



NEWS RELEASE

for immediate release

Million Steps for Mental Health Goal Surpassed

March 22, 2021

Everyone knows that getting fresh air is great for your mental health. For one Meewasin Trail lover, spending time outdoors is about much more than being outside - it is about building connections in a socially distanced, pandemic world.

This year, Frances Sreedhar set a goal to walk a million steps on the Meewasin Trail in support of two local community agencies: the Meewasin Valley Authority and the Canadian Mental Health Association, Saskatoon Branch. Her goals are to raise awareness about the links between physical and mental health, highlight the importance of the Meewasin Valley, and raise \$10,000 for the non-profits, one step at a time.

An exciting update with Frances' journey may motivate others to get involved for the tail end of the initiative. Giving herself a deadline of March 31, 2021, Frances has already surpassed her original goal of a #MillionStepsForMentalHealth – so she has set another wonderful challenge that makes it easy for others to get involved. “To continue my fundraising efforts, I have decided to attempt 1,111,111 steps by my original deadline of March 31,” says Frances, “I challenge you to also track an activity to reach 111,111 steps or a different milestone measure this month! Let’s make a difference, together.”

She says that with the warm weather and spirits high, she was able to meet her goal a bit early, and now wants to focus on getting others involved and reaching her fundraising goal. As someone who has worked in the mental health field for years, Frances felt compelled to take charge of her own wellness through daily action. Currently at just over 25% of her fundraising goal, Frances wants to let others know we are all in this together; especially as some of the recent mental health statistics are quite appalling. For example, pre-pandemic, 1 in 5 Canadians had a mental health challenge. We now know 5 in 5 Canadians are experiencing mental health issues as a result of the pandemic.

Frances notes it is not always easy, and “some days are tougher than others. Knowing I am walking for others gives me hope. With each step we take, we are doing something important for ourselves and those we love. My walks help me feel more grounded and capable of meeting the demands of life during these stressful and anxious times. When I feel better, I can help others feel better. It is one thing I can do to get through the day no matter how I am feeling.”

If you would like to donate now, please visit the [Meewasin donate page](#) and/or the [CMHA Saskatoon donate page](#). Use the hashtag **#MillionStepsForMentalHealth** in the message box to support Frances on this amazing initiative! A great challenge to benefit your mental health and the community, **find more ways to get involved on the [Million Steps for Mental Health page](#)**.

Contact Andrea Lafond at Meewasin at (306) 665-6887 or alafond@meewasin.com for an interview, questions or concerns.

Contact Faith Bodnar CMHA Saskatoon at (306) 220-5201 or fbodnar@cmhasaskatoon.ca for any questions regarding CMHA Saskatoon programs and services.

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About Meewasin Valley Authority

The Meewasin Valley Authority exists to ensure a healthy and vibrant river valley, with a balance between human use and conservation by:

- *Providing leadership in the management of its resources;*
- *Promoting understanding, conservation and beneficial use of the Valley; and*
- *Undertaking programs and projects in river valley development and conservation,*

for the benefit of present and future generations.

There are 67 square kilometers of land and over 90km of established trail, which has seen up to 1.87 million trail visits per year, in the Meewasin Valley. The area also features sites that help people to connect to nature through experiences such as Beaver Creek Conservation Area, the Northeast Swale, Saskatoon Natural Grasslands, the River Landing Spray Area, and the Cameco Meewasin Skating Rink @Nutrien Plaza. Meewasin is a non-profit organization that relies on donations and volunteers for sustainability. To get involved or learn more visit www.meewasin.com

About Canadian Mental Health Association – Saskatoon Branch

The Canadian Mental Health Association Saskatoon Branch was established in 1948. We have grown and changed over more than 70 years, providing community based, mental health services and programs. We are members of the provincial and national CMHA federation. Our vision is “mental health for all”. To learn more about what we do, to get involved or to access services, please visit us at saskatoon.cmha.ca

We are located on Treaty 6 Territory, the traditional territory of the Cree People and the Homeland of the Metis Nation.

