



NEWS RELEASE

For Information Contact:

Mitchell Happ
Marketing Coordinator
306-477-9121
mhapp@meewasin.com

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Meewasin Celebrates Fran Sreedhar's 'Million Steps for Mental Health' Achievement

SASKATOON — Meewasin celebrates Frances (Fran) Sreedhar, a local mental health professional and dedicated Meewasin Valley supporter, on the successful completion of her "Million Steps for Mental Health" campaign. Sreedhar launched this initiative in honour of her mother, Rosalie van den Berg, to promote mental health awareness, with the resulting proceeds benefiting both Meewasin and the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). Over the five-year campaign, Sreedhar logged over five million steps along the Meewasin Trail and reached her \$10,000 fundraising goal. She often remarked that achieving a million steps annually — about 2,750 steps or 15 to 20 minutes of walking daily — "Is actually not hard; it just takes persistence."

Fran first began walking The Meewasin Trail during the COVID-19 pandemic, discovering its benefits for mental well-being through exercise and connection with nature. "My five-year journey, walking on The Meewasin Trail, has taken me into a deep experience of physical and mental well-being, an appreciation for nature, and all that Meewasin is protecting," Sreedhar shared. "Walking has become a grand regulator in my life, helping me cope through the pandemic, multiple losses, and significant life events. It has brought me into mindfulness and connection with people and with our beautiful city. I'll continue walking, but now I don't have to count the steps. It's become a way of life."

Meewasin's Interim CEO, Mike Velonas, expressed gratitude for Sreedhar's efforts. "From the entire Meewasin team, we want to thank Fran for including us in her campaign highlighting how important community and outdoor physical activity are to mental health. We are extremely grateful that she has chosen to fundraise for Meewasin."

Meewasin would also like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated in the "Million Steps for Mental Health" challenge.



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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 108km of established trail, which has seen up to 2.365 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 Meewasin 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

Meewasin Valley Authority

402 Third Avenue South, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada S7K 3G5

P: 306-665-6887 F: 306-665-6117

www.meewasin.com