



## Fact Sheet: Information about the Miskwaabimaag Basket



The Miskwaabimaag Basket was gifted to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls by the Red Willow Collective. The group is made up of Indigenous kwe (women) from Manitoba. The purpose of the gift is to help the Commissioners as they gather the stories of loved ones, families and survivors of violence.

This concept honours the fact many Indigenous people throughout the world use baskets to gather goods and belongings. The Miskwaabimaag Basket will be the carrier of stories that support mino-biimaadiziwin — an Ojibway teaching that means the good life of all beings.

The Miskwaabimaag Basket was created through the ancestral practice of weaving red willow together. The unity of these branches that are interwoven together symbolizes the strong bond and connection that Indigenous people have with one another.

***Miskwaabimaag is harvested by many nations across Turtle Island.***

***It is a ceremonial item that provides spiritual protection and represents the teachings of respect.***

***The red willow for this basket was harvested near the Manito Api sacred site – a place where Indigenous people gather for ceremony for over thousands of years.***

The basket is lined with red cloth to keep the stories and items that are shared with the National Inquiry safe and protected. Rocks are placed around the base to remind us of our connection to the land and the copper vessel that sits beside the basket is filled with water to remind us of the sacredness of life.

The basket represents kwe (women); it symbolizes our continued connection to land, language and culture through the ceremonies and teachings of our Grandmothers. It is a distinguishable reminder of women's important role in building, strengthening and repairing relationships. As the National Inquiry undertakes its work, it will hold all of the truths that are gathered by the Commissioners; these stories are teachings that will help to identify ways we can work together towards a collective good life.

***The Red Willow collective is comprised of professional artists, researchers and community activists, including: KC Adams, Jaime Black, Leona Star, Rayanna Seymour and others.***