



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

For immediate release
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MKO Celebrates Pride with a Special Event in Thompson

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc. is hosting an event called “In Our Circle Diversity is Our Strength” tomorrow, June 25 from 11:30 am to 3:30 pm at 55 Selkirk Avenue in Thompson.

Pride Month is commemorated each year in the month of June to honor the Stonewall riots in New York City. In June 1969, patrons and supporters of the Stonewall Inn staged an uprising to resist the police harassment and persecution to which lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) Americans were commonly subjected. This uprising marked the beginning of a movement to outlaw discriminatory laws and practices against LGBTQ Americans. Today, LGBTQ Pride Month celebrations include pride parades, picnics, parties, workshops, symposia, and concerts, attracting millions of participants around the world.

“MKO is very proud to support diversity in our workplace and communities,” said **Hilda Anderson-Pyrz**, program manager for MKO’s Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Liaison Unit. “We honour the contributions of Two-Spirit and gender-diverse people during this very special month. Two-Spirit and gender-diverse people still face many barriers and are too often faced with higher rates of violence and gender-based discrimination within the home, workplace, and community. These challenges are also met with a lack of resources for Indigenous communities, which can lead to further isolation. This can result in self-harm, suicide, along with other physical and mental health issues.”

“At MKO, we are committed to supporting everyone in our circle through advocacy and education, creating safer spaces, encouraging inclusiveness, and improving societal attitudes while breaking stereotypes that contribute hate crimes and discrimination toward the Two-Spirit and gender-diverse population,” shared Ms. Anderson-Pyrz. “We must challenge all bodies of governments, institutions, and social service supports to uphold and protect the rights of Two-Spirit and gender-diverse people while creating safe and inclusive spaces to reclaim their roles and identities.”

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For more information:

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Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) is a non-profit, political advocacy organization that has represented 26 First Nation communities in Manitoba’s North since 1981. The MKO represents more than 72,000 First Nations people.