



Nishnawbe Aski Nation

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAN WELCOMES YOUTH REPORT AS CALL FOR ACTION

THUNDER BAY: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler welcomed the release of the *Feathers of Hope: A First Nations Youth Action Plan* aimed at improving the lives of First Nation youth and called on the governments of Ontario and Canada to accept the report as a catalyst to start addressing a wide variety of critical issues.

“On behalf of Nishnawbe Aski Nation I welcome this insightful report and I congratulate the youth who have worked so diligently on its preparation. Their effort is greatly appreciated and reflects the spirit, enthusiasm and determination of our young people,” said Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, who participated in report’s release at an event in Thunder Bay today. “The report highlights the significance of Jordan’s Principle and the need to ensure that First Nations children have access to the same level of care and services as all children in Canada without unnecessary delay.”

The Feathers of Hope report was prepared through the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth in collaboration with First Nation youth after 19 months of work including a five-day youth forum in Thunder Bay, a three-day gathering in Kashechewan First Nation and Fort Albany First Nation, and visits with youth in northern First Nations across the province.

Two of the northern Youth Amplifiers selected to lead the planning and delivery of the forum were from NAN First Nations including Julaine Trudeau (Muskrat Dam First Nation) and Nicole Beardy-Meekis (Sandy Lake First Nation).

A key finding of the report highlights the need to eliminate jurisdictional disputes between government parties (either provincial or federal) or between two departments or ministries of the same government that impairs the delivery of services to First Nation youth, especially in remote communities.

“The report highlights the significance of Jordan’s Principle and the need to ensure that First Nations children have access to the same level of care and services as all children in Canada without unnecessary delay,” said Fiddler, who holds the youth portfolio and served as a Champion (mentor) for the youth during the development of the report. “These outstanding young people have showed us the way, and it is time for the provincial and federal governments to work together and create positive change and healthy opportunities for our youth and our communities.”

Jordan's Principle is a child-first principle that provides that the government, ministry or department of 'first contact' must pay for services for a First Nations child in the event of a jurisdictional dispute between two government parties. It is named in honour of Jordan River Anderson, a four-year-old Anishnawbe child from northern Manitoba who died in hospital in 2003 while two government parties argued over payment of expenses related to his care. NAN formally endorsed Jordan's Principle in 2007.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation is a political territorial organization representing 49 First Nation communities in James Bay Treaty No. 9 and Ontario portions of Treaty No. 5 – an area covering two thirds of the province of Ontario in Canada.

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