

# FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

## STATEMENT

March 11, 2019

### First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) saddened by death of former Indigenous Youth Intern in air disaster



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**Coast Salish Traditional Territory/Vancouver:** The First Nations Leadership Council is very saddened to hear of the passing of Micah Messent in yesterday's Ethiopian Airlines disaster, that resulted in the 157 deaths, including 18 Canadians.

Micah, an Indigenous youth, was a member of the Red River Métis Nation in Manitoba, was raised as the youngest of five siblings in the Comox Valley.

Micah was a well-liked member of the Year 11 (2017-18) intake of youth in the Indigenous Youth Internship Program (IYIP) – formerly the Aboriginal Youth Internship Program (AYIP), which each year provides a 12-month internship for up to 25 young Indigenous British Columbians, ages 19 to 29. Micah served his IYIP placement with the BC Parks branch of the Ministry of Environment.

Micah's placement with BC Parks provided him the opportunity to not only utilize his formal education, but also to exchange traditional teachings and life experiences with others. The placement led to a full-time position in government with the BC Parks Indigenous Relations team that focuses on enhancing reconciliation within the agency and the broader Natural Resource Sector.

Micah, an avid sailor, was a graduate of the Indigenous Studies program at Vancouver Island University and had plans to return to school in the future to pursue a law degree.

The FNLC sends deepest condolences to the family, friends and community of Micah Messent during this sad time. As well, we are sending our thoughts to the Indigenous youth interns who worked along side Micah.

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*The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN), First Nations Summit (FNS), and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC).*

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## **Background on the IYIP**

Every year, this program provides a 12-month paid internship for up to 25 young Indigenous British Columbians, ages 19 to 29. This program was created by the BC Public Service Agency in partnership with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, the First Nations Leadership Council and Indigenous youth organizations.

## **Program Goals**

- Encourage Indigenous youth to consider the BC Public Service or Indigenous organizations as a place to pursue a rewarding career.
- Support Indigenous youth to develop their leadership skills.
- Provide opportunities for Indigenous youth to contribute and improve relationship building between Indigenous communities/organizations and the Provincial Government.
- Contribute to closing the social and economic gaps that exist between Indigenous people and other British Columbians.