



**Media Advisory**

*September 26, 2017*

## **National Inquiry to host artistic expression panel during Smithers Community Hearings**

**Smithers, British Columbia-** The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls will hold an artistic expression panel on Wednesday, September 27, 2017 during the Community Hearings.

The day will begin with the Commissioners hearing from 8 high school students-- Melynee McDames, Madison Seymour, Chris Spencer, Alyson Guno, Annalee Parker, Megan Christiansen, Linda Spencer and Elijah Stephens. The youth, whom all attend the Kitsumkalum First Nation, wrote and recorded a song entitled, *The Highway*. The song is a heartfelt ballad about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls- with a strong focus on the Highway of Tears, the road that runs from Prince George to Prince Rupert in northern British Columbia. Video Link here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hG\\_gd26oYel](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hG_gd26oYel)

The students will start by performing their song for the Commissioners. Afterward, grade 12 student Melynee McDames will provide testimony about the loss of her Grandmother Lana Derrick and how her personal experience with the issue helped with inspiration for the video. Next, the Commissioners will have a sharing circle with all the students as they focus on the questions, "What is the message that you are trying to send through your work and why is it important?"

*The Highway-* was done in collaboration with the N'we Jinan video project. The N'we Jinan Tour Is a music initiative that brings a mobile recording studio and a video production team into schools and youth centres across North America- specifically to First Nations and Native American reservations.

The program offers youth the chance to create an original song and music video that explores relevant issues and topics while promoting positive messaging, community engagement and collective voice. Program Link here: <http://nwejinan.com/>.

After the youth panel, Hip Hop group Mob Bounce (affiliated to N'we Jinan) will present to the Commissioners on the importance of artistic expression as evidence. Travis from the group, who is also from Kitsumkalum First Nation, will speak to the vital role that music plays on the lives of Indigenous youth.

As part of the presentation, Travis will provide photographs and videos of working with Indigenous youth both in urban and reserve settings. Mob Bounce music link here: <https://soundcloud.com/mob-bounce>



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Mob Bounce provides workshops to Indigenous youth called- hip hop in a sacred space. The workshops provide youth the opportunity and experience to learn Mob Bounce's approach to combining traditional and spiritual Indigenous Culture with contemporary methods of musical and artistic expression.

The artistic expression panel will be led by Director of Research Aimée Craft. Media are welcome to attend the event.

**Location:** Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre Hall  
3955 3rd Avenue, Smithers BC  
**When:** Wednesday, September 27, 2017 @ 1:00 PM

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