Howell, MI - Throughout the month of May, LACASA is hosting a powerful visual display of red dresses outside its building in honor of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Awareness Month. This striking display serves as a poignant reminder of the ongoing crisis of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit individuals, and aims to raise awareness within the Livingston County community.

For decades, Indigenous communities have struggled with rates of assault, abduction, and murder of tribal members more than ten times national averages. Because of complex jurisdictional issues between local, tribal, and federal authorities, many of the perpetrators are never brought to justice.

"At LACASA, we are committed to ending all forms of violence, and that includes standing in solidarity with Indigenous communities and amplifying the voices of those impacted by this crisis," said LACASA President & CEO Bobette Schrandt. "This display is a visual call to action, urging our community to learn more, engage in conversations, and advocate for justice and systemic change."

The color red holds deep significance in many Indigenous cultures, often representing life, blood, and the sacred, and is believed by some to be the only color spirits can see. The empty red dresses symbolize the missing individuals and the profound absence felt by their families and communities, while the red handprint symbolizes silenced voices. LACASA's representation seeks to bring visibility to a tragedy that has historically been marginalized and underreported.

According to the National Crime Information Center, in 2016, there were 5,712 reports of missing American Indian and Alaska Native women and girls, but the US Department of Justice's federal missing person database only logged 116 cases.

LACASA recognizes the deep historical and contemporary presence of Indigenous peoples in Michigan, the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabek – the Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi nations, among others.

"Significantly, the very land on which our Home for Good stands was dedicated to our organization in a special ceremony before we moved in, underscoring our commitment to serving and respecting all members of our community," Schrandt said. "This act of remembrance through the red dress display is made even more meaningful given this connection to the Indigenous heritage of this land," she added.

LACASA encourages the community to learn more about the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls movement through resources like the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC) and the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs, and to engage in respectful conversations about the issue with friends, family, and colleagues.

Click here to see more photos of the display at LACASA.

ABOUT LACASA: *LACASA Center is a locally based organization dedicated to helping victims of child abuse, domestic violence and sexual assault. The nonprofit provides*

critical services and educational programs that build awareness about interpersonal violence and help prevent abuse in the community. To learn more, visit lacasacenter.org.