



PRESS RELEASE

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JOYCE ECHAQUAN MEMORIAL RALLY: FOUR YEARS ON AND THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT STILL REFUSES TO ADOPT JOYCE'S PRINCIPLE

Manawan, September 28, 2024 – More than a hundred people gathered today at 5 p.m. at Place du Canada in Tiohtià:ke (Montreal) to pay tribute to Joyce and reiterate the importance of her collective legacy in bringing to light the sad reality of Indigenous Peoples. Organized by the Caring for Social Justice Collective and with the support of Joyce's Principle Office, the rally not only denounced the injustice and inequalities still suffered by Indigenous Peoples to this day, but also demonstrated the ostensible societal solidarity that continues to grow.

For the fourth year in a row, several commemorative vigils in memory of Joyce Echaquan were held in Quebec, and for the fourth year in a row, several Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations and individuals united their voices to demand that the Quebec government adopt Joyce's Principle and finally acknowledge the existence of systemic racism and discrimination in Quebec. This is the prerequisite for taking the next step together to improve the quality of life of Indigenous Peoples. Despite the government's resistance, the Caring for Social Justice Collective and Joyce's Principle Office are more determined than ever to stand shoulder to shoulder to ensure that Joyce's path leads to real well-being for Indigenous Peoples in the health and social services system.

The rally began with an opening prayer by author and activist Katsi'tsakwas Ellen Gabriel and a musical performance by the Powwow Rangers. Several speeches were given, notably by Mr. Sipi Flamand, Chief of the Conseil des Atikamekw de Manawan, and Mr. Ghislain Picard, Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec-Labrador (AFNQL). A minute's silence followed to honor Joyce's memory and legacy. The event ended with a beautiful text by poet and activist Maya Cousineau Mollen. Delegations from the Atikamekw communities of Manawan and Wemotaci also came to attend this unifying and touching event for their sister Joyce.

"I hope that the terms "cultural safety" and "reconciliation" will finally take on their full meaning with the adoption of Joyce's Principle by the Quebec government. Just last week, the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) declared its support for this important, rights-based Principle. How long will it take for our government to follow suit and recognize the evidence? One thing is certain: we're continuing to work hard to put in place tools to ensure that Indigenous Peoples know their health rights and have them respected. One of the new projects we are proud to have announced at the Joyce Memorial Rally is the establishment of our ambassadors, who will be able to promote Joyce's Principle by offering support to various health and social service organizations in their work to adopt and, above all, implement Joyce's Principle," states Jennifer Petiquay-Dufresne, Executive Director of Joyce's Principle Office.

"As members of the Collectif, we advocate an egalitarian healthcare system that values every individual, regardless of status or origin. What happened to Joyce is deplorable, and we will continue to honor her courage and be allies to Indigenous Peoples in asserting their vital rights for as long as it takes. Our vision, which is to decolonize the conventional public health system and build a system based on a community-based vision of health rooted in a social justice perspective, is the basis for fighting injustice and doing our part to end systemic racism and medical colonialism," attest the members of the Caring for Social Justice Collective.

About Joyce's Principle Office

Joyce's Principle Office, created following the tragic death of Ms. Joyce Echaquan in September 2020 at the Joliette hospital, aims to have Joyce's Principle adopted by various bodies, including the Quebec government.

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Source : Joyce's Principle Office \ www.principedejoyce.com

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