

July 2023

CHILDREN FIRST

Brokenhead Ojibway Nation is working towards developing their own Child well-being Law



MEMBERS SHARE THEIR IDEAS

This project will give future generations a rich resource of information and perhaps allow them to appreciate being part of the family even more.



MARCH 15TH 2023

Brokenhead Meets with Elizabeth Debicka- Assistant Deputy Minister, Indigenous Governing Bodies Support Branch, Department of Families, Government of Manitoba and BON Law Development Group. Brokenhead Chief and Council, along with the BON law development working group, partake in a vital meeting with members of the province. >>>



Meeting with Elizabeth Debicka, Assistant Deputy Minister

WII BIMAADIZEWAG ABINOOJIIAG INAAKONIGEWIN

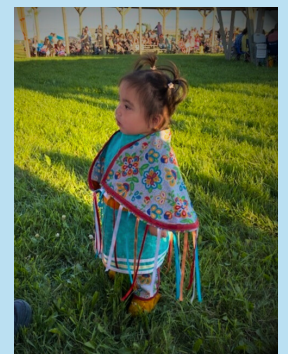
(Our Children Will Live Law)

The story is, that we the BON Law Committee sit, plan and develop a Law that would be best for our children. A Law that would protect our children, a guide to ensure they live a good life. The life that they would live if they were being nurtured in a healthy family within the Anishinaabeg ways of knowing, norms and sense of well-being. With dreams of a safe, great and prosperous future. Life and living as we have known it once and as we learn and live it once again. We develop a Law to get life as close to that healthy family as possible so that the children may live a good life. So that "the children will live".

As the Law Committee, it is our responsibility in the best way we can, that we make sure OUR CHILDREN WILL LIVE.

"Wii Bimaadizewag Abinoojiiag"

*Deep gratitude to Elder Carl Stone for these words and the name of the law, given to you during your vision.



>>> Brokenhead Chief and Council, along with the BON law development working group, partake in a vital meeting with members of the province. The goal was to engage in discussion about coordination agreements between Brokenhead and the province.

Leadership had informed the province of its intentions to create a customized child welfare law specific to Brokenhead and that much of the work was already underway. The province was eager to work alongside Brokenhead to ensure a mandate is provided by the cabinet for Brokenhead to meet its timelines for negotiation.

While the provincial representative noted how the current model has not served Indigenous youth well, Chief Gordon Bluesky remarked that “we do not need to justify our approach to the current regime; the old model has not worked, and we are taking a new approach”. The kick-off between governments took place on March 15, 2023, and more meetings are set to take place in the following months as Brokenhead moves forward in this historical journey.

Since that meeting, Leadership Along with the Department of Families, continue to meet on a routine basis. Our goal is to begin formal coordination agreement negotiations during the summer. We have been reassured that our progress with the Province will continue over the course of the Provincial Election slated for October.



GRASSROOTS INITIATIVE

Throughout the C-92 Family Law development process, Brokenhead Leadership has recognized the value and importance of keeping the initiative grassroots by incorporating community values, traditions and customs.

In January 2023, Brokenhead hosted a community engagement session as part of the process to gather important information from Elders and Youth. This session helped to ensure the new Law incorporated the voices of its members.

We had 50 people in attendance, the majority of them being youth.

Thank you to our organizers! the session was a success, members had an opportunity to contribute their thoughts and perspectives to Brokenhead's future Law. Information was also collected through in-person interviews along with community surveys to collect the data that contributed to the 1st draft of our Family law.



THE COWESSESS JOURNEY COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT WITH CHIEF CADMUS DELORME

KNOWLEDGE SHARING & LEARNING FROM OTHERS



NATIONAL INDIGENOUS CHILD WELFARE CONFERENCE (NICWA)

Members of Council along with, the Bon Law development working group and youth had been selected to attend the NICWA conference. NICWA supports American tribes in building the capacity to prevent child abuse and neglect through positive systems of change at the state, federal, and tribal levels. As Brokenhead continues to develop its own Child welfare law, it is of vital importance to learn from other established tribes and building nation to nation alliances. Much of the conference information was brought back and incorporated into the first draft of our law.

NATION TO NATION RELATIONSHIP BUILDING & UPCOMING MICCOSUKEE TRIBE VISIT

During the conference, there was an introductory presentation on the tribal court system that was created by the Miccosukee Tribe of Miami, Florida. This began an important relationship with members of the tribe to invite Brokenhead to learn more about tribal courts. While enacting jurisdiction of child welfare and developing our law in Brokenhead is our goal, we need to consider other structural changes to the system such as how services are delivered under our law. Since the beginning of CFS in our community, it has been mandated by the colonial provincial court system, which has left many of our children labelled as permanent wards and lost in that system. The Miccosukee tribe has been a self-sustaining tribe with their own constitution and bylaws since the 1960's including their own child welfare laws. Our visit to the Miccosukee tribe is going to give us a better understanding of how to create our own federally regulated Tribal court system to help ensure that our children don't get lost in a system that does not belong to us.

BROKENHEAD MEETS WITH PEGUIS CFS

Brokenhead Chief and Council along with the Family Law Development team were invited to Peguis First Nation to get a firsthand look at the progress to date throughout the enactment of their C-92 Law. The Act known as Honoring our Children, Families and Nation Act came into force on January 31, 2023, making Peguis the first Nation in Manitoba to take on full jurisdiction of their child and family services.

A presentation was given to Brokenhead, which gave a better understanding of what to expect throughout the coordination agreement phase of the law development process. Further to that it has paved the way for future meetings and relationships, to continue the discussion on how to best meet the needs of our children and families as Brokenhead continues to develop their Law. Brokenhead was given a tour of the Peguis Sun Lodge that incorporates, traditional knowledge, values, teachings, and customs under Peguis's legislation to ensure that the services being provided consider children's, identity, values, beliefs, and customs when involved with the new system.



PIPE CEREMONIES FOR THE WORK BEING DONE

Throughout the whole law development process Leadership along with the working group has seen the value of staying connected to our culture and ceremonies. To date, there have been three pipe ceremonies that have been held in the community to ask for guidance, and blessings, and give thanks for the work we are doing. Tuesday, May 23rd, 2023, was for the name of the law that came to Elder Carl Stone and a feast for the name. On October 25th the pipe ceremony was before the community engagements to ask for direction in a good way. February 10, 2023, the pipe ceremony was asking for guidance to help gather crucial community input with the Elders and Youth before the engagement.



JOIN US

First reading of the law,

WII BIMAADIZEWAG ABINOOJILAG
INAAKONIGEWIN

AUGUST 7TH 2023

BROKENHEAD OJIBWAY NATION - SERGEANT TOMMY
PRINCE COMMUNITY HALL

AUGUST 8TH 2023

WINNIPEG - CANAD INNS POLO PARK, 1405 ST
MATTHEWS AVE

LAW DEVELOPMENT TEAM>>>



Chief Gordon Bluesky

“Boozhoo, My name is Gordon Bluesky, I am the Chief of Brokenhead Ojibway Nation. I am a proud Father of 3 beautiful daughters, and husband to an amazing wife. With lived experience through the colonial history of the 60’s scoop, and provincial CFS system. I believe that the time has come for our community to exercise our inherent right to jurisdiction over the child welfare system. I believe that us as Anishinaabe people can care for our children in way that the province has failed to for many years. Through customary care and kinship care, our family Law will change the way that services are delivered to families in Brokenhead, that has been along time coming. I am determined to see this law developed and ratified throughout my term as Chief in hopes to create a better future for our children and families in Brokenhead. As leaders we have a collective responsibility to ensure that the current regime has no place in our community to further impact and dictate care and control over how we provide care to our children and families. We will continue to work toward our goal for self determination and sovereignty throughout this process, and I look forward to what the future has in store for our Nation.”

>>>LAW DEVELOPMENT TEAM>>>



Councillor Wendell
(Ogimaa) Sinclair

“My name is Wendell Sinclair Jr (Ogimaa), I am Anishinaabe and member of Brokenhead Ojibway Nation. I have lived and worked in Brokenhead for most of my life. I have a beautiful family of my own, my children Lucas and Airabella and my wife Nicole. I believe it is important for us to have our own family law, to assert our inherent right to jurisdiction over the protection and wellbeing of our children. Having our own family law will ensure that the protection of our children and their identity as Anishinaabe people is in line with our core values when it comes to the culture, language and traditions. In order to be truly sovereign as a Nation, we have to continue to create and replace outside government laws with our own. We are very progressive as a Nation in Brokenhead, we have many of our own laws and bylaws such as: BON Land Code, BON Membership Code, BON Financial Administration Law and many more. Enacting our own family law the Wii Bimaadizewag Abinoonjiiag (Our Children Will Live Act) is another step forward in achieving our Nation’s sovereignty. More importantly, we will now be responsible for the protection of our children and not left at the hands of another government.”

“To me I see the law as taking back full jurisdiction of our own system. I always envisioned a system that does not take our children away. This Law will help change that. It will help to restore family units while removing the need for apprehension through prevention. It will allow the family to step in and assist parents without the same roadblocks dictated by the provincial CFS system. Through C-92 we can now move away from the Provincial CFS system by enacting this law and do a better job providing services to our community. It’s my hope to see this complete throughout this term, and I am proud of all the members in the community who have been a part of this process, along with the team working on this project and their contributions.”



Councillor
Allen Hocaluk



Councillor
Remi Olson

“Many years ago, I became an advisor for CFS in Brokenhead. The systems that are currently in place are not working well for our children. The agencies put in place do not follow our way of life in caring for our children. I believe all children need to be placed with family. For too many years the province has trained our people to do their work like the residential schools. Our law is unique because it allows for input from our own people who understand what it takes to make change for our community and as Anishinaabe people. The law is tied to many other areas in our community and with good governance great things are possible.”

“My name is Chris Kent and I am a member of our Nations Council. I have lived in Brokenhead Ojibway Nation since I was 6 years old and I am a proud member of our community. Prior to being in leadership I worked for the Nation as the Water Treatment Plant Manager for 22 years. I am in my second term and I am a member of the working group for the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation Wii Bimaadizewag Abinoonjiiag Inaakonigewin (Our Children will live) Act. The Children and Families well being of our Nation has always been one of my top priorities and I feel very strongly that by creating this Act and our own system we are moving in the right direction to support healing and a better future for our children and families. I look forward to the time when our own Children & Family Lodge is creating better outcomes for our People.”



Councillor
Chris Kent

>>>LAW DEVELOPMENT TEAM>>>



**Elder Carl W.
Stone (B.A.)**

Elder Carl W. Stone (B.A.) was born on the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation and raised by his Grandmother Eliza Stone. She was a respected Elder and of the Anishinabe Midaywin Society. Carl is a grandfather to five and brother to sixteen siblings. For the last 46 years, Mr. Stone has been active in the reclaiming of the Anishinabe Spiritual and Cultural ways of his people. In the mid-1970's, Carl was one of seven young men of the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation who played a role in bringing back the Traditional Drum and Ceremonies to Brokenhead Ojibway Nation. After 100 years of silence, the Brokenhead Drum sounded its voice once again. Among other works Carl worked in addictions for sixteen years and was a chartered member of the first Child and Family Services steering committee in its development. Carl worked in Treaty Land Entitlement and is former Director of Education for Brokenhead. Carl then worked as a student advisor for over 20 years at the Indigenous Student Centre (ISC) at the University of Manitoba and retired in 2020. He is now an Elder-in-Residence at ISC. He also does a lot of work in the community and works in ceremonies such as the Sundance, Sweat lodge, and other ceremonies, he is an Elder's helper, and guest lectures on traditional teachings and spirituality. "Miigwetch Gegawabamin minawa, Carl."

Hazel is a member of Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, and grew up on the nation with seven brothers and three sisters. Hazel grew up as a child in care of the children's aid Society of eastern Manitoba, from the age of nine years old and aged out who cared 18 years of age. May 9th, 1968, A 2 vehicle accident had caused 36 children in the community to be without parents, Hazel's parents, eldest sister and her husband passed away and left children without parents. Growing up on the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation and attending an off reserve high school gave early experiences of different treatments of prejudice and maltreatment, due to being Indigenous, which inspired Hazel to become an advocate for others. In 1982, SE child and Family Services was created in 63 Manitoba First Nations had their own community members attend a First Nation social workers program, at the University of Manitoba. Hazel attended the social work training program in 1983 as a social worker for the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation. Having worked in child welfare and Health and Human services in Manitoba and Vancouver, BC, for a 32 year period Hazel has gained valuable experience, skills, networking and forming long term friends and colleagues. After retiring in 2013, Hazel is still volunteering by sitting on committees and continues to advocate for the rights of First Nations communities, families and children. From 2018 to the present, Hazel continues representing Brokenhead Ojibway Nation on the Southeast child and Family Services board. Notably Hazel, aged 65 and retired, is sitting on the Brokenhead C92 family law development team and states, "it's a privilege to be creating BON family law, to take our own First Nation into Indigenous focused Child and Family Services for the families and children of Brokenhead Ojibway Nation. Looking forward to the future of having our own BON child and family law."



**Hazel Kent-BSW
Knowledge Keeper**



**Jean Bear
BSW-MSW Candidate
Knowledge Keeper**

"Boozhoo Aannin my name is Blue Thunderbird Woman, and my English name is Jean Bear. I am a mother of 3 children, 7 grandchildren, 2 great grandchildren and a fur baby. I have worked for Brokenhead for 30 years prior to my 12 years with Peguis CFS. I am currently working for my community as the Health Director for Brokenhead. My family all survived residential and day school. Growing up through the intergenerational trauma I gained lived experience, which helped me to become a compassionate person to ensure our people are treated with respect, love and dignity. Our Family Law is an opportunity for us as Anishinabe people to reclaim our inherent right to jurisdiction over child welfare and reduce the number of children in care that were taken by a system that was never ours. All Creator's creations are valued. Meegwetch."

"Boozhoo: Nizhoo Binese Kwe dizhinikas Mukwa dodem. As a member of the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation Family Law Working Group, I am honoured. I have worked for the majority of my working career as a Social Worker in the area of Child Welfare, Addictions and Mental Health. As a Mother, Grandmother, spouse, Aunt and friend I share my lived experience for the betterment of the future of those who come behind. I strongly believe that By, For & About our Anishinabek Language, cultural, spiritual way of life is the key to open closed doors. Currently I work as a Knowledge Keeper with the Indigenous Programs for Corrections Canada at Stony Mountain Institution as a recognized Spiritual Caregiver/Knowledge Keeper, who carries the teachings of the Iskatewizaagegan Midewiwin. I am a member & in good standing with the Baaskaandibewiziibing (Brokenhead Ojibway Nation FN) signatory to Treaty #1. Miigwetch"



**Delores Chief-Abigosis
BSW-MSW Candidate
Knowledge Keeper**

>>>LAW DEVELOPMENT TEAM>>>



Pam Kent
Jordan's Principle

“Boozhoo, my name is Pam Kent. I am a member of Brokenhead Ojibway Nation and had lived here since I was 17 years old. I have raised my children here in Brokenhead Ojibway Nation and the community is very important to me. I am a registered Social Worker with my Bachelor of Social Work Degree. I have also completed my Human Resource Management Certificate and First Nations Community Wellness Diploma all through the University of Manitoba. My career started at Sergeant Tommy Prince School as the Home School Coordinator which I worked for 10 years before moving on to the Child Welfare Field for another 12 years in many different capacities. My passion and commitment has always been working to better the lives of children and families for our people and I continue to do so as the Director of Jordan's Principle for Brokenhead Ojibway Nation. I am very happy to use my knowledge, skills and experience to be apart of the working group for the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation Wii Bimaadizewag Abinoojiag Inaakonigewin (Our Children will live) Act. This is an Act that will give our Nation the ability to create a system that works with our families for our families in our own way.”

Marcy Large is from Saddle Lake Cree Nation, Treaty 6 territory. She's the Chief Executive Officer and Founder of Larger Developments Inc, a Company who's committed to working with First Nations related to the scope of Children and Family Services. It has always been her passion to contribute at a grass roots level in this area for the best interest of our children, youth and family's well-being. Before devoting her time to developing her Company, Marcy worked in field of Management for 15 years in the areas of Finance, Administration, and Human Resources within various First Nations, Delegated First Nations Agencies and Government relations departments across Canada. A Healthy lifestyle and keeping Culturally connected are core principles for the mother of Five Children. Her motivation to achieve success has always been a priority as a role model in her community and the communities she works within. Her on-going mission is to empower, strengthen and contribute to Nations for the betterment of the People from a child first Approach. Believing for reconciliation to be restored, we have to start with ourselves. Her background in education is Bachelor of Commerce and Business Administration. For the past few years, the experiences expanded in BillC-92 and Law Development. Marcy was the team lead for multiple Law Developments Across Canada including: Miyo Pimatisowin Act: Striving for a Better Life Law, Cowessess First Nation; Awsak Wiyasiwewin, a multi-Nation Law developed by 3 Founding First Nations of Loon River First Nation, Lubicon Lake Band and Peerless Trout First Nation; Mihtatakaw Sipiy Awsak Wiyasiwewin, (Driftpile Cree Nation). Through all the developments, her focus is still family first and the rest will follow. “Let's put our minds together and see what kind of life we can make for our children”
-Sitting Bull-



Marcy Large
Team Lead



Dion Peterson C92-
Engagement Coordinator

“Boozhoo, My name is Dion Peterson, and I am a proud member of Brokenhead Ojibway Nation. I am a father of 3 healthy children, and happily Married. I have worked in the Field of Child and Family Services since 2016, Including Sagkeeng Child and Family, And Southeast Child and Family service. I am in my 3rd year of my Bachelor of Social work at the University of Manitoba. I have worked for my community for the past 4 years with experience as a Frontline CFS worker and more recently C-92 Law development. Having spent much time meeting with Elders, building relationships and gathering community knowledge to help develop and Indigenize our law. I am also part of the law development working group, continuously working to expand my knowledge of current system pitfalls to address those gaps while contributing to the development of BON's Family law. I have a passion for helping our community develop capacity, specifically in the child welfare area having seen firsthand many of the challenges our children and families face. For too long our children and families have slipped through the cracks of the provincial CFS system and its time for a change. Working with Elders and Leadership, and community members in Brokenhead to develop our own Law has been a great and humbling experience for me. I look forward to the day that our Law is enacted, and we assume full jurisdiction of child welfare for our community.”

Brett is a lawyer with Borden Ladner Gervais LLP in Calgary. Brett has an Indigenous law practice where he works with First Nation governments on matters related to asserting self-governance, law and policy development, risk management, and the enforcement of historic treaty rights. Brett is currently assisting various First Nations with respect to developing CFS Laws under Bill C-92. Brett also has a litigation practice and has recently appeared before the Supreme Court of Canada and the Alberta Court of Appeal in high-profile constitutional cases involving disputes between federal, provincial, and First Nation governments.



Brett Carlson
BLG Legal Representative

>>>LAW DEVELOPMENT TEAM



Wes McLean
Capital Hill

Wes McLean began working in the political sphere in 2003 for in New Brunswick. He later worked for the Senate Conservative Leader, then as Special Assistant in the PMO, and as Senior Policy Advisor to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. From 2010 to 2014, he was a Member of the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Victoria-Tobique. During that time, he served as Deputy Government House Leader, and Legislative Secretary to the Premier. He also chaired the Government Caucus Committee for Legislative Review. Wes authored the Organ and Tissue Donation Strategy Act, which received the unanimous approval of the Assembly in 2014. He returned to the Senate Conservative Leader's Office, and in late 2016, began working for the government of Manitoba. Wes served as deputy chief of staff to the Premier of New Brunswick from 2018 to 2021, where he was responsible for legislative and policy planning, as well as cabinet operations. He joined the Capital Hill Group in 2021 as a senior consultant. Jordan's Principle for Brokenhead Ojibway Nation. I am very happy to use my knowledge, skills and experience to be apart of the working group for the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation Wii Bimaadizewag Abinoojiiag Inaakonigewin (Our Children will live) Act. This is an Act that will give our Nation the ability to create a system that works with our families for our families in our own way."

Dennis is an experienced political strategist and public policy expert who leverages more than a decade of experience gained in previous roles within federal and provincial governments to advance the interests and priorities of Indigenous Nations. Prior to joining CHG, Dennis worked as the Chief of Staff to the Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations in the Government of Manitoba, before assuming a position as a Project Manager at the Priorities and Planning Secretariat of Cabinet where he helped usher major government priorities from the policy development phase through to implementation. Dennis also worked as a political strategist on Parliament Hill, serving elected officials in a variety of areas including committee preparation and management, legislative development, research, strategic communications and community-level engagement. Today, he leverages his knowledge of how governments, organizations, associations, and communities work to advanced Rights-based and nation-building initiative for First Nations. Working in good faith with First Nation partners, Dennis has helped to secure major successes that have advanced historic land claims, additions-to-reserve, successful Crown Consultation and Accommodation processes, First Nation/industry economic development agreements, and the restoration of First Nation jurisdiction. He has also worked to secure funding for capacity building, infrastructure, community, and social service projects both on and off-reserve. Dennis strives to achieve these successes by working collaboratively with Chiefs, Councils, administrations, service delivery agencies, Indigenous-owned businesses, tribal and treaty organizations, and National Indigenous Organizations (NIOs).



Dennis Burnside
Capital Hill



Taylor Kent
Community Engagement
Coordinator

"Hello, my name is Taylor Kent, I have lived and worked in Baaskaandibewiziibing (Brokenhead Ojibway Nation) my whole life. Working closely with the youth of BON throughout the years, some jobs I have worked were camp counselors/administrator in the summers, a Southeast CFS Case Aid for BON and the Home-School Coordinator for Sergeant Tommy Prince School/BON. Most recently I have joined the BON Law Development team as a Community Engagement Coordinator. I have been a foster parent to a wonderful little girl going on four years now. Understanding the foster care system I see the need for our community and children to move away from the colonial CFS system. Our Family Law is going to help change that because it is geared towards our people, culture, and belief system.

PLEASE EMAIL US FOR MORE INFORMATION:

BON.LAW.DEVELOPMENT@GMAIL.COM