



Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAN LAUNCHES INTERACTIVE WEBSITE TO RECLAIM RIGHT TO FOOD SELF-DETERMINATION

THUNDER BAY, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Terry Waboose launched an online resource that will promote nutrition and food self-determination in NAN First Nations on NAN Food Day today.

“Diabetes, obesity, heart disease and other chronic diseases continue to rise to epidemic proportions in our territory and the consumption of foods high in fat, salt and sugar is a major contributor to the health crisis faced by our First Nations, especially remote and isolated communities,” said Deputy Grand Chief Terry Waboose. “This interactive website will allow First Nation communities across NAN territory to share information and exchange ideas on how to harvest their own supplies of quality, nutritious food and will be a valuable resource as we move towards re-gaining our food self-determination.”

The Kiiitigaan Aski website supports the exchange of knowledge between communities and the sharing of best practices. It highlights community food initiatives and will include an online toolkit to assist community food system planning and other food initiatives.

“Kiiitigaan Aski” is derived from the OjiCree language meaning “good things growing on the land.”

Since 2009, NAN has been working to address the growing disparity between our communities and the rest of Canada in terms of access to affordable, nutritious food, and the direct impact on positive health outcomes. NAN has developed a Food Strategy based on six key pillars: 1. Traditional Practices, 2. Imported Foods, 3. Local Production, 4. Nutrition Practice, 5. Planning, Policy and Advocacy, 6. Research and Knowledge Transfer.

“Our people have always had their own food systems, relying on traditional knowledge of hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering. But these traditional foods are becoming harder to obtain due to environmental contamination, government restrictions, lack of resources to purchase equipment and fuel to get out on the land and other barriers,” said Waboose. “The final report on NAN Food Distribution Feasibility Study is currently underway, and we look forward to key findings and recommendations that will help move our food strategy forward.”

The website was launched on NAN Food Day, an annual event to increase awareness and promote discussion on access to food that is nutritious, affordable, from the land and to support the effort of reclaiming First Nations' right to food self-determination.

The right to food for Indigenous peoples was highlighted in a 2012 report by the United Nation Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier De Schutter, who examined food security and how the human right to adequate food is being realized in Canada. Their report made several recommendations to improve food security, but was ignored by the federal government despite the approximately two million people in Canada who have been declared as food insecure.

For more information please visit the Kiitigaan Aski website at www.kiitigaanaskihub.ca.

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