



NEWS RELEASE

May 6, 2019
For immediate release

Cowessess First Nation Breaks ground on New Girls Residence to bring children in care back home

Cowessess First Nation is pleased to announce that on Thursday May 9th it will be breaking ground on a brand-new home for female youth in care, making good on a promise made by their newly re-elected Chief Cadmus Delorme.

“Cowessess First Nation continues grow, enhance and take responsibility for the areas within our means. Our children in care are our future and our foundation. For Cowessess, playing a more direct role with our children in care provides for a stronger future. This new girl’s residence coming to Cowessess is the beginning of understanding the challenges and opportunities of what our children in care need. We want them to walk with their head up high as proud Cowessess First Nation citizens, and we look forward to utilizing this space to reconnect them with their roots and nurture them as part of a strong community” - Chief Delorme.

Cowessess First Nation has over 100 children in care, the majority of them in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Previously, there was no system in place for Cowessess First Nation to obtain direct data of where children were and who was

raising them. The hope is to change that with the newly created role of the Community Connections Outreach Worker, who's main priority will be to locate all of the Cowessess children in care.

The Youth Transition Home will focus on 10 female youth between ages 14-17 who are in long term care with the Ministry of Social Services or First Nation's Child Welfare Agencies. The home, made possible by a Joint Agreement between Cowessess First Nation and Yorkton Tribal Council Child and Family Services Inc. will be a safe space for Youth registered to Cowessess First Nation, in Care with Yorkton Tribal Council Child and Family Services, and the Ministry of Social Services in and outside of Saskatchewan, transitioning out of child welfare.

Basement construction will begin on May 13, preparing the foundation for an already purchased RTM home scheduled to be moved onto the site by June 1, 2019. A Naming Ceremony for the home will also be taking place on May 31, 2019 with youth set to begin moving in on August 1, 2019.

"We are creating a supportive and nurturing environment that cultivates a sense of belonging within the community with a cultural focus towards self-sufficiency and independence. The vision is to connect children in care to their communities, believing this bridge will become the community driver to asserting our right to raising in children. The home will aim to break down barriers for our people and bring the community together for generations to come" – Cindy Sparvier, Program Manager.

Thursday's traditional Sod turning ceremony, marking the first day of construction on the transition home will begin at 9:00 a.m. and will be followed by a reception at the Last Oak Golf Course on Cowessess.

Requests for interviews are welcome.

For more information or to arrange an interview, contact:

Rhoda Twumasi

639-205-7142

Rhoda.twumasi@cowessessfn.com

Backgrounder

2017 Chief and Council began discussing Cowessess Children in Care

Nov 13, 2018 Cowessess Chief and Council passed Band Council Resolution to open home and approve Ad Hoc committee members. The Ad Hoc committee was given the responsibility of opening a home on Cowessess First Nation for youth Aging out of child welfare system.

Nov 15, 2018 Cowessess First Nation submitted Asserting Rights For Children In Care – Proposal for long term home for child in care to YTC Child and Family Services. Mutual agreement was approved. YTCCFS will pay the construction cost to build the home on Cowessess First Nation. Cowessess will designate and set aside land for home. The home will follow YTCCFS Policies and Procedures for home operatio

