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**RMYC PRIORITIES AND WORKPLAN FOR 2016-17**

**1. Leadership and Organizational Development:** Recruiting and training young leaders and role models to run the Regional Multicultural Youth Council (RMYC) using a youth-to-youth strategy and positive peer influence to promote healthy lifestyles, change negative habits and make a difference.

\* The RMYC will hold inclusive meetings, workshops, and training sessions to provide leadership and organizational skills for Youth Council officers and Aboriginal students involved in the “Leaders of Today/Noongam Gaa-niigaanibiwaach” to engage peers to create the change they want to see.

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**2. Advocacy:** Reviewing studies and reports on issues of interest, and working on recommendations that advance the wellness, safety and achievement of children and youths from all backgrounds.

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**\*** The RMYC will use its seat on the City of Thunder Bay’s Strategic Planning Committee, Civic Pride Task Force, Anti-racism & Respect Advisory Committee, Diversity Thunder Bay, Community Coalition for the Protection of Children and Youth (CCUPCY), Community Coalition for Youth Housing; to be a youth voice, speak up on issues that impact young people, and provide input and feedback on activities, services, programs, supports that impact children and youth.

**\*** The RMYC will liaise with the Children’s Advocate for the City of Thunder Bay and explore ways of collaborating to promote the City’s Children’s Charter, and link with relevant City Departments to improve access to programs, services and supports that improve the wellbeing of children and youth

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**3. Safe Spaces for Youths to Hang Out and to Stay:** Working with Thunder Bay Children’s Advocate, the Friendship Centre, Boys and Girls Club and other organizations to create safe spaces for all children and youth to hang out, access services, participate in healthy activities, recreation, academic upgrading, employment, counselling and so forth, and lobbying for a youth shelter and transitional housing with proactive programs for homelessness and at-risk youth.

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\* Working with the Multicultural Association of Northwestern Ontario (MANWO) to run the Multicultural Youth Centre as a youth drop-in resource centre for information, programs, services, peer support, referrals and so forth, as well as develop the Centre as a model inclusive facility for planning and organizing activities, hosting meetings and socials, and training peer leaders for satellite centres.

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**4. Safer Communities Campaign:** Out-reach to community housing projects to work with the parents and organize activities for their children, and collaborate with Thunder Bay Police Service, Dilico Anishnabek Family Care, Nu-Vision Ministry Canada, and other partners to run pilot projects at Limbrick and Windsor Place, Academy and the South-core that can make neighbourhoods safer.

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**5.** **Reception and Orientation for New Students:** Applying the Reception and Orientation Program for First Nation students from surrounding reserves and new immigrant youths coming to study in Thunder Bay to facilitate their integration into the community. Continue to work with Nishnawbe Aski Nation and other interested parties on interactive video portals to help parents and students coming to school in urban centres access information about city life.

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\* MANWO and the RMYC will seek funding for the After-School Program at Dennis Franklin Cromarty (DFC) High School and support activities for students at the Matawa Leaning Centre and other schools to provide safe spaces to enhance student wellness, safety, graduation and achievement.

**6. Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy / Creating Safer Schools:** Forming Working Groups in schools to monitor implementation of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and the Accepting Schools Act as a follow-up to a project funded by the Ministry of Education to assess the impacts of polices developed by Lakehead District School Board and The Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board to create a safer and more accepting learning environment for all students.

\* Liaising with the Lakehead District School Board to revive the Youth Embracing Diversity and Education (YEDE) conferences to engage students in creating safer and inclusive schools

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**7.** **Revolution Girl Style / Girl Power:** Developing the capacity of the REV Girl Power Program to involve girls and young women in activities that build self-esteem, empower themselves, and share information to enable them to make responsible decisions and wise choices.

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**8**. **Band of BROTHERS (*B****oys* ***R****ights* ***O****f* ***T****hemed* ***H****abits* ***E****ncouraging* ***R****ight* ***S****kills****):*** Promoting Band of Brothers among boys and young men to learn about relationships, and share information to enable them to make responsible decisions and wise choices

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**9. Job/Work Skills Development:** maintaining partnerships with YES Employment Services, Service Canada (Summer Experience Program), Ontario Native Women’s Association, Friendship Centre, and Metis Nation of Ontario to secure funding for job training and work-place experience to prepare students and youths for careers, professions, and employment.

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**10. Promoting Racial Harmony:** Making and distributing multicultural bows (black, red, white and yellow ribbons intertwined to symbolize the beautiful colours of the human race united in harmony). Work with the City’s Anti-Racism Committee and Diversity Thunder Bay on activities to promote March 21–International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and encouraging the formal reporting of racist and discriminatory incidents to monitor community relations in the community.

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**11. Volunteering Opportunities for Youth:** Providing opportunities for students to do their community service hours to graduate high school while developing job-skills and gaining work-experience. Offering nurturing support for young people to do voluntary service for civic pride, personal growth, exposure to careers and employment prospects, and for future character references.

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**12.** **Engaging First Nations Students and Aboriginal Children and Youth:**

**\*** Working with First Nation Chiefs todevelop peer leaders and role models through an Aboriginal Youth Advisory Committee (AYAC) to provide a voice for Aboriginal youths to share stories, discuss their situation, and provide input on activities, programs, services, and supports that affect them.

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**\*** Exploring new ways to encourage Aboriginal youth to use arts and crafts to share talents, express themselves and tell their stories. Collaborating with The Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Definitely Superior Art Gallery on the NeeChee Studio project to raise awareness about family and lateral violence, promote healing, and create an ideal vision of a healthy community.

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**\*** Partnering with Lakehead University (Aboriginal Initiatives), Active Youth, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Friendship Centre, Ontario Native Women’s Association and other Indigenous groups to give the youth a voice and engage them to be part of the solution to the problems they face. Promoting healing, safety and wellness and linking indigenous children and youth with supports to realize their potential and become the best they can be. Raising awareness in the community about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 recommendations and the call for all of us to take action.