

MEDIA STATEMENT

Tuesday, December 4, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MATAWA CHIEFS COUNCIL ISSUE STATEMENT ON EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE ON MATAWA EDUCATION AND CARE CENTRE STUDENT

THUNDER BAY, ON: Responding to an incident caught on video that occurred on Saturday, December 1st that appeared to show a female Uniform Patrol Officer of the Thunder Bay Police Service (TBPS) striking a student of the Matawa Education and Care Centre while restrained in a Superior North EMS stretcher—the Matawa Chiefs Council offered the following statement:

“As we continue our investigations into this matter and consider all appropriate legal recourse—the Matawa Chiefs Council wish to condemn the actions of the first responders who were present and involved in this incident. These actions were unacceptable and unjustifiable, regardless how they were precipitated. We wish to express our full support of the youth, family and community affected. Further, we will stand in solidarity with Nibinamik First Nation in holding the TBPS and Superior North EMS accountable for their abhorrent approach to bringing one of our youth to safety.”

As of the time of this statement, the female Officer who is seen to strike the youth, while under restraint in a stretcher, has been placed off duty and an internal TBPS investigation has begun. No further information on the progress of potential external investigations and/or other legal remedies has been made available. Since 2013/2014, the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD) has received 225 complaints about the TBPS despite only having 300 sworn and civilian members.

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For more information, please contact Carol Audet, Communications Manager – Matawa First Nations at (807) 632-9663 or by email at caudet@matawa.on.ca

Matawa First Nations Management is a Tribal Council providing a variety of advisory services and programs to 8 Ojibway and Cree First Nations in James Bay Treaty No. 9 and 1 First Nation in the Robinson Superior Treaty (though not a signatory). Follow them on Facebook or Twitter at: @MatawaFN - **Matawa Education and Care Centre (MECC)** is a private First Nations High School in the city of Thunder Bay serving the students of the five (5) remote Matawa communities of Neskantaga, Webequie, Marten Falls, Nibinamik and Eabametoong. Officials from MECC has been involved in the First Nations Youth Inquest since 2016. In 2017, they acquired the City of Thunder Bay’s former Grandview Lodge and opened it as the Matawa Education and Care Centre in September 2018.

