



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS



ABINOOJYAG BIGHIWEWAG
First Nations
Family Advocate Office
"Bringing Our Children Home"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 7, 2019

First Nations Family Advocate Office marks fourth year anniversary of opening

Treaty One Territory, MB. – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs' First Nations Family Advocate Office is hosting their fourth year anniversary celebration to honour First Nations families for their strength and courage in navigating the child welfare system on Friday, June 7, 2019.

"The First Nations Family Advocate Office is one of a kind across Turtle Island. They respond to the injustice and discrimination our people face within the Manitoba child welfare system. Many of the families they see have been through difficult situations in navigating a complex CFS system, and often their voices are not heard," said Grand Chief Arlen Dumas.

The First Nations Family Advocate Office officially opened on June 1, 2015. Through the support of the AMC Chiefs-in-Assembly, a resolution mandated AMC to create this important space to help our families and children navigate the child welfare system – a system that seems set on keeping families apart.

"The removal of First Nations children from their families and Nations has had devastating effects on our communities. Our children are placed in the centre of the circle of care in our Nations; they are the heart and motivation. By placing the children at the centre, we are thinking seven generations ahead. The decisions we make today will have lasting impacts on all of us and we want to make sure those decisions are positive," said Grand Chief Dumas.

On Friday, June 7, the First Nations Family Advocate Office will release their four-year progress report entitled *Always Think of the Little Ones*. It is dedicated in memory of Elders Elmer Courchene and Doris Pratt. The report provides an overview of the work the FNFAO has undertaken with over 1,153 First Nations children by providing healing and wellness workshops for families, children in care, and youth who have aged out of care.

"Our families deserve to be listened to and assured their concerns are being heard and acted on accordingly. This event represents a chance for the families to be honoured for their strength and commitment for fighting for their children and to improve their family life," said Cora Morgan, the First Nations Family Advocate.

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs invites all First Nations leadership, Elders, mothers, grandmothers and families to join the celebration on Friday, June 7, from 11a.m. - 2 p.m. at the Thunderbird House in Winnipeg.

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