



June 3, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President of Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (IAAW)
Comments on the 2nd Anniversary of the Final Report of the National Inquiry on MMIWG

EDMONTON – IAAW representatives were present in Gatineau, Quebec when the Final Report of the National Inquiry on MMIWG was presented to the public on June 3, 2019. It was a moving event with many tears shed for the families that shared their stories as part of the Inquiry's work.

While many of the 231 recommendations in the Final Report place primary responsibility on government to implement a plan to address the national tragedy of MMIWG, IAAW has continued in its everyday work to engage with families and build recommendations that are Alberta-specific.

Despite the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on our ability to deliver in-person supports, IAAW continues to support Indigenous women and families through on-line sessions with topics on wellness, violence prevention, healthy relationships, financial literacy, employment and training, youth safety and leadership, transitions from federal correctional facilities, advocacy and housing supports, all which are culturally-informed and infused with Elder guidance.

Building off our successful Indigenous Women's Justice Forums in 2017 and 2018, we continue to strategize, participate in, and implement justice initiatives that focus on improving the court system, and provide education and access to justice for Indigenous women and families.

What was started in 1995 in the basement of the Canadian Native Friendship Centre with no funding, has grown to be a recognized and accomplished organization serving Indigenous women throughout Alberta. We continue to build allies with stakeholders and we have been surprised and grateful for the outpouring of support for our organization. IAAW has established formal alliances and partnerships with agencies, such as the Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society (Calgary) to build a path forward, one that is family-first and trauma-informed. We have also joined forces with the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) as the official Provincial-Territorial Member Association representing Alberta Indigenous women.

IAAW's 25th Annual Esquao Awards to recognize the 'Angels Among us' was postponed due to COVID-19 but our collective efforts to recognize Indigenous women, and to encourage them to not give up, will resume in-person in May 2022.

In the meantime IAAW will continue its work to obtain justice, address barriers, and assist Indigenous women. This commitment is owed to the women of all ages who have shared their stories with us, and the matriarchs who guide us in our work.

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