

FOR RELEASE
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Youth invited to Our Voices and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations wellness conference

Joint news release

HAINES JUNCTION—Our Voices and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN) invite youth to join us for the Shāna Dákeyi Kāy - Youth on our Country Youth Wellness Conference, August 3-7, 2016, at Kathleen Lake, Yukon, in Kluane National Park and Reserve.

All Shāna Dákeyi Kāy - Youth on our Country activities throughout the five-day event emphasize leadership and wellness through connecting with the land in one of the most beautiful and rugged places on earth. Highlights include keynote speakers Brandon Kykavich, youth activist Ta’Kaiya Blaney and NBA basketball star Damen Bell-Holter. Every day is packed with outdoor activities, traditional craft workshops, music and more.

"Champagne and Aishihik First Nations is thrilled to host the youth traveling to our Traditional Territory to join the Our Voices youth gathering next week," Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Chief Steve Smith said. "Empowering our youth with the knowledge and skills to carry on our traditions and practice dān k’e (our way) is a top priority for CAFN."

The 2016 youth wellness conference is made possible through generous support from the Government of Yukon.

"The Yukon government is proud to continue to support incredible opportunities like this for youth to be on the land, connect with their culture and spend time with their peers," Premier Darrell Pasloski said. "I congratulate the organizers on putting together an amazing agenda of cultural activities and inspiring speakers. This event will encourage leadership, wellness and achievement amongst our youth, which in turn creates opportunities for them to contribute to Yukon and build even better lives for themselves."

The CAFN government is pleased to host the gathering in close collaboration with Our Voices.

"We thank CAFN for partnering with us and allowing us to be on their traditional territory for our third Gathering," Our Voices co-chair Kluane Adamek said. "Our vision of empowering youth by connecting them to the land would not be possible without their support. We want to lift up our youth by having them connect with tradition. Our goal is to hold up the Indigenous youth across the North and provide them the supports they need as emerging leaders."

Parks Canada is also partnering by contributing exclusive use of the Kathleen Lake campground in Kluane National Park and Reserve throughout the five-day gathering.

"Parks Canada works with more than 300 Indigenous communities across Canada in conserving, restoring, and presenting Canada's natural and cultural heritage. We are pleased to partner with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations to welcome these young indigenous leaders to Kathleen Lake campground for the Shāna Dákeyi Kāy - Youth on our Country Youth Wellness Conference 2016," Parks Canada Yukon field unit superintendent Diane Wilson said. "Canada's national parks are gateways to nature, adventure, and discovery, and all of us at Kluane National Park and Reserve wish the participants a wonderful time in this treasured Parks Canada place."

The 2016 youth wellness conference is hosted by CAFN and Our Voices, in partnership with Parks Canada, with generous support from the government of Yukon and other local sponsors. Our Voices and CAFN appreciate the support of all our partners and sponsors.

Indigenous youth ages 14-30 are invited to register by Monday, August 1. For more details and to register please visit cafn.ca/event/voices-youth-gathering.

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