



Box 3—Watson Lake, Yukon—YoA 1Co Phone:867-536-2097 Fax: 867-536-2810 Email: laws@northwestel.net

Community Advocates

THE GOAL

In May 2019, we began a five-year project to address gender-based violence and build a safer and more responsive community by training a team of community Advocates who are survivors of violence, to become anti-violence leaders in their communities, supporting, responding, and restoring dignity and safety for survivors of violence.

THE TRAINING

Advocate training blends western response-based practices and Kaska Dena principles and teachings of dignity, justice and healing, and is supported by Kaska Elders and the Centre for Response Based Practice.

Advocate trainees are passionate about this opportunity.

“I really enjoy it! It’s something I’m passionate about. It’s great to be hands on!”

“I love it! I’ve noticed that since I’ve been in the program people are reaching out to me for help.”

--Advocate quotes

A FORCE FOR CHANGE

Plans are to train our Advocates to fill a very important gap in support for survivors of violence and create change in communities, so that women and children feel safer and supported. Advocates engage in organizing community campaigns, job shadowing/placements at local agencies, and survivor support, making referrals to agencies, and companioning with survivors to attend appointments.

MOVING AHEAD

An Advocate Team has been created and has been up and running for over a month as training continues. The newly formed team is moving forward with the goal of addressing gender-based violence and building a safer and more responsive community, engaging in:

- **COURT WATCH**

“Opposing violence against the land and against each other, calling on us to be mindful of our words and actions, to uphold fairness, care observe that all our citizens and their family receive fair treatment and support.”

-- Quote from Upholding Dignity; Justice Kaska Advocates Training 2019-2020

- **SOCIAL MEDIA LAUNCH**

A new LAWSADVOCATESTEAM.ORG page will be launched in February providing updates on the progress of Advocate Teams and upcoming COVID-safe community events including drum-making and sewing circles.

- **REMEMBERING AND CELEBRATING THE LIVES OF MMIWG2S+ IN KASKA HOMELANDS**

The Advocate Team is set to provide event planning support for families of MMIWG2S+ people to plan, organize, coordinate, and deliver memorial feasts, and to design and create commemorative headstones, connecting families with cultural and emotional supports as needed.

- The advocates recently hosted a drum-making workshop and learning how to sew Kaska slippers. They are also distributed moose meat to elders and community members. They will be involved in training to learn some counselling skills to provide cultural support to community members in the future.

National Day of Awareness and Action for MMIWG

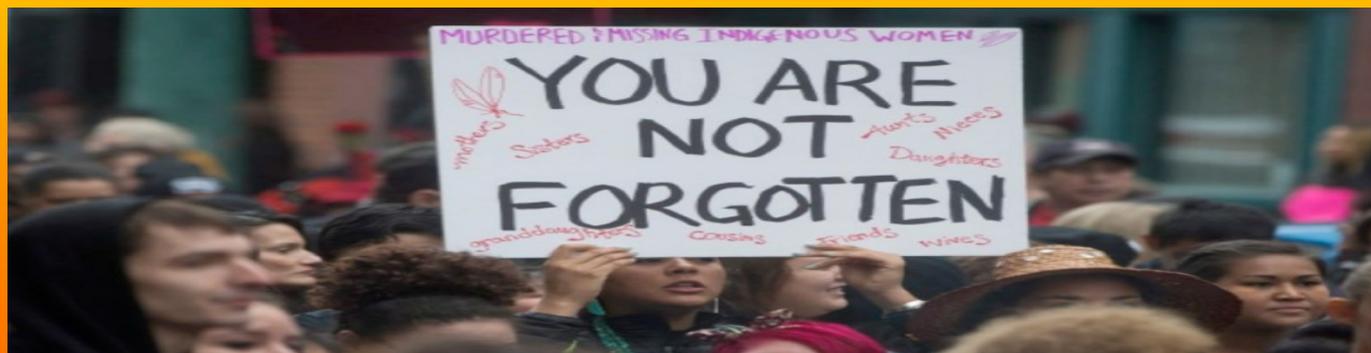
Start time: May 5 th at 11 am

May 5 is the National Day of Awareness and Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Gender diverse people. On this day we aim to raise awareness about this ongoing crisis and take action.

On this day we remember the people who have lost their lives to colonial, gender-based violence, and their families and communities that live daily with the grief of losing loved ones.

The advocates and Youth for Dignity participants will be planning a March beginning at 11 am from the MMIWG Commemorative at the Signpost Forest.

Following the walk, we invite you to join the Youth for Dignity and Advocates at the WLSS for lunch and the unveiling of the witnessing blanket for the MMIWG Red dress which is on display at the WLSS.



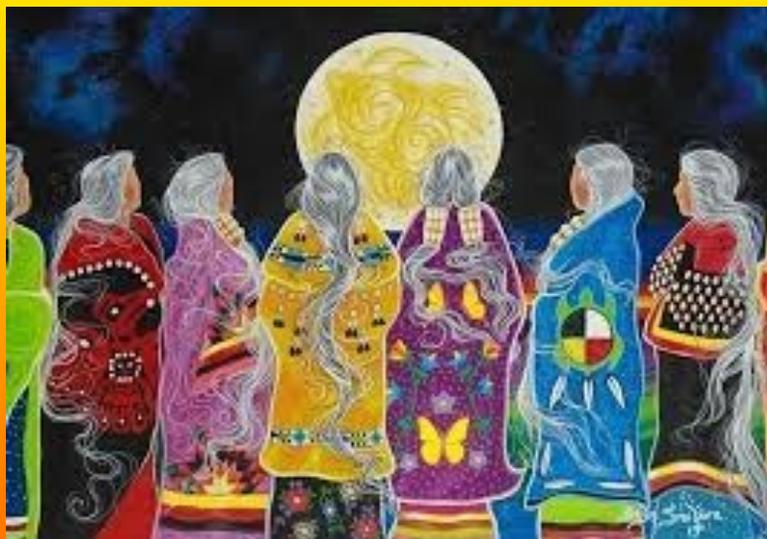
Families of MMIWG

Liard Aboriginal Women's Society recently received funding to work with families of MMIWG in Ross River, Good Hope Lake, Lower Post and Good Hope Lake to coordinate our traditional potlatches or commemorative for our stolen sisters.

This project will commemorate the lives of (at least) 20 Indigenous women from the Kaska homelands. Each of these women will be commemorated through working with their families to create a headstone (grave marker), and to support the families to host a "headstone potlatch" (a feast or celebration that is typically held one year after a person passes away), to lay the grave marker. There are several unsolved cases, or cases where a person is still missing in the Yukon, and as such, a funeral or headstone potlatch would not have been held. In many cases, the families were informed years after the death or disappearance of a woman that remains had been found, and as a result, most of these women did not have a funeral or memorial potlatch held in their honour. This project is needed to support the families through their grief and closure process by providing resources and other supports for them to gather to commemorate their loved one at a feast, and to lay a headstone or commemorative in their memory.

We are pleased to announce the new addition to our team of Carol Ann Johnny and Victoria Metcalfe who will each be coordinating in their communities of Good Hope Lake and Ross River.

This project has a great team of Advocates and LAWS staff who will be working with families. Should you need counselling support, please reach out to any of our advocates who will connect you with one of our professional therapists.



MITT MAKING WORKSHOP

LAWS will be offering a free mitt making workshop.
Everyone is welcome to join.
We look forward to seeing you.

Date: April 11th to April 14th

Where: 2 Mile Hall

Time: 10 am to 2 pm



never give
up on the
things that
make you
s m i l e .