



COMMUNITY NOTICE

For Immediate Release:

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MCA DEVELOPING LAW FOR CHILD RIGHTS AND PROTECTION

The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne is developing a new community law which will protect the interests of children who are involved in child welfare services. The “Child’s Rights & Responsibilities Law” will be developed over the next year, but the community’s input is greatly needed now prior to the actual drafting of the law.

“It’s important that we hear from the community, especially those who have been involved with child protection services or those who work with and understand children who will eventually be served by this law,” said Grand Chief Abram Benedict. “We will also determine safe ways to collect feedback from the children themselves in order to ensure this law protects all of their needs.”

The timing of the law is based in part on the passing of the federal Bill C-92 in Canada, which gives First Nations the right to exercise jurisdiction over their own child welfare matters provided the First Nation has a child protection law in place. Bill C-92 dictates that the First Nations law will then supersede any provincial authority. MCA had already maintained jurisdiction over our child’s rights through Akwesasne Child & Family Services, but had not yet developed a law.

The intent of Bill C-92 is to address the longstanding issue of indigenous children being over-represented in the child welfare system while being under-protected and often stripped of their cultural identity. Issues such as the devastating destruction caused by residential school placement, or the damaging results of placing indigenous children in homes of a different culture are the areas that Bill C-92 is intended to address.

MCA’s Child’s Rights & Responsibilities Law will encompass many areas of child protection with the intent to create a culturally-relevant law that is specific to the needs of Akwesasne children and families. It will be a law that serves our children and celebrates our ability to determine what is best for them, without interference from outside agencies.

“This is a law that will be written for Akwesasronon, with complete Akwesasronon oversight and input,” said Director of Justice Joyce King. “The value and importance of this law is far-reaching and will impact the next seven generations. We sincerely hope you will choose to be a part of it.”

The Working Task Group has just completed initial information/input sessions in the community to launch the law’s development. Additional consultation and informational events and activities will take place in the weeks and months to come. Your participation as Akwesasronon is requested. If your group would like to participate in the community input sessions, please call or email Connie Lazore at connie.lazore@akwesasne.ca or 613-575-5000 ext. 2403. We hope to hear from you!