



A Gathering of Medicine Stones
22nd Annual International Two Spirit Gathering 2010

Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc. - "Those Who Lead"
455 McDermot Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3A 0B5
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In partnership with the Two-Spirited People of Manitoba Inc.

GATHERING THEME

The theme for this year's gathering, "*A Gathering of Medicine Stones*", is based on an Ojibway story that tells us about a time long before European contact. It is said that people from all directions were called to this central place and were instructed to bring their healing medicines. Upon gathering the people shared and mixed their medicines to create the most powerful medicine. After this was done, each of travelers returned to their people taking a portion of the "big medicine" with them. To remind us of this event, stones circles (petroforms) were left upon the land, each stone representing one of the one-hundred medicines that was gathered. We are told that medicine people today are the gifted ones who can open the stones to release the healing medicine.

We invite Two Spirit people to bring a medicine stone from their traditional territory so that we may honour this ancient event. The stone can be large or small, a personal gift or an offering to the land. Note: If you would like to contribute your stone for a sweat lodge ceremony, it must be the kind appropriate for this purpose. Granite, one of the hardest stones in the world, is used in this region. It can be extreme-heated and quickly cooled without shattering or exploding (throwing shards).

The photo above is of grandfathers and grandmothers and sage gathered on Pasqua First Nation for the (madoodoswaan) sweat lodge ceremonies conducted at the 19th Annual International Two Spirit Gathering held on Treaty #4 Grounds near Ft. Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan.

Gathering participants will have the opportunity to visit the **Bannock Point Petroforms** at Whiteshell Provincial Park, 93 kilometers east of the site for this year's gathering, See weblinks below for more information.

http://maps.google.ca/maps?f=d&source=s_d&saddr=Beaus%C3%A9jour,+Manitoba&daddr=White+Lake,+Manitoba&geocode=Fczh-wldwUg_-imrlgJvZpbqUjHX5zb8DDYdQA%3BFUJI-wldQZpO-il7TqCFCmWVUjFnj1EZJ8ZDFQ&hl=en&mra=ls&sll=50.061772,-96.515903&sspn=0.051133,0.110378&ie=UTF8&ll=50.150506,-96.006775&spn=0.816613,1.766052&z=9

Petroforms are shapes and geometrical patterns made from arranging large rocks and boulders, often over large areas of open ground

http://www.carvedrocks.com/Petroforms/encyclopedia.htm#Whiteshell_Provincial_Park
<http://www.manitobaphotos.com/petroforms.htm>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ka Ni Kanichihk (KNK) and the Two-Spirited People of Manitoba (TSPM) have partnered to host the twenty-second annual gathering of Two Spirit people in North America, *A Gathering of Medicine Stones*. The following definition of Two Spirit people is found in *Manitoba's Aboriginal Strategy on HIV/AIDS*:

Two Spirit People – a term used to describe Aboriginal people who assume cross -, or multiple gender roles, attributes, dress and attitudes for personal, spiritual, cultural, ceremonial or social reasons. These roles are defined by each cultural group and can be fluid over a person's lifetime. Modern terms like gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, [GLBT] transsexual and intersexed (in combination with, or exclusive to, Two Spirit) may be adopted by some Aboriginal people to define who they are.

This special gathering began in 1988 in Minnesota when a local group of Native American gay and lesbian community members saw the need to launch a cultural revitalization movement that was based on the principle of being alcohol and drug-free. The world-wide HIV pandemic had also reached the Two Spirit community at this time galvanizing many local activists to become involved in the HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention movement.

The Minneapolis gathering was organized with the support of allies such as the Minneapolis American Indian Center, Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council, and the Minneapolis Civil Rights Department, along with community businesses and private donors. For the past 21 years annual gatherings have continued to be supported by various levels of government, Aboriginal organizations, foundations and private donations. There is also a component of regional and local fundraising and in-kind support for this event.

TSPM hosted the gathering in 1990 and 1998 with approximately 125 participants at each event (a full report on the 1998 gathering is available). TSPM will host the 20th anniversary of their first gathering on Labour Day Weekend, September 3-6, 2010 at a retreat centre outside of Winnipeg. The theme, "A Gathering of Medicine Stones" is reflective of the spiritual and ecological nature of this gathering. Approximately 125 participants representing various Aboriginal and Native American nations and tribes from across Canada and the US are expected to attend. The four-day agenda will include cultural activities, health and wellness sessions, leadership building, anti-homophobia and human rights training, and networking opportunities. A Two Spirit youth life-skills component and panel session will be included. Youth will be one of the priorities for travel scholarships.

Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc., the auspicing body for this project will provide administrative support, financial accounting and will function as the central coordination and planning site. A joint committee of Ka Ni Kanichihk and TSPM representatives will lead the planning and coordination, and oversee fundraising efforts and the successful delivery of the project. A project financial audit will be included in Ka Ni Kanichihk's annual report. As a registered charity Ka Ni Kanichihk will provide tax receipts for individual and corporate donations.

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