



Ontario Native Women's Association

Media Release

May 13, 2011

Re: Ontario Native Women's Association Fully Supports National Chief and Mayor of Thunder Bay's Call for Increased Supports for Aboriginal Youth

For Immediate Release

Ontario – The Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) President, Dawn Harvard extends condolences to the family, friends and community of Jordan Wabasse. "It's with a heavy heart that I speak out today regarding the tragic loss of Jordan – a young man who left his home, his family and his community in the hopes of furthering his education and pursuing his interest in hockey," said Dawn Harvard. She went on to say, "while Jordan's family and the Webequie First Nation community may have some closure on his disappearance, they are left to deal with the grief surrounding his death. As an advocate for Aboriginal women and their children and as a mother, I can say with utmost certainty that our families should not have to fear for the safety of their children when they are sent to urban centres for schooling. Our young people deserve the same care, support and protection as other youth."

ONWA is fully behind the Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo and Mayor of Thunder Bay Keith Hobbs in calling for increased supports for students. ONWA Executive Director, Betty Kennedy commented, "with the projected increase in Aboriginal/First Nation population and more and more students coming to Thunder Bay and urban centers for education, it is important to have appropriate and culturally based support services for students. Until relevant educational opportunities are available in First Nation communities, then we all have a responsibility to provide appropriate supports." She concluded, "It is our hope that Jordan's family receive the respect and support needed for their healing to begin. In this way we all honour Jordan Wabasse's memory."

The Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) is a not for profit organization that empowers and supports Aboriginal women and their families in the province of Ontario.

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