



SERVICE & ADVOCACY PROJECT IDEAS

REDress Project

An opportunity for awareness and dialogue about
Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Supporting Zonta International's mission to make the world a better place by empowering women through service and advocacy



Photos from The REDress Project Website



WHAT is the REDress Project?

The REDress Project was begun in 2011 by Métis artist Jaime Black after attending a conference where she heard about the hundreds of missing and murdered women in Canada. Her first display of red dresses was at the University of Winnipeg and its purpose was to bring attention to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The dresses were displayed empty so they evoke the missing women who should be wearing them. The color red is symbolic in several ways: it is said to be the only color the spirits can see, it relates to our lifeblood, and it represents both vitality and violence.

The display of the red dresses provides an opportunity for dialogue about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and offers a space for voices to be heard and stories to be told. While Ms. Black has done a number of exhibitions of red dresses, others have started their own displays, inspired by Ms. Black. Even the display of a single red dress – or a series of red dresses throughout a community, has meaning and will provide an opportunity for conversation. For more information on the project, go to <https://www.jaimeblackartist.com/exhibitions/>

HOW TO IMPLEMENT THIS PROJECT?

The displaying of red dresses as part of this project is to be a visual reminder of the “staggering number of women who are no longer with us” according to the originator of the project. Thus, the project is essentially to hand red dresses in a public place – outdoor space is preferred – where it is accessible to more people and is more of a draw for the public.

Once the dresses catch the public eye, a conversation should be had about the terrible situation that involves the high number of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The project sponsors might also use this as an opportunity to advocate for change – change to law enforcement training, changes to reporting systems and data bases, the creation of missing person hotlines, etc.

It may also be worth considering organizations that would be a good partner for this project – especially if there is an Indigenous-led organization or a reservation in close vicinity.

SOME FACTS ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN

When compared to national averages,
Indigenous women are:

- 2.5 times more likely to be assaulted
- 2 times more likely to be stalked
- 5 times more likely to experience
interracial violence
- 10 times more likely to be murdered

More than 1 in 3 Indigenous women will
be raped in her lifetime.

6 in 10 Indigenous women will be
physically assaulted.