

# An Update on Camp Widjiitiwin

October, 2021

Camp Widjiitiwin has an extensive 90 year legacy as an extension of Muskoka Bible Centre, impacting thousands of campers and staff with the gospel of Jesus Christ. In 2009 the IGNITE outreach program began, growing over the years to become a unique, partnership based model of reaching inner city youth with the gospel for five of the nine weeks of summer camp. And then the 2020 Pandemic hit, virtually immobilizing overnight youth camps across the world.

For two summers (2020-2021) Camp Widjiitiwin was unable to operate as it had for so many years. There was a recognition that this would bring significant challenges to re-launching in future seasons. These challenges were exacerbated by the fact that the facility was already experiencing significant deferred maintenance. It was considered prudent by the Board and Leadership of MBC to take this season to assess the future of Camp Widjiitiwin. This assessment was not taken lightly and was supported by a committed prayer effort throughout.

As a Kingdom enterprise, the leadership of MBC recognizes that God raises up people and ministries for seasons of time and so we must hold all we do with an open hand. It is a key responsibility of the MBC Board and leadership to continually evaluate how our resources and opportunities are being stewarded for the Kingdom mission that God has entrusted to us.

The assessment was completed by a third party so that proper attention and time could be given with diligent staff and board participation. The research included interviews with alumni spanning several decades, current staff leadership, IGNITE partners and other stakeholders such as donors and parents of campers. An interim report was presented to the MBC Board Executive in August with a detailed report provided in early September. The Board then met for a day of prayer and discussion in mid-September which concluded with the following direction to the leadership of MBC:

*“The CEO of MBC will strike a task force including representation from each of the IGNITE inner city community partners as well as one board member. The task force will work together to create a plan for a sustainable IGNITE outreach ministry to marginalized communities under the direction and support of MBC. Proper planning and preparation for this will take some time and therefore it is expected that Camp Widjiitiwin will not operate again in 2022.”*

The following two points clarify the parameters given to this task force:

1. The proposed IGNITE ministry plan will see MBC focus on the unique opportunity to have a greater impact for the Kingdom among marginalized families and their children, also providing various opportunities for existing MBC families to participate in serving these communities. This objective flows directly out of the mission of MBC to help grow resilient, biblically rooted families.
2. The plan must ensure the following components:
  - a. All aspects of this program must be done with excellence - requiring adequate investment in the required leadership, operational and facility support.

- b. The program and follow up will be designed for greatest efficacy with shared input, resourcing and ownership by the agencies and partnering churches working within these marginalized communities.
- c. A funding system will be established to ensure a quality and safe facility as well as competent leadership and staff having adequate training for working effectively with families and children from these communities.

We are very excited as we anticipate a new level of impact in the future for thousands more families and children who are significantly less fortunate than most of us. We believe that this direction will drive us to better fulfill a mandate given to the Church of Jesus Christ to care for our marginalized populations - specifically the orphans and widows and those suffering injustice.

We are asking our MBC and Camp Widjiitiwin families to participate with us in this direction. Your prayers, questions, input and financial support is greatly appreciated as the task force begins to initiate the planning process. We will keep our constituency informed as the plans for this special initiative come together - stay tuned for updates.

We also want to honour those who have provided faithful leadership to Camp Widjiitiwin over all these years and especially most recently Mike Greenfield (Moose) and Josh Laverty (Heyoo) . These two are largely responsible for the development and growth of the IGNITE partnership program that now provides the foundation upon which an expanded and more focused IGNITE program will be built under a future leadership structure that will be determined by the task force. We thank them for their leadership and dedication to the cause of the Kingdom of God and their faithful ambassadorship for Jesus Christ.

Please feel free to contact myself if you have specific questions or interest in partnering with us in this direction.

Your fellow servant in Christ,



John Friesen  
CEO, Muskoka Bible Centre

