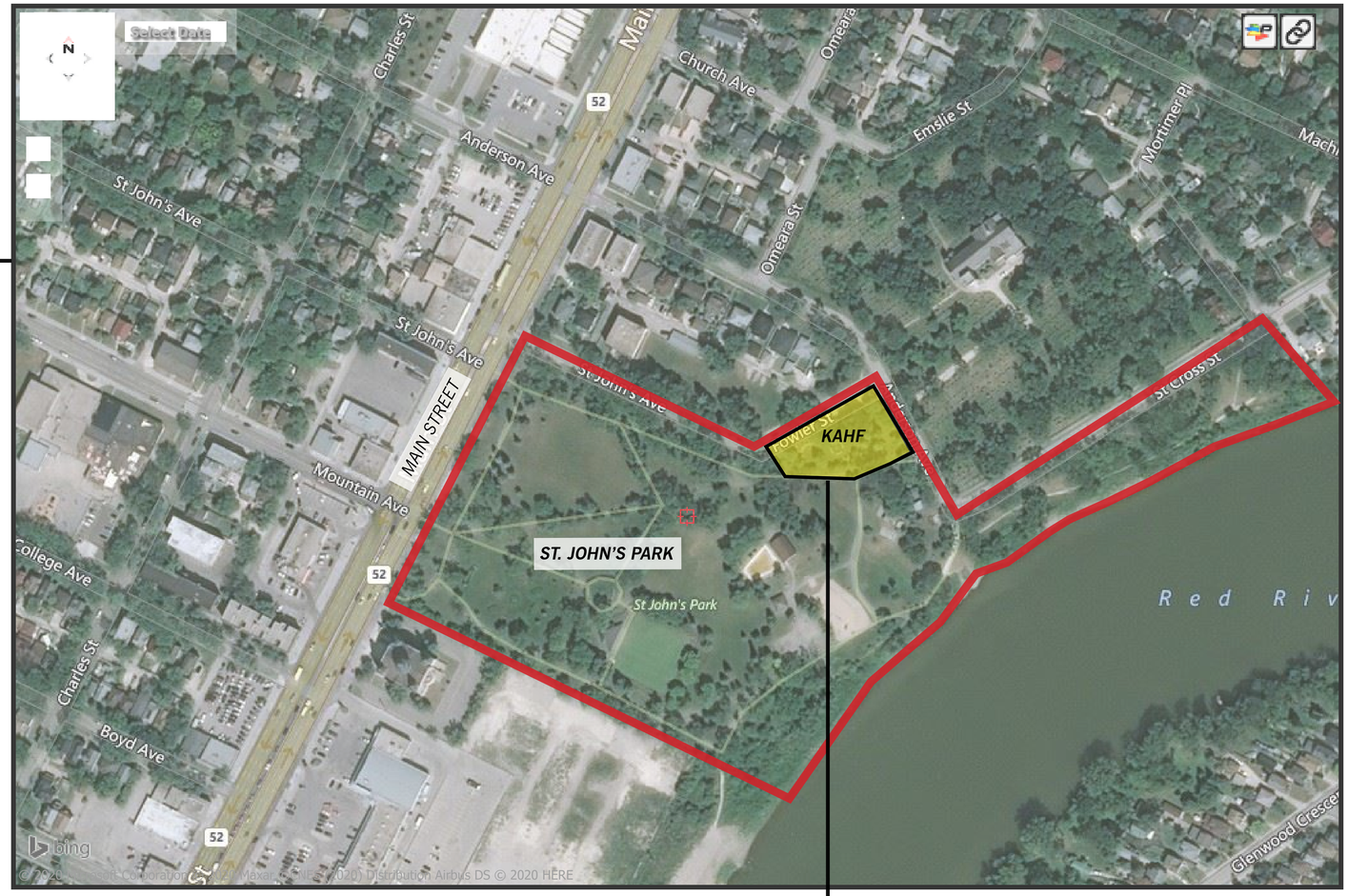
Any additional information the applicant would like the CCM to consider in making their recommendation.

KAHF has been used well and often since construction was completed. People leave tobacco offerings and remembrances such as ribbon ties for the unmarked graves that have been discovered at the various residential school sites across Canada. During Covid, adult education classes were held on site. Events for schoolchildren are organized and a living curriculum for students and other visitors is being developed.

Appendix A

Renaming a Portion of St. John's Park to **Kapabamayak Achaak Healing Forest**
Welcoming Winnipeg







KAPABAMAYAK ACHAAK HEALING FOREST

Located in St. John's Park, Kapabamayak Achaak Healing Forest is a spiritual and sacred space for introspection, recognition and renewal; a place that is inclusive to all, in a location accessible to those seeking to heal and reflect.

VISION: ***LAND - LEARN - HEAL***

Kapabamayak Achaak Healing Forest (KAHF) is a living memorial to Indigenous children lost to or affected by the residential school system. It is located within St. John's Park in the North End of Winnipeg. The Healing Forest has its roots in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and is part of a network of Healing Forests to be developed across Canada that are responsive to the experiences of each local community.

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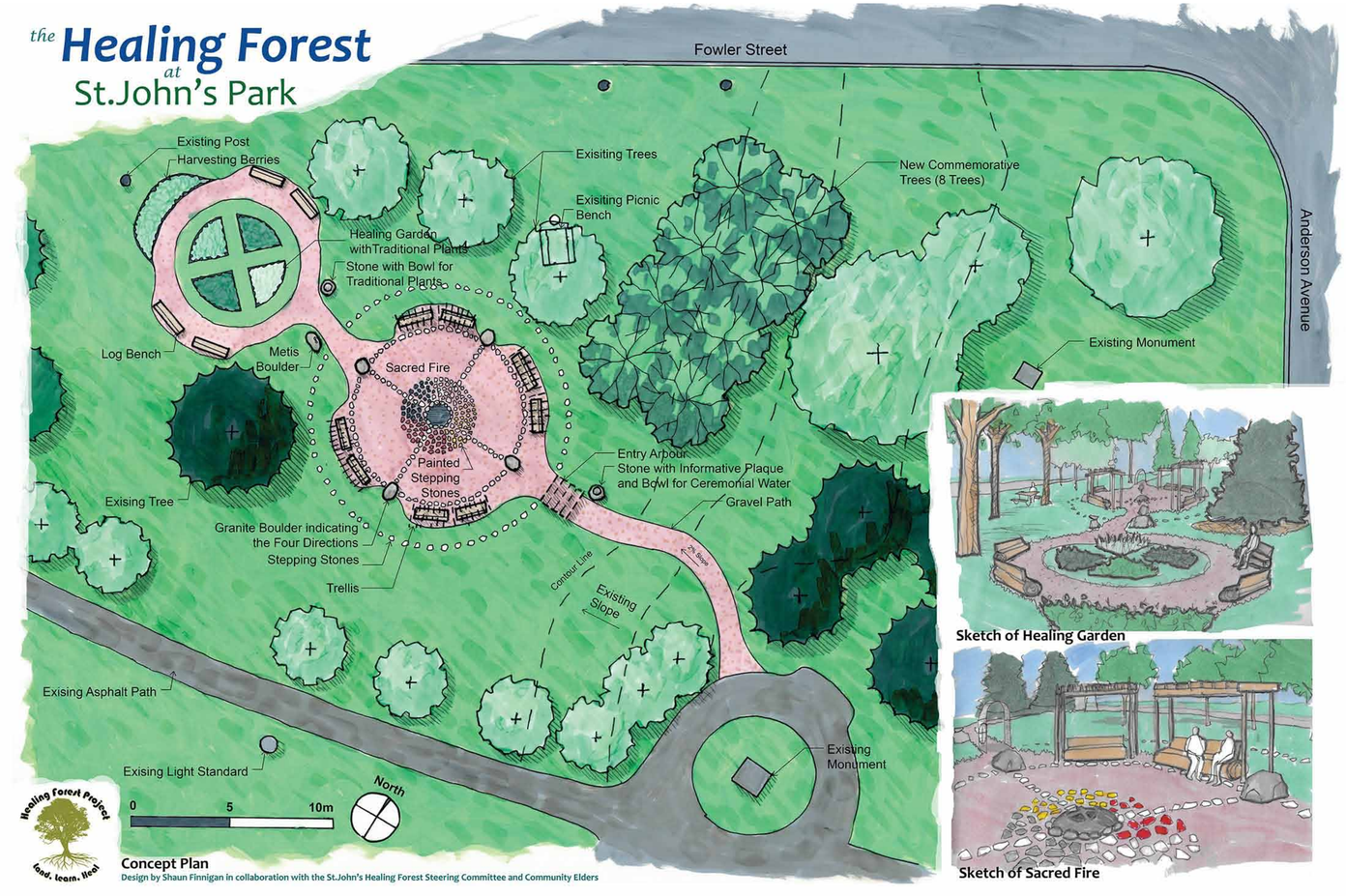
Through the involvement of numerous educators and schools, the Healing Forest, as a place for learning, offers opportunities to incorporate curriculum, connected to Indigenous worldviews and focused on history from multiple perspectives, on ecology and on sustainability. Teachers and students from nearby schools have already begun to develop a relationship with the site, having participated in project planning, tree planting and the building of a unique curriculum. As a response to Elder's request for an outdoor space to share their teachings, this is a place where students will learn and link learning to the land. Learning our histories, the stories of the past, will cultivate our understanding of citizenship and sustainability in our present.



Original Concept Drawing by local artist Shaun Finnigan.

Elements of design include:

- Gathering space with Circular form
- medicine wheel symbolism
- Seating
- Boulders marking the four directions
- Healing Garden area
- Sacred Fire

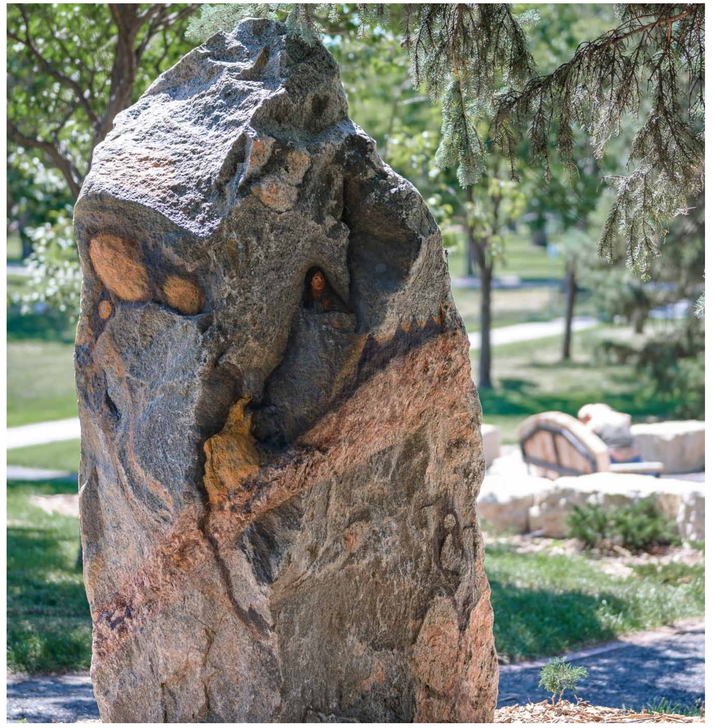


Major Design Mandates:

- Respect the land and respond to the elements within.
- Use natural materials wherever possible to show thanks to Mother Earth.
- Ensure that each element within the design had meaning and connection to the vision.
- Incorporate art created by local Indigenous artists.



View of Kapabamayak Achaak Healing Forest from above (looking west).



Eastern Grandmother Stone by artist, Natalie Rostad-Desjarlais

Construction was completed from 2019 through to 2021. The space has been well used by the general public and school events were regularily held prior to the pandemic.

KAHF has engaged with the City of Winnipeg Parks Division through each step in the process and continues the relationship via the Adopt-a-Park program.

We now look to future goals, including continued educational events within the space as well as providing signage at KAHF as shown on the next page.

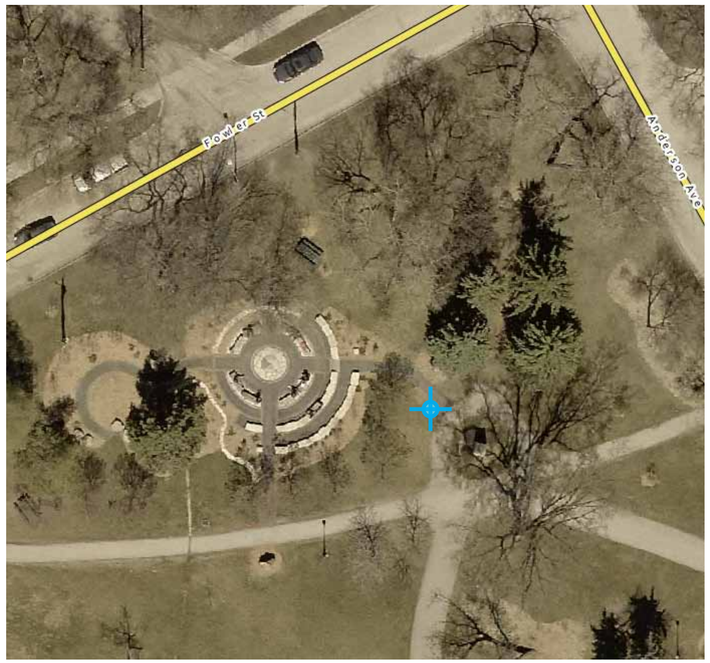


Granite medicine wheel center & sacred fire

PROPOSED SIGN

- Located at the east entry to Kapabamayak Achaak Healing Forest.
- To inform the casual visitor about the name of this space as well as its intended purpose.

PROPOSED SIGN LOCATION





Kapabamayak Achaak Healing Forest

Kapabamayak Achaak Healing Forest is a living memorial to Indigenous children who died or were affected by the Residential School system; a place for community to gather for sharing, healing and learning.

Our community-based group seeks to work towards Truth and Reconciliation on this sacred space on Treaty One Territory--ancestral lands of the Anishinaabe, Ininew and Dakota, and homeland of the Métis. Through intergenerational and land-based learning programs, we hope that you will connect to the past and envision a just future.

Artwork on the four-direction Grandmother Stones is by Natalie Rostad-Desjarlais.

healingforestwpg.org
/Facebook.com/healingforestproject/







Renaming a Portion of St. John's Park to **Kapabamayak Achaak Healing Forest**

Welcoming Winnipeg

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Appendix B

Healing Forest receives new name

Phase Two of the forest design plan continues this summer



By: **Sydney Hildebrandt**

Posted: **12:01 PM CDT Monday, Jul. 20, 2020**

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PHOTO BY SYDNEY HILDEBRANDT

Members of the Kapabamayak Achaak Healing Forest planning group, from left: The Very Rev. Paul N. Johnson of St. John's Cathedral; Judy Wasylycia-Leis, Kyle Mason, Val Vint, and Rachelle Carlisle with children Levi, Lacey, and Lexus.

Hey there, time traveller!

This article was published **20/7/2020** (644 days ago), so information in it may no longer be current.

The Healing Forest at St. John's Park has been given a new name and will continue Phase Two of the project this summer.

An unveiling of the forest was held last September, where the traditional spirit name, offered by Elder Peetanacoot Nenakawekapo, was announced. The new name given to the space was Kapabamayak Achaak, meaning Wandering Spirit in Ojibwe, along with the colours yellow, blue, and green.

"(Peetanacoot) said … you're really wandering around the bush looking for those medicines and those spirits, so it's Wandering Spirit — who you are when you're gathering medicines," said Val Vint, a member of the planning group, about Nenakawekapo's reason behind the name.

Phase Two calls for a garden with more medicine plants, and for an additional gathering circle to be built near the existing one.

Last fall, Métis-Cree artist Natalie Rostad-Desjarlais completed artwork on four boulders, representing the four directions: east, south, west, and north. Various animals and people are depicted on the rocks.

The idea of developing a healing forest in Winnipeg dates back to 2017, when University of Winnipeg education professor Lee Anne Block responded to the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, specifically regarding education on reconciliation and the history of colonialism.

Block assembled a team of community members, who shared a common goal of creating a space for learning and healing, and could also serve as a living memorial to children who died in residential schools, as well as survivors. The Healing Forest was

largely funded by the City of Winnipeg, Province of Manitoba, and The Winnipeg Foundation.

Since the project's initial phase, which saw the installation of benches, a granite medicine wheel, and trees planted, the Kapabamayak Achaak Healing Forest has evolved over time and has hosted numerous visitors for different occasions — something the planning group hopes will continue.

"It's our way of providing a space for building better relationships for all members of the community," said Judy Wasylycia-Leis, a member of the planning group.

The space, which is located between Main Street and the Red River, has so far been used for drumming circles, a graduation ceremony, sharing circles, and land-based learning.

Rachelle Carlisle, an Indigenous researcher and educator at Seven Oaks School Division, brings her students to the Healing Forest as a way to move education outside of the traditional classroom.

"Initially this space was to be used as a place to learn and a place to go to; to bring students to learn about culture, and history, and to connect the past to the future to the present. And it's also reflecting our Indigenous ways and in our curriculum, as well," said Carlisle, who is also a member of the planning group.

The Healing Forest planning group has an ongoing partnership with the St. John's Cathedral across the street from the park, and has been using the church's charitable number for donations. One hundred per cent of the funds donated to the Healing Forest through the cathedral stays with the forest.

However, the planning group is seeking non-profit status and hopes to gain its own charitable number in the future.

More information about donations and the Kapabamayak Achaak Healing Forest can be found on Facebook.



Sydney Hildebrandt
The Times community journalist

Sydney Hildebrandt was the community journalist for The Times until September 2021, when she joined our sister paper, the Brandon Sun.

Healing forest to be grown in Winnipeg park

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Corner of St. John's Park to see trees, outdoor learning space to honour residential school survivors

Elisha Dacey · CBC News · Posted: Feb 11, 2018 12:21 PM CT | Last Updated: February 11, 2018



Lee Anne Block and Kyle Mason are part of a group hoping to build a healing forest in St. John's Park in the North End. (Elisha Dacey/CBC)

A corner of a Winnipeg park will soon be home to a new outdoor learning space and trees planted in honour of residential school survivors and missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Called a "Healing Forest," the northeast corner of St. John's Park in the North End will be transformed, say organizers, to help people reflect, heal and learn from the past.

"I first heard about the Healing Forest from Charlene Bearhead [of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation], and it grabbed my imagination instantly. And I almost instantly saw St. John's Park as an important location to put the healing forest in Winnipeg," said project spokesperson Lee Anne Block.

- **First Nations in the first person: Telling stories & changing lives**

"It's a site where Indigenous people and the settlers met, negotiated, had difficulties, and people struggled on both sides of the equation," Block said.

"So in terms of reconciliation, in terms of healing, and in terms of the fact there were so many children in schools right around the park who could use it as an outdoor learning space, the idea just kind of grew."

The forest will feature two circle gardens, she added.

"One is the learning space, and there'll be a sacred fire pit in the centre of that space," said Block. "So there's one circle garden which is for learning, and there's another circle garden which is for a different kind of learning, which is an actual growing garden, a medicine wheel garden."

A pathway will connect the two spaces, feature log park benches and the trees they plant will be blended into the current trees already in the park.

"The details are still up in the air but we do have money to start building."

The design of the forest and garden were done in consultation with the community, local elders and the City of Winnipeg, who gave the group the land to build their forest, said Block.



A sketch of the proposed healing forest and learning space. (Submitted by Kyle Mason)

Reconciliation and healing

Fellow organizer Kyle Mason said he got involved in the project when he overheard the group talking about it at Neechi Commons one lunch hour.

The Indigenous activist is the son of two residential school survivors, he said, and he has seen the effects of intergenerational trauma in his own family.

"My family has a long history in this province, my family's actually direct descendents of Chief Peguis on my father's side, and on my mother's side my grandfather was the co-founder of the Manitoba Metis Federation.

"And so Lee Anne's mentions about Indigenous peoples conversing with people in St. John's Park along the river, those were my people."

The healing forest is another step in reconciliation efforts, especially for families like his, said Mason.

- **Manitoba advocates help families by 'translating from CFS jargon into human language'**

"Now I'm a father of a four-year-old at home and this is the first time in generations that somebody in my family has grown up with both mom and dad at home," Mason said.

"So my biggest life goal is to have the impacts of residential schools not carried down to my son, through his generation, so that my life can be a watershed moment in my family history.

"And healing and reconciliation needs to happen, so that's why a project like this is so important."

The group will unveil the plans and launch the project on Monday at St. John's Anglican Cathedral at 10 a.m. Indigenous leaders and elders will be attending, said Mason.

With files from The Weekend Morning Show