

Emotional Prayer Walk Gathers Community Together

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Almost 400 people gathered to honour and remember the victims in Thunder Bay – Photo by Amanda Perreault

THUNDER BAY – The Prayer Walk in Thunder Bay brought together hundreds of residents in a movement of respect and of healing. The goal of sharing the moment and trying to bring some very much needed resolution and resolve to the issues facing Indigenous people started at Thunder Bay City Hall, stopped at the Thunder Bay District Court House, and continued to the Thunder Bay Police headquarters.

A crowd of about 350 walkers came together at City Hall to start the walk.

There were speeches from First Nations leaders, from Mayor Keith Hobbs, and from the mother of Tammy Keeash. The emotion of the event could be felt through the crowd as the Prayer Walk got underway.

The walk followed a week of serious issues. Nishnawbe-Aski Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler had lead a press conference in Toronto on Wednesday stating that there is no confidence in the Thunder Bay Police Service from First Nations over their investigation into the deaths of Indigenous people.

NAN Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler Addresses Prayer Gathering

The NAN Grand Chief addressed the gathering at City Hall in his language. His statement was that the efforts to uncover the truth are not over.

Mayor Hobbs addressed the gathering, flanked on his left by NAN Deputy Grand Chief Jason Smallboy and on his right by Fort William First Nation Chief Peter Collins.

Mayor Keith Hobbs Addresses Prayer Walkers and City

His voice often breaking, Mayor Hobbs stated that the city has let too many fall behind. The Mayor told the audience that the city will do whatever is needed to heal Thunder Bay.

The event was put forward by North Caribou Lake First Nation to honour and remember Tammy Keeash – a seventeen-year-old who died in Thunder Bay in May.

Tammy's mom Pearl Slipperjack, shared with the gathering words of thanks for all of the support as the family deals with the tragic death of her daughter.

The day was one more for healing and prayer than of anger and confrontations.

There was only one man carrying a protest sign, asking “What if the drownings were not accidental” – that man stated that he had asked the family if he could carry that sign.

Fort William First Nation Chief Peter Collins stated that it is not time for pointing fingers, but time for solutions and healing.

The flag for [North Caribou Lake First Nation](#) was raised at City Hall.