

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

4TH ANNUAL JORDAN WABASSE MEMORIAL AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

THUNDER BAY, ON: The family of the late Jordan Wabasse, Matawa Education & Care Centre and Webequie First Nation Education Authority announced today the winners of the 4th Annual Jordan Wabasse Memorial Awards. The inaugural annual awards started in Webequie First Nation in 2018 on Jordan's birthday on June 27. Winners, this year, are as follows:

- Hailey Whitehead – Simon Jacob Memorial Education Centre (JMEC)/Keewaytinook Internet High School (KIHS) in Webequie - Outdoor Education
- Rachele Whitehead-Begg - SJMEC/KIHS in Webequie - Athletics
- Tricia Shewaybick - SJMEC/KIHS in Webequie - Outdoor Education
- Bronwyn Rody - SJMEC/KIHS in Webequie- Outdoor Education
- Breanna Moonias – Matawa Education & Care Centre (MECC) Thunder Bay - Eabametoong - Outdoor Education
- Durrell Oskineegish - MECC in Thunder Bay - Nibinamik - Athletics

Each student received an award of \$1000 in memory of the late Jordan Wabasse, a wonderful hockey player and hunter, who inspired these awards and each year encourages students to pursue their education and extracurricular activities. SJMEC/KIHS students were celebrated at their graduation last week and MECC students will be celebrated at their graduation today.

Jordan Wabasse was a youth from Webequie First Nation, a student of the Matawa Learning Centre (now Matawa Education & Care Centre), and a dedicated hockey player and hunter whose life tragically ended far too soon in 2011. As a result of this tragedy, and six other tragedies in Thunder Bay, the Seven Youth Inquest was held in which 124 recommendations were made for improvements in education for remote First Nations youth attending high schools in Thunder Bay. Twenty-four (24) of those recommendations were directed to the Matawa Learning Centre (now MECC) including this award in Jordan's honour. The following are quotes from student entries:

"I have worked really hard throughout my studies at the Matawa Education and Care Centre. I have participated in both Outdoor Education and in the Hockey Program for the last few years and have been dedicated to spending as much time learning on the land and on the ice as possible throughout my studies. As an MECC student I participated in the school's first Moose Hunt and first Geese and Duck Hunt, both were amazing opportunities and I was given the chance to be a leader amongst my peers. I am really looking forward to graduating this year, and plan on completing Police Foundations in post-secondary." — **Durrell Oskineegish from Nibinamik First Nation, Matawa Education and Care Centre Graduate, JWMA for Excellence in Athletics**

"My grandparents taught me how to fish, hunt, and many lessons about travelling and living on the land. I always have preferred to be out on the land, instead of being at home. I always made my grandparents take me with them when they would go hunting or fishing. Going camping and picking

berries were highlights of my childhood summers. When I was 10 years old I moved to the city and had trouble maintaining my connection to the land. In 2018 I joined the Matawa Education and Care Centre and began to participate in the Outdoor Education program. A highlight for me while at MECC was the Kitchi Siipi Canoe Expedition. Paddling from my home community downstream was really challenging and an amazing experience overall, I learned so much about myself and connected with my traditional area. After I graduate from the MECC I am planning on pursuing post secondary education. One day, I would love to be able to bring youth out onto the land and work in the field of Mental Health and Outdoor Education.”— **Breanna Moonias from Eabametoong First Nation, Matawa Education and Care Centre Graduate, JWMA for Excellence in Outdoor Education**

“The canoe trips I went on positively impacted my health and well-being and shaped me into a better person. I decided I would continue to pursue my education because the canoe trips changed my perspective on what I can do to get back on track with my education. It is important for me to receive an award in tribute to late Jordan Wabasse because I know that these awards are very special to the immediate family, his extended family and the entire community.” — **Hailey Whitehead from Webequie First Nation, Keewatinook Internet High School Graduate, JWMA for Excellence in Outdoor Education**

Rachelle’s teacher said “Rachelle is active in many sports in Webequie including volleyball, baseball and broom ball. Not only does she play, she also organizes physical activities and sports for the youth in her community. She wants to ensure that they have something positive to do and so that they have a love of sports like she does. Rachelle also teaches her daughter about physical activity and the outdoors.” — **Rachelle Whitehead-Begg from Webequie First Nation, Simon Jacob Memorial Education Centre Graduate, JWMA for Excellence in Athletics**

“If I were to be selected to receive this award, it would be truly an honour. I knew Jordan Wabasse since I could remember. Jordan Wabasse was a good athlete and good hunter providing for his family but even more, he was a good friend. Jordan was an outstanding goaltender and there are still days I wonder where he could have been by now with his goalie career. I got to know Jordan and the kind soul he was. Rest in Peace Jordan.” — **Tricia Shewaybick, from Webequie First Nation, Simon Jacob Memorial Education Centre Graduate, JWMA for Excellence in Outdoor Education**

Brownwyn’s Guidance Counsellor said “ever since I met Bronwyn she always showed compassion for others. She is one of the kindest students that I have had the privilege of teaching. She shows genuine care for others. She has always demonstrated her love for the outdoors through participating in camping trips, going fishing, or just being out with nature. She has begun to instill that love for the outdoors into her two young daughters.” — **Brownwyn Rody, from Webequie First Nation, Keewatinook Internet High School Graduate, JWMA for Excellence in Outdoor Education**

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