

Duluth Indigenous Commission
Monday, February 26, 2024
411 W 1st St, Room 155, City Hall

Commissioners present: Rene Ann Goodrich, Max Bowman, Rebecca Graves, Amber Lightfeather

Commissioners interim:

Commissioners absent: Moira Villiard, Lenelle Hrabik, Phoebe Davis, Ryan Clark

Staff present: Kathy Wilson, Hannah Figgins

Note: per the request of the Indigenous Commission members, Ojibwe language words are used in the meeting minutes. Gegit is used to indicate that the Commission has come to a consensus in support of the motion.

1. Call to Order and Introductions

- Vice-Chair Bowman called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM, introductions were made.

2. Approval of January 22, 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes

- January 22, 2024 minutes. **Motion passed: Gegit - All.**

3. Public Comment

- Gabriel Peltier addressed the commission as a former Indigenous Commissioner in 2011. He has submitted an application to join the Commission again, with his primary goal to re-start the initiative for an Indigenous culture and arts center.
- A community member came to the Commission to let them know that there are a couple of Indigenous residents at Bethel who are not being allowed to smudge. Community members and city staff recalled that there was a similar issue in a County building several years ago and the Indigenous Commission assisted by writing a letting in support of the County allowing smudging. Vice-chair Bowman said they would like to confer with the Chair before going forward, but believes in the importance in supporting the Bethel residents' rights to practice their religion by smudging. The City Fire Marshall may be able to provide more information on local laws regarding fire code and the religious freedom to smudge.

4. City Reports and Updates

- **Board/Commission Liaison Updates**
 - Duluth Citizen Review Board/Police Bias Audit – no updates.
 - Duluth Public Arts Commission – Commissioner Woods reported that DPAC has allocated \$15,000 of Arts Festival funding to the Indigenous Commission for the June Pow Wow., and \$15,000 for artistic Ojibwe language signage in City Hall. Commissioner Woods provided some updates on DPAC's current projects and goals. She invited the Indigenous Commissioners to attend future DPAC meetings so the two Commissions can stay informed of each other's work and support each other. DPAC meetings are typically held right before Indigenous Commission meetings from 4pm-5:30pm
- **Other Updates/Comments from City Councilors or City Staff**

- The Police Chief will be at the next meeting, and the Mayor has the IC schedule and will let city staff know what date will work for his schedule.

5. New Business

- **June Pow Wow Planning** – Commissioners Villiard and Clark were absent, but are working on planning outside of the meetings. Updates expected at the March meeting.
- **Honor Fires** – Gaagigewendodgosiwaj Honor Fires – Commissioner Goodrich updated that this year is the third year of having these fires, with the support of City of Duluth, Mending the Sacred Hoop, Native Lives Matter Coalition. This year they would like to host fires in January, February, and May to coincide with MMIWR annual events. More information on these events was provided by Commissioner Goodrich is attached to the minutes. Babette Sandman plans to attend the March meeting to discuss other Honor Fires happening in the community.

6. Action Items

- None at this time

7. Subcommittees

- **Sobriety Feast** – no updates
- **Art in Gichi-ode' Akiing** – no updates
- **Education** – Commissioner Lightfeather had several updates. She is involved in many parent groups and committees to address disparities for Indigenous students in Duluth public schools. Lightfeather asked for a letter of support from the Indigenous Commission to bring to the school board meeting later in the week. **Motion passed: Gigit – all.** Letter attached.
- **Housing** – no updates
- **MMIWR** – Commissioner Goodrich shared informational flyers and information about recent events to the Commissioners. Information and flyers attached.

8. Ongoing Business

- **Full Moon Ceremony** – no updates
- **Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT) Constitution Updates** – Commissioner Bowman shared information about the most recent draft. The draft and information on how to get involved/how to provide comments is online: <https://www.fdlconstitution.org/>
- **Decolonization and Visibility Ideas** – Commissioners discussed strategies for removing/changing problematic local art depicting stereotypes of Indigenous People and/or depicting inaccurate histories. More discussion from Commissioners and guest Peltier regarding an Indigenous Cultural Center and ways to use the Ethnographic Study the Commission funded a few years ago.

9. Announcements

- **Little Free Library Programs**, information in the Meeting packet. Consider further discussion of this at the next meeting on Monday, March 18th.

Meeting adjourned at 7:53pm



02/28/2024

Duluth School Board, ISD #709
709 Portia Johnson Drive
Duluth, MN 55811

Dear members of Duluth School Board:

On behalf of the Duluth Indigenous Commission, a few of us are concerned parents as well, with American Indian children in the Duluth Public Schools, we would like to take this opportunity to express our concern regarding the Resolution of Concurrence and Non-Concurrence pursuant to [Sec. 124D.78 MN Statutes](#).

As you are aware, every year the American Indian Education Parent Advisory Committee (AIEPAC) is charged with completing a Resolution of Concurrence and Non-Concurrence. Every year, for many years, the AIEPAC committee has submitted a Resolution of *Non-Concurrence*. The American Indian student graduation rate is abysmal at roughly 46%. Even worse is the fact that graduation rates have been this low for decades. Why has this been normalized and accepted?

The Indigenous Commission wholly supports the following AIEPAC specific requests:

- **Reduce liaison caseload** - currently the ratio of students to liaison is roughly 120/1. Best practices are a caseload of about 25/1. Hiring more staff would improve these numbers.
- **Dedicate a permanent space for liaisons to meet with students**. Currently, liaisons are stuck in closet spaces, small, shared spaces, and at least one is forced to use a rolling cart. Our students deserve better, which would include a safe private space and a culturally appropriate area to meet with the liaison.
- **Create an action plan** to retain and recruit American Indian staff to multiple roles.
- **Create a school-within-a-school pilot project** by working with American Indian staff and others in the community to provide more support and guidance for our students. The Indigenous Commission is very interested in this concept and recognize that doing what has always been done is not working. Radical ideas and changes are needed to drastically improve these numbers and help our kids succeed.
- **Provide robust professional development for district staff** that has been reviewed by American Indian staff.

Thank you for your time, and I appreciate your consideration in this matter. Feel free to reach out to myself or the commission with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Amber Lee Lightfeather, Commissioner, AIEPAC committee member, and parent
On behalf of the Duluth Indigenous Commission

Duluth Calendar Year 2024 Annual Honor Fire Events for MMIWR Gaagige-Mikwendaagoziwag Honor Fires

Gaagige - Mikwendaagoziwag Honor Fires are Held in Conjunction with Duluth Annual Events for Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Relatives. Hosted By: Native Lives Matter Coalition - No More MMIWR Great Lakes

Co - Hosted in Support with Gaagige - Mikwendaagoziwag Committee Community Partners, City of Duluth, Duluth Indigenous Commission, Supported by Members on the Commission.

1/5/2024 Recognition of "Twin Ports Trafficking & MMIWR Awareness Month" - (Central Hillside)

2/14/2024 "9th Annual Memorial March for Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Relatives" - Closing Ceremony
Duluth YMCA, Building for Women 302 W 1st St, Duluth, MN
(Alternative Venue Location & Date: 2/9/2024 4PM - 8PM at Central Hillside)

5/5/2024 "4th Annual National Day of Awareness for MMIWR" - (Harborview)
(Alternative Venue Location & Date: 5/4/2024 4PM - 8PM at Central Hillside Park or Gichi - ode' Akiing Park)

Duluth Annual Events for MMIWR, are recognized each year by the city of Duluth with Proclamations and Lighting Enger Tower "Red for MMIWR" Permits & Certificate of Insurance are provided by Native Lives Matter Coalition

Native Lives Matter Coalition / Twin Ports - No More MMIWR Great Lakes
Phone: (219) 590-1186 & (715) 919-3440 nlmcoalition@gmail.com
Honor Fires for MMIW, MMIWg2S, MMIWR 2015
Gaagige - Mikwendaagoziwag Memorial Honor Fires MMIWR 2022



Annual MMIW, MMIWg2S, MMIWR Honoring Fires

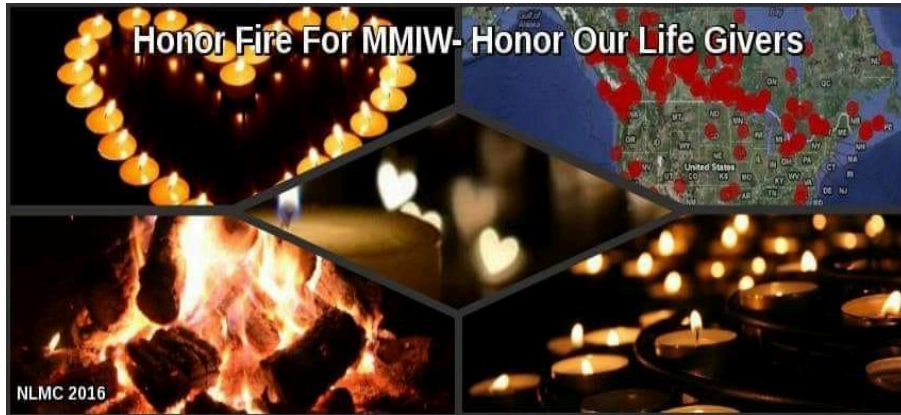
City of Duluth Proclamation on Valentine's Day

2/14/Each Year & 5/5/2024

(NLMC 2016)

10th Annual MMIW, MMIWR Honor Fires During Valentine's Each Year

Established - NLMC 2015 MPLS & 2016 Duluth <https://fb.me/e/6PDbjBlxM>



City of Duluth Lights Enger Tower "Red for MMIWR"

4th Annual 2/14/2024 & 5/5/2024 (NLMC 2021)

3rd Annual Honor Fires for MMIWR

Duluth MN & MKE WI Gaagige - Mikwendaagoziwag Honor Fires

2/14/2024 & 5/5/2024 (NLMC 2022)



Upcoming 2/14/2024 & 5/5/2024 <http://tinyurl.com/MMIWRHonorFires>

Duluth Gaagige-Mikwendaagoziwag, Duluth Indigenous Commission

2/14/2024 9th Annual Memorial March for MMIWR - Duluth

3 - 5PM Closing Ceremony : Gaagige - Mikwendaagoziwag Fire

Duluth YWCA, Building For Women: 32 E 1st St Duluth MN

5/5/2024 National Day of Awareness Rally & March

City of Duluth Lighting Enger Tower RED

2/14/2024

Duluth 9th Annual Memorial March for MISSING & MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS, TWO SPIRIT PEOPLE & RELATIVES



*Red Ribbon Honoring
City Proclamation
March Escort*

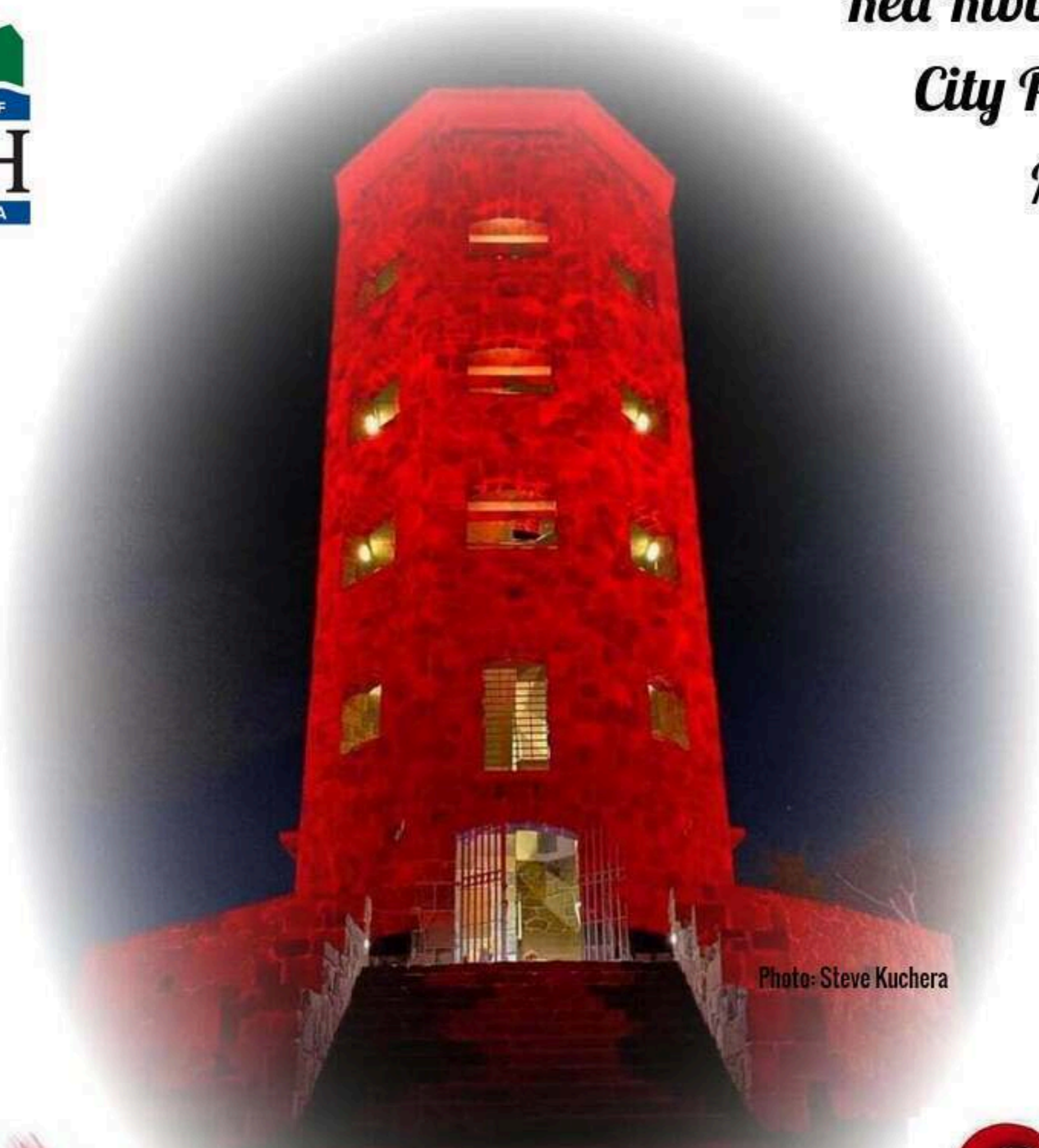


Photo: Steve Kuchera



You Are Not Forgotten



#MMIW #MMIWG2S #MMIWR

City of Duluth / Gaagige - Mikwendaagoziwag Duluth Committee / Duluth Indigenous Commission

Immediate Press Release 2/12/2024
Media Contact: Rene Ann Goodrich
715 919-3440 / nlmcoalition@gmail.com
Event Link: <https://fb.me/e/3476wAUmv>



9th Annual Memorial March for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Relatives on Valentines Day - 2/14/2024 11AM - 5PM

Please Join the Twin Ports community in the annual memorial event in recognition of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Two Spirit People. The event will begin with the opening ceremony at American Indian Community Housing Organization, Traditional Opening by: Ricky Defoe, followed by a march downtown Duluth, and ending at Building for Women with a closing ceremony with honor fire.

The day will be recognized with Twin Ports Cities Proclamations, Duluth Mayor Roger Reinert and Superior Mayor Jim Paine along with the city of Duluth Lighting Enger Tower "Red For Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Relatives".

MMIWR families, community leaders, grassroots, community partners, tribal and state advocates and offices will be supporting to help bring healing through collaborative efforts of awareness, honoring and advocacy with the MMIWR family centered event.

Presentations by: Sugar Bush Drum, Oshkii-Giizhik Singers, Red Shawl Round Dance
Speakers include: MMIWR Families, Community Advocates, Minnesota MMIR Office and Wisconsin DOJ MMIW,R Taskforce, Duluth Indigenous Commission

This year marks the 9th year of the Duluth annual memorial march, sponsored by Native Lives Matter Coalition - No More MMIWR Great Lakes campaign.

The strength of the Twin Ports - Great Lakes MMIW,R movement is collaboration.

The event co hosts include: Native Lives Matter Coalition, No More MMIWR Great Lakes, American Indian Community Housing, Mending the Sacred Hoop, Duluth Indigenous Commission, Fond du Lac Social Services, YWCA Duluth , CASDA, PAVSA, WE Health Clinic, UMD's Women's Resource & Action Center.

Supporting co hosts: Northwoods Socialist Collective, Twin Ports Democratic Socialists of America, Twin Ports-No More MMIWR Great Lakes, Indigenous Peoples Circle, Native Lives Matter Great Lakes, Building Unity, Harm Reduction Sisters, Safe Haven Shelter, Women's March Minnesota, Duluth YMCA

Event Supported by City of Duluth MN & Superior WI, Duluth Indigenous Commission, MN MMIR Office, WI DOJ MMIW Taskforce, Duluth Gaagige-Mikwendaagoziwag Committee & MN MMIR Office Gaagige- Mikwendaagoziwag Advisory Board

9th Annual Memorial March

Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Relatives

2/14/2024 11AM - 3PM Valentine's Day

City of Duluth Lights Enger Tower Red for MMIWR

Twin Ports City Proclamations: Duluth MN & Superior WI
MN & WI Gaagige - Mikwendaagoziwag Honor Fires

MMIWR Family Speakers & Calls to Action

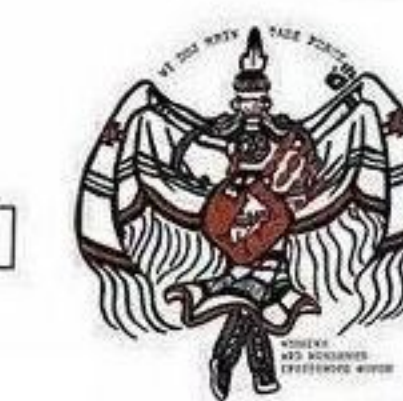
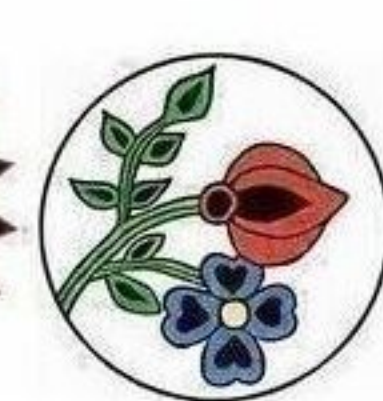
Red for MMIWR, Red Ribbon Memorial, Red Dress & Shirt Displays
Red Shawl & Red Jingle Dress Honor Round Dance

Designated Staff, Sugar Bush Drum, Oshkii Giizhik Singers

Community Leaders - Presenters - Honoring - Speakers
Youth Led Art Activities & DownTown Duluth MMIWR March

Supported by: MN MMIR Office & WI DOJ MMIW Taskforce
Duluth Gaagige-Mikwendaagoziwag, Duluth Indigenous Commission

- 11:00 AM** Opening Ceremony: Ricky Defoe
AICHO, Robert Powless Center: 202 W 2nd St. Duluth MN
- 2:30 PM** MMIWR Memorial March DownTown Duluth MN
- 3:00 PM** Closing Ceremony : Honor Fire, Light Meal Provided
Duluth YWCA, Building For Women: 32 E 1st St Duluth MN



Minnesota
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Relatives
Office



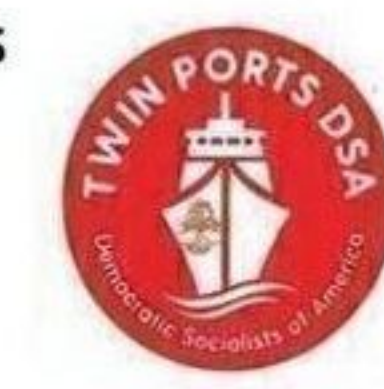
eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
Duluth

casda
CENTER AGAINST SEXUAL & DOMESTIC ABUSE INC.
pavsa
Program for Aid to
Victims of Sexual Assault



WE
HEALTH
CLINIC

NORTHWOODS
SOCIALIST
COLLECTIVE



Safe Haven
Shelter and Resource Center



Sponsor, Host : Native Lives Matter Coalition, No More MMIWR Great Lakes

Event Co-Hosts: American Indian Community Housing, Dabinoo'Igan, Mending the Sacred Hoop, YWCA Duluth, Native Lives Matter Red for MMIW, CASDA, Fond du Lac Human Services, Duluth Indigenous Commission. Supporting Co - Hosts: UMD's Women's Resource & Action Center - WRAC, Northwoods Socialist Collective, Sing Our Rivers Red, Twin Ports Democratic Socialists of America, Twin Ports-No More MMIWR Great Lakes, Indigenous Peoples Circle, Native Lives Matter Great Lakes, Building Unity, Harm Reduction Sisters, Safe Haven Shelter, PAVSA, WE Health Clinic, Duluth YMCA