

Celebrate

# FOSTER PARENT APPRECIATION MONTH

ALL MARCH!



**PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Need for Indigenous Foster Homes is “huge” across Northwestern Ontario: Tikinagan**

*Agency’s annual Foster Parent Appreciation Month this March*

**Northwestern Ontario – March 1, 2023:** While Tikinagan Child and Family Services is honouring more than 370 foster parents across 30 First Nations during Foster Parent Appreciation Month in March, the agency says there’s still a need for more Foster Parents.

Greg Moe, Tikinagan Service Manager who oversees the Foster Parent support services at Tikinagan, says the need for more Indigenous Foster Homes in the northwestern Ontario is “huge.”

According to Moe, Tikinagan needs two to 10 homes in every community, or 450-500 homes. A number of those homes are needed for high-risk and specialized youth, supporting youth with a wide-range of challenges such as mental health, developmental delays, complex trauma, or behavioral issues.

“Once children become teenagers, they experience new life challenges,” Moe says, now in his 14th year with the agency. “They want to test new limits, become independent, learn new things. Providing a safe space for them to explore life as a young person and come back home at the end of the day, knowing they are grounded and loved, is so important.”

In addition to 30 First Nations Tikinagan serves, the need for Indigenous Foster Parents is particularly growing in urban areas such as Thunder Bay, Dryden and Sioux Lookout.

“We are looking for someone who genuinely cares for our children and wants to make a difference,” explains Moe. “Every child, no matter their age or life history, deserves the right to succeed in life. Our Foster Parents play a big role in helping them get there.”

Tikinagan equips and collaborates with Foster Parents to provide the resources and worker support they require, including hands-on training. Foster Parents who support high-risk or specialized youth homes receive higher daily pay rates.

“The reward of lifting a child’s spirits and helping them cope through those tough times is a reward in itself,” notes Moe.



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**Tikinagan**  
Child & Family Services

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At Tikinagan, Foster Parents help raise our children while assisting them in maintaining their connections to their family, culture, and community. Foster Parents are everyday people who come from all walks of life – homemakers, band councilors, grandparents, uncles, and aunties. They work at the community store, the nursing station, the school. Foster parents can be married or single. Often, they have their own children.

But the key requirement is their willingness to help a child, says Moe.

“We need the help of individuals and couples who have a desire to make a difference. We need Indigenous Foster Families who want to help raise children while assisting them in maintaining their connections to their family, culture, and community.”

Moe hopes individuals and couples who are considering opening a Foster Home with Tikinagan see the success stories of current Foster Parents being honoured during the agency’s Foster Parent Appreciation Month in March. Moe describes Tikinagan’s Foster Parents as “the backbone to Tikinagan with the most important role.”

For the month of March, Tikinagan is honouring its Foster Parents, culminating with an event on March 31 that will feature Foster Parent stories and performances by comedian Ron Kanutski, a former child care worker; and Shabistik, a hip-hop artist.

To learn more about Foster Parent Appreciation Month or to learn more about becoming a Foster Parent or the services at Tikinagan, call 1-800-465-3624 or visit [tikinagan.org](http://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.*



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