

PRESS RELEASE
VOICES OF OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH
AKWESASNE

On May 8th the *VOICES of Our Children and Youth* students were filmed by Akwesasne TV at the request of the Kana:takon Grade 5 and 6 classes to conduct a VOICES session on kid's perspectives on the impacts of COVID-19. The purpose of the session was to educate our local Akwesasronon children about COVID-19 in a community context and about how to stay safe. The lesson covered the symptoms of COVID-19 and how to stay safe at home and in the community. The lesson also included posters that were made by the children illustrating who their heroes are in this pandemic.

The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (MCA) and the Ahkwesahsne Mohawk Board of Education (AMBE) jointly agreed to participate in a "Voices of Our Children and Youth" project in 2018. The VOICES project is funded by the Canadian Institute of Health and Research in partnership with the Ahkwesahsne Mohawk Board of Education, University of British Columbia, York University and Katenies Research and Management Services. *The goal of the VOICES project is to build capacity within the community of Akwesasne to influence change toward safety and injury prevention amongst Akwesasronon children and youth.*

Dr. Rose-Alma (Dolly) McDonald is the local coordinator of the project. The project is designed to demonstrate the potential to influence community safety and injury prevention policy and programming, as well as to coordinate efforts within the community to monitor injuries occurring in the school setting and assess the need for local community injury prevention initiatives that will complement the safety planning of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and St. Regis Mohawk Tribe located near Cornwall, Ontario.

Niawenko:wa to our funders and for those who participated in the development of the COVID-19 Safety lesson video and particularly the Grade five and six Kana:takon School students, as well as our leadership for listening to what these young Akwesasronon students had to say with regard to community safety in a pandemic context. This important project is designed to empower our next generation of leaders by allowing them to use their *voice* to impact change for other children and youth in Akwesasne

For further information contact:

Dr. Rose-Alma J. McDonald,
Coordinator Voices of our Children and Youth,
rosealmamcdonald@sympatico.ca
613-575-2533