Wikwemikong Unceded Children's Bill of Rights

WHEREAS, we believe that all children are created with the inherent right to be safe, to be loved and nurtured, to be heard and believed, and to have adequate health care, nutrition and shelter; and

WHEREAS, we believe that each child has the right to be free of physical or emotional abuse, to be protected from sexual abuse and exploitation, and to be free from neglect, discrimination and the demeaning or destructive acts of others; and

WHEREAS, our children have the right to a name and the right to stay with and not to be separated from his/her birth parents and to know their extended family and community, aspects which are important to the sense of belonging and survival of our people and allow our children to thrive as a contributing citizen of Wikwemikong; and

WHEREAS, our children have the right to learn about and benefit from our history, culture, language, spiritual traditions and philosophy and to have positive adult role models in their lives; and

WHEREAS, we believe that parents have the primary responsibility for providing their children with proper prenatal care, ongoing age-appropriate physical and emotional care, and emotional nurturing, adequate food, shelter, education and health care; and

WHEREAS, we believe that parents have an absolute responsibility to provide their children with a safe and healthy home and child care environments, to teach their children safety skills, and to provide appropriate supervision; and

WHEREAS, we believe that we too have a responsibility to assure that our children have a standard of health, safety, education and nurturing necessary to promote healthy values and behaviours which will help them mature into healthy and productive members of our community; and

WHEREAS, we believe that the treatment of children and their welfare is the responsibility of the entire community, and that the responsibility extends to all children who reside in our community, regardless of their band membership or their length of residence; and

WHEREAS, we recognize that domestic violence, substance abuse, lack of supervision, inadequate medical care and physical or emotional neglect may have a deep and traumatizing effect on a child's physical and emotional growth and development; and

WHEREAS, maltreated, neglected, parentless and traumatized children often need special care, treatment and support in a way that promotes their healing and safety, as well as their dignity, value and future well-being;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by Wikwemikong Chief and Council proclaim the Wikwemikong Children's Bill of Rights in order to assure that all children in our community who are under the age of eighteen years of age are provided with adequate food, clothing, shelter and health care; that they are protected and supervised to assure their safety and health; that they receive nurturing, appropriate cultural teachings and adequate education – all of which are their inherent and basic rights as our Anishinaabe children.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wikwemikong Chief and Council shall advocate for and promote the safety, dignity and well-being of our children throughout the community including all government, business, social service and educational activities and all other institutions in the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wikwemikong Chief and Council shall undertake such other efforts as may be deemed necessary to assure the long-term safety and protection of our children, including, but not limited to, monitoring the well-being of the children, encouraging parents to participate in services to remedy behaviours that place children at risk, and ensure the placement of children with relatives or other community members by utilizing Customary Care when necessary for the health and welfare of the children.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Wikwemikong Chief and Council issue and proclaim; in commitment to our youth and our community, and the desire to keep children safe through mandated reporting mechanisms; declare that all Wikwemikong Citizens have the duty to report any child abuse.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wikwemikong Chief and Council issue and proclaim; in support of the youth in our community, to provide authorized paid release time when appropriate to employees while they volunteer with youth at school and in the community. The goal of this initiative is to encourage and sustain adult involvement to assist youth and to support the involvement of organizations in their efforts to reach out to the youth and families.

This resolution is undertaken on behalf of our children with the goal of preparing them to assume a creative, productive and honourable role in our society, and to assure that the ultimate future of our people is considered and protected through our actions from this day forward by the Wikwemikong Chief and Council.

Signed this 27th day of November, 2013 at Wikwemikong Unceded.

Ogimaa N. Duke Peltier

Councillor Bernadine Francis

Councillor E. Maureen Trudeau

Councillor Lawrence Enosse

Councillor Gladys F. Wakegijig

Councillor A. Robert Corbiere

Councillor Cecilia J.C. Pitawanakwat

Councillor Margaret Manitowabi

Councillor John Dube

Councillor Luke Barry Wassegijig

Councillor Lorraine Ann Fox

Councillor A. Eugene Manitowabi

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