

Voices into Action – Manitoba/Saskatchewan Program Launch

For Immediate Release: April 14, 2016

On April 14, 2016 FAST-Fighting Antisemitism Together®, will be launching *Voices into Action*, its free curriculum-based social justice program for secondary students in Manitoba/Saskatchewan. The audience will feature 450 – 500 grade 9 to 12 high school students and educators from Winnipeg and surrounding areas.

The launch of *Voices into Action* will be brought to you in partnership with the Winnipeg School Division (WSD).

“Winnipeg School Division’s Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) curriculum incorporates key themes of sustainability such as poverty alleviation, human rights, health and environmental protection and climate change,” said Fatima Mota, WSD Superintendent of Education Services, Equity & Diversity, Inclusive Education. “Partnering with organizations like FAST assists us in our goal to help students develop the knowledge, skills and values needed for meaningful participation in a global and pluralistic society.”

Superintendent Mota added that event emcee, Michael Redhead Champagne, who chairs Aboriginal Youth Opportunities, is a former WSD student putting his ESD knowledge to action.

“I am honoured to be a part of Voices into Action, a timely and welcome education initiative for a city determined to address the worrying signs of racism, hatred, and prejudice.” – Judy Wasylycia-Leis

Details:

Voices into Action Manitoba/Saskatchewan Launch Event

MC: Michael Redhead Champagne, founder and chairman of Aboriginal Youth Opportunities

Special Guest: Judy Wasylycia-Leis

Dates & Location:

April 14, 2016

Technical Vocational High School Theatre

1:00PM – 2:30PM

Developed by a team of experts at OISE-UT, the bilingual program is entirely online and brings key human rights issues to the forefront of Canadian classrooms - powerful environments for positive change. The goal of *Voices into Action* is to teach young people that hatred has no place in Canada and to inspire action to promote social justice. All teachers, and especially those who cannot attend, are encouraged to preview and use *Voices into Action* by registering (at no charge) at www.voicesintoaction.ca or www.parlezetagissez.ca.

Voices into Action builds on the success of the *Choose your Voice* program for middle schools that, since 2005, has been delivered to over two million students in approximately 19,000 schools in every province and territory in Canada. In 2010 *Choose Your Voice* received the Award of Excellence from the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

Both programs are delivered by FAST-Fighting Antisemitism Together®, founded in 2005 by Tony Comper, the former CEO and President of BMO Financial, and his late wife Elizabeth. FAST is dedicated to combating all forms of intolerance and hatred, with antisemitism as a specific manifestation of it.

Immediate objectives of event:

- create a media event that will attract the attention and support of educators and school leaders with the goal that they register for and use the *Voices into Action*
- create a nucleus of school and other leaders who will actively promote the registration for and use of *Voices into Action*
- promote human rights and social justice activism locally and globally
- promote taking action on the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report
- promote critical thinking on difficult topics using assigned tasks, research, discussion groups, classroom debate, drama role play, written and artistic expression
- promote taking action to eliminate gender inequality both in Canada and abroad
- promote taking action as a result of what we have learned from the Holocaust and other genocides, to eliminate all forms of racism, prejudice and antisemitism

Long Range Outcome:

- Teachers in every high school will use *Voices into Action* in many subject areas to promote social justice, enhance positive classroom and school environments and hasten the elimination of racism, stereotypes and all forms of discrimination.

Voices into Action website: www.voicesintoaction.ca or www.parlezetagissez.ca.

Media interviews available with Judy Wasylycia-Leis, Michael Champagne, the FAST executive team and coordinators.

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