



## CHI-MIIGWECH FROM THE PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR THE NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION EVENT HELD SEPTEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup> 2022

Together, on Agency One First Nation lands in the Treaty Three Territory at Fort Frances, and on the grounds of the former Ste. Margarete Indian Residential School, we listened and reflected to remember the children lost to the residential school system and honoured Survivors, their families, and their communities. Our commitment to never forgetting and playing a role in this important reconciliation journey, which at the heart of it builds on the relationships between First Nations people and the wider community, was demonstrated on The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation days events on September 30th, 2022.

Our actions were built on the Seven Grandfather Teachings exhibiting humility, bravery, honesty, wisdom, truth, respect, and love, to carry out a public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools. Through the many voices, it was shared, that witnessing such a strong attendance and participation was humbling and inspired a strong sense of pride. Whether it was donating time for the organizing, implementing, participating, and communication of this event and/or offering monetary and gifted donations, the planning committee are much deserving of the highest accolades in the successful roll-out of this beautiful day's events along with many others that contributed and helped and to those in attendance.

On behalf of the Planning Committee for The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, we'd like to formerly thank everybody who made this day the success it was. In the late winter of 2022, Gizhewaadiziwin Health Access Centre (GHAC) and the United Native Friendship Centre (UNFC) started to reach out to agencies to form the Planning Committee; all of whom were onboard. We all began working together, using guidance from GHAC and Giishkaandago'lkwe's Joint Elder's Council, to plan what the September 30th event would look like.

The organizations who sat on our committee we'd like to thank are the UNFC, Canadian Mental Health Association Fort Frances Branch, Seven Generations Educational Institution, Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services, Shooniyaa Wa-Biitong, Weechi-it-te-win Family Services, Nanicos Limited, Agency One First Nations Lands, Treaty Three Police Services, the Rainy River District School Board, New Gold Inc., the Ontario Provincial Police, and GHAC. All of these agencies and their staff worked extremely hard to bring this event to fruition and are deserving of equal gratitude.

Others who contributed to make this event the success it was includes the Joint Elders Council: Brian Major, George Kirkrude, Margaret Ottertail, Gilbert Smith, Mooki Morrison, Hazel Copenace, Josephine Potson, Edna Morrison, Shirley Atwell, John George, and Josephine Wood, the CN Police, Betty's Fort Frances, La Place Rendez-Vous, Heron Landing Golf Club, Rainy Lake Sports, Boston Pizza, Flint House, Sorting Gap Marina, 93.1 The Border, the Fort Frances Times, McDonalds, General Supply, Webbs Wholesale, Cloverleaf, Fort Frances High School First Responders, the Northwestern Health Unit, Ink Spatz, WalMart, Ed Atatise, Henry Willie, Patty Bruyere, Ida Linklater, William Yerxa, Tracey Isaac, Jay MacFarland, Chief Brian Perrault, Brad Fyfe, Wes Debungie, Gary Smith, the 5 invited drums Aazhawii Giizhik, Agency One, Whitefish Bay, Hanisha, and Broken Horn, the drum Saagajiwe, Shannon Singleton, Michelle Allan, Doris Caribou, Brittnee Hunter, Casey Oster, Jordan Morrison, Gary Medicine, Chad Smith, Andrew Easton, Mike Anderson, Jeremiah Fairbanks, all of the dancers, the First Nation communities who donated, and the Town of Fort Frances. We'd again like to thank our Elder Gilbert Smith for acting as Spiritual Advisor for Giishkaandago'lkwe Health Services. We were also overwhelmed with the support of our numerous volunteers for such an important day; miigwech to all who gave a hand, and to anyone else who we may have missed.

Chi-Miigwech to our incredibly brave Elders who shared their residential school survivor stories, Shirley Atwell and Buddy Loyie. They were the reason we were all together and it was incredible to hear their stories. Chi-Miigwech to all who attended the event, and to the Rainy River District School Board and the Northwest Catholic District School Board for bringing the youth. May we continue to move forward and work hard together to honour the survivors and remember the children.