

Taykwa Tagamou Nation's Child Wellbeing Law Passes

TAYKWA TAGAMOU NATION, ON, CANADA, November 14, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- After more than two years of planning, drafting, and community engagement, Taykwa Tagamou Nation has taken their first step in officially exercising jurisdiction over the child welfare system that has disproportionately affected First Nations children for decades. With overwhelming community support, they have officially passed their Child Wellbeing Law.

"The vision we have for our children to experience better opportunities with better outcomes than we were afforded is a shared vision amongst our membership, so the overwhelming support comes as no surprise", said Chief Bruce Archibald. "Our Child Wellbeing Law is holistic. It requires the support of all of us to better support our families and children, and most importantly, it's grassroots - so our entire community can see themselves in where it is today, and where it is slated to arrive in the future."

For decades, assimilationist policies have detrimentally affected many generations of First Nations peoples. Due to overlapping constitutional jurisdictions and chronic underfunding by the federal government, First Nation peoples continue to struggle to overcome the long-term effects this has caused. There was a growing need for First Nation peoples to take control of their own child and family services. The work on Taykwa Tagamou Nation's Child Wellbeing Law has roots that go back over many previous decades, as many leadership and staff bravely asserted TTN's jurisdiction over the years. This work took on new energy when the federal government's Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families came into force on January 1, 2020, recognizing Indigenous jurisdiction.

"Change is in the air, you can feel it", continued Deputy Chief and Social Services Portfolio Holder Derek Archibald. "We're so proud that our Child Wellbeing Law is based on our own Cree customs regarding the traditional family relationships that we have practiced since time immemorial. We still have a long way to go, this is only step one."

Taykwa Tagamou Nation is exercising its jurisdiction in phases beginning with prevention, band representative services, customary care and family dispute resolution. In the first phase, child protection will continue under agencies mandated by Ontario and other provincial authorities. Ultimately Taykwa Tagamou Nation plans to increase its transformation of the system over the years, to exercise its full jurisdiction over child welfare matters, based upon Cree traditions.

There are a number of key projects currently in the works that support this holistic vision,

including the Taykwa Tagamou Nation Youth Centre, the Veronica S. Archibald Healing and Cultural Learning Lodge, and a Safe Home. Taykwa Tagamou Nation is also in the beginning stages of developing a community-based dispute resolution circle process that will be accessible not only for child welfare cases, but also for family and community disputes.

The Child Wellbeing Law is not yet in force. The timing to bring the law into effect will be decided by Taykwa Tagamou Nation's Chief and Council, and will take into account funding and coordination negotiations expected to begin soon with the Government of Canada and Government of Ontario.

Sydney Oakes

"Provoke Public Affairs

+1 905-929-7151

sydney@provokepublicrelations.com

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