



NEWS RELEASE

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Celebrating 10 years of children’s health services at St. Mary’s Wellness and Education Centre

Representatives from Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, the University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine’s Department of Pediatrics, and the Saskatoon Tribal Council signed a memorandum of understanding to celebrate, and enhance, a 10-year partnership.

An innovative, community-based model of well-being—bringing the doctor’s office into the school—took shape 10 years ago at St. Mary’s.

Responding to the needs of children and families in the city’s core neighbourhoods, where children’s health services were absent, the three organizations saw great opportunity to improve both health and educational outcomes of students and community members. They opened Canada’s first in-school pediatrics clinic, offering a number of children’s health programs and services.

Today, St. Mary’s Wellness and Education Centre includes a variety of strategic partnerships and professional on-site health services that complement the educational focus on literacy and numeracy support. Services are housed in a world-class learning environment supported by corporate sponsorships and strong community supports.

“It just made a lot of sense to include health and education in one facility,” said Diane Boyko, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Board of Education chair. “Schools are community hubs. Students spend most of their waking hours here and parents are here regularly, so it makes accessing health services so much easier for families. It was a bit of risk to go ahead with this model, but I think it has paid off from both an educational and community-health perspective.”

“Working together ensures our children receive the best healthcare, education and teaching tools in one environment. This model has been successful and has improved the quality of life for many of our youth. We are fortunate to be commending a 10-year partnership with Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools and the University of Saskatchewan,” said Saskatoon Tribal Council Tribal Chief Felix Thomas.

“The centre is one of the most unique initiatives in Canada,” said Dr. Preston Smith, dean at the College of Medicine. “We are proud to be involved with a program that so wonderfully exemplifies our strategic priorities of Indigenous health and social accountability and community engagement.”

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