

“I just feel it’s our job as adults to stand up for kids when something wrong is happening, and that’s what I was doing.”

The **CICH National Child Day Award** recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the health and well-being of Canadian children and youth. This year, we are proud to recognize Dr. Cindy Blackstock for her lifelong development and promotion of culturally-responsive and equitable child protection services and her unyielding insistence on public acknowledgement and respect for the rights of indigenous children in Canada and beyond.

A member of the Gitksan Nation, Dr. Blackstock is the Executive Director of First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada. She also serves as an Associate Professor and Director of First Nations Children’s Action Research and Education Service at the University of Alberta and a Professor in the School of Social Work at McGill University. She has led and collaborated on numerous Canadian and international human rights initiatives. Her efforts have been recognized by the Nobel Women’s Initiative, the Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, Frontline Defenders and the University of Northern British Columbia.

In January 2016, following a nearly decade-long effort led by Dr. Blackstock and others, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal found the Canadian government to be racially discriminating against 163,000 First Nations children and their families by providing flawed and inequitable child welfare services and failing to implement Jordan’s Principle to ensure equitable access to government services available to other children.

This landmark decision is profoundly important. But she would be the first to say that our work has only begun. As we move forward together to address these structural inequalities, we are fortunate to have her and her lifetime of work to guide us. Her integrity, research, and achievements in the domains of child protection and indigenous children’s rights speak the truth that must inform the journey of societal change.

We commend and express our sincerest thanks for her proven commitment to “stand up for kids when something wrong is happening.” It is our distinct privilege to honour Dr. Cindy Blackstock with the 2016 National Child Day Award.