

NEWS RELEASE

WSD and Share the Magic announce local initiative at Niji Mahkwa School

February 26, 2018 (Winnipeg, MB) – Winnipeg School Division (WSD) and Share the Magic today announced details of a partnership for a local initiative aimed at building a personal home library for each child starting with the Niji Mahkwa Nursery/Kindergarten class of 2017-2018.

The program works on the basis of ensuring students receive books of their choosing at regular intervals throughout the school year and over the summer months. The initiative, which began in September 2017, will continue to follow the children through every grade they attend Niji Mahkwa School.

“Each month, I visit the Kindergarten/Nursery class and bring books for each child to choose at their current reading level,” says Chris Melnick, Executive Director, Share the Magic. “A book is also presented to the class as a whole for reading at school, ensuring the children are exposed to new reading on a monthly basis, both in the classroom and in their homes.” Melnick says throughout the school year, every child will choose 10 books. At the end of the school year, each child will choose an additional 17 books to have over the summer months. Studies have shown that if a child has 17 books during periods when they are not in school, they will have the opportunity to maintain or increase their literacy levels.

In addition to providing children with their own library, WSD will collect data on literacy skill improvements as reported by teachers working with this group. The anecdotal evidence is expected to support whether the children appear more ready to learn, have an easier time learning and performing tasks and are achieving higher literacy levels than the children in other classes.

“Owning our own books is a privilege many of us take for granted, but which can make a huge difference in a child’s ability to do better in school and be more engaged in their learning,” said Celia Caetano-Gomes, WSD Superintendent of Education Services Curriculum and Learning Innovation. “This partnership with Share the Magic is helping us to better provide that ability to our students in one of our Inner City schools.”

Other actions made possible through this partnership are year-end book give-aways, through which students from Nursery to Grade 8 at Niji Mahkwa can choose five books to call their own, providing them with good reading through the months of July and August. Share the Magic is also partnering with Animichigewin, which is funded through community FACT grants to assist organizations like schools to run literacy and numeracy based family and parenting programs for families with children up to six years old. Local Elders and Knowledge Keepers go to Niji Mahkwa each month to share and read Indigenous stories to pre-school and early year’s students. Families that participate each month have the opportunity to hear stories from the Elders and take part in literacy activities with light snacks and refreshments.

WSD was established in 1871 and currently has 78 schools, 33,000 students and 6,000 employees. Its purpose is to provide a learning environment that fosters the growth of each student’s potential and provide equitable opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and values necessary for meaningful participation in a global and diverse society.

Share the Magic Book Program is a registered charity which aims to increase literacy levels in low income populations. The Program collects new and gently-used books for give away and community libraries, free of charge, in Manitoba communities that do not have many books. *Share the Magic* gives away books for all ages, from baby books to adult fiction and non-fiction. To date *Share the Magic* has given away 420,000+ books. For more information contact Chris Melnick, Executive Director at: cmelnick@mymts.net or by calling 204 257 0517.

-30-

Media contact:

Radean Carter

Senior Information Officer

Winnipeg School Division

(204) 789-0412 or mobile (204) 771-5352