

What are They Seeing in MANS

Half of the \$4 million raised to date comes from outside the Alberta Conference and its members. A first encounter with Adventism is making an big impression where you might not expect it.

If you have kids in one of Canada's 67 Adventist schools, you probably know that something different happens when you have Adventist teachers working in a healthy Adventist environment. But what do others see?

As manager of the Bridge Campaign, I quickly realized that Mamawi Atosketan Native School (MANS) was something special and important—something that you didn't have to be Adventist to appreciate. And so we went looking for partners to join us in our quest to create the tool that MANS' dedicated teachers need to radically change the lives of kids on what's reputed to be the toughest reserve in Canada: a high school building.

What we found were people who care as much as we do—maybe more in some cases—about the future of the beautiful, talented children of Maskwacis. These highly-successful, compassionate people come from places and organizations I didn't know existed; some of them come from Maskwacis itself.

I'm humbled by what they see, for it's the power of God working through people who put their hand to the plough and don't look back.

First Encounters: A Diverse Group
Sam Minde, CEO Neyaskweyahk Group of Companies, Erminskin Band, Maskwacis—A graduate student at Simon Fraser University, Sam and his wife were looking for a place that would value his children and support what they as parents were trying to teach them. "We chose Mamawi because we believe in teaching and guiding our children about Jesus and what He's done," Sam told the crowd assembled for MANS' ground breaking in May. "We also believe in celebrating the uniqueness of our culture and our language, and we feel that Mamawi is able to bring those concepts, those elements to our teaching."



Hope's Mission gave MANS' high school students an experience they will never forget: being part of a student-generated idea that turned into a powerful community ministry.

Deborah Mates, Executive Director, Canadian Welding Association Foundation—Deborah had crossed Canada visiting aboriginal communities, looking for schools with the most promising chemistry—places where a junior high or high school welding program could make a real difference. "What I saw [at MANS] was a different group of kids—very different from what I've seen in any other aboriginal community. They're focussed, they're engaged, and I know it's because of the teachers." Because of her foundation's investment, MANS will have a separate industrial arts centre where not only welding but other hands-on skills can make a real difference.

The Ptarmigan Foundation, Calgary—"I am satisfied that MANS is making a positive difference," a recently-retired executive of an oil industry giant wrote. After visiting MANS, the former CEO/CFO applied his keen mind—honed by decades of data analyzing—to the task of digging deeper, asking incisive questions as he looked for the best places to invest money from his personal foundation. His substantial donation funds the Ptarmigan Cree Cultural Centre.

The Greene Family Foundation, Calgary—"Our family was very moved

by the success of your school and the effect that is having on your community," wrote the matriarch of the family that is helping to make the high school building a reality. She recognized the impact that changing the course of a single young life can have in a community, and she and her family resonated with the story of Hope's Mission* among others.

A Student Perspective

When the Adventist Review did its investigative story on MANS earlier this year,** the reporter captured the insights of a grade seven student who confessed that when she came to MANS, she didn't care about animals or their pain. For many students, that kind of emotional investments comes at too high a cost. Now, the teenager wants to be a veterinarian.

"This school," she mused, "changes peoples' hearts sometimes."

*A brief overview of Hope's Mission can be found in the August 2016 Messenger.

**Adventist Review, February 2016 issue.



Lynn McDowell, LLB & Certified Specialist in Planned Giving
 Director of Planned Giving | Philanthropy
 Alberta Conference (403) 342-5044, ext. 233