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PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Walking Together: Honouring Missing & Murdered Indigenous People

Northwestern Ontario – May 5, 2022: In an effort to increase awareness about a major crisis that continues to take place in our communities, Tikinagan Child and Family Services' hosted "Walking Together: Honouring Missing & Murdered Indigenous People," their first annual conference honouring Red Dress Day, on May 5.

Thelma Morris, Tikinagan Executive Director, who opened the event after prayers and drumming from Elder Romaine Lyon and Elder Victor Lyon, discussed the importance of the day and her own connection to losing a loved one.

"I'm no stranger to the pain," said Morris. "I will never know who hurt her because as often as this happens, the cause of death is unclear.

"This is a story you hear over and over again, and it has to stop. I don't want this to happen to our women and girls."

The conference featured guest speakers, including Lac Seul First Nation's Shana Southwind, who shared about the unsolved disappearance of her grandmother and its impact on her family.

Eabametoong (Fort Hope) First Nation's Riley Yesno spoke about justice and colonization, encouraging Canadians to imagine what our country would have been if colonization would not have impacted our communities.

"Future thinking is a really transformative practice," said Yesno, "It is an act of resistance. It's asking questions like, If I could picture what justice looked like in my wildest imagination, what would it look like?"

Bridget Perrier gave her harrowing firsthand experiences of the sex trade industry while living in northwestern Ontario.

Red Dress Day is an annual event held by the REDress Project in memory of the lives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls across Canada.

With more than 80 people in attendance at this year's conference, Tikinagan is planning to host next year, making it an annual event.

"This event organized by our Training Unit was a huge success," said Rachel Tinney, Tikinagan Associate Executive Director "We look forward to next year's conference."

For more information, contact the Communications Team by email at communications@tikinagan.org.

For over 35 years, Tikinagan Child and Family Services has been serving our 30 First Nations in Northwestern Ontario. The Creator entrusted First Nations with the sacred responsibility of protecting our children and developing strong families and healthy communities.