

NIPISSING/ BLUE SKY CHILDREN FIRST CHARTER

GIVEN THAT a thriving community invests its hopes in the future of its children;

AND THAT All children deserve to live in a family and community that believes that the welfare of children is of primary importance;

AND THAT All children deserve the assurance of their inherent goodness;

WE, THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTH BAY ENDORSE THE NIPISSING/ BLUE SKY CHILDREN FIRST CHARTER OUTLINED BELOW AND PRESENTED BY THE CHILDREN FIRST ROUNDTABLE, A BROADBASED COALITION OF PUBLIC, PRIVATE AND NON-PROFIT SECTORS WORKING TOGETHER WITH PARENTS AND CHILDREN TO ENSURE THAT ALL CHILDREN RECEIVE THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT THEY NEED TO REACH THEIR MAXIMUM POTENTIAL.

Children like other human beings, are entitled to fundamental rights and freedoms. Because of children's unique vulnerability, it is the responsibility of adults to ensure not only that children are safe from exploitation and neglect, but that they have access to a fair share of society's resources.

The preamble of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that *"...the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community..."*¹ While parents have the primary responsibility for their children's care and upbringing, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child makes it clear that governments have a duty to help families fulfil their responsibility and to protect the rights of children. Nipissing Children First Charter situates the provisions of the Convention in a local context.

When our children's fundamental needs are met, they are better able to meaningful contribute towards creating a civic community. This Charter represents our community's commitment to our future. To this end, all measures undertaken by communities within Nipissing District and the Blue Sky Region will ensure the fundamental rights and freedoms of our children.


Through this Charter, we, the public, private and non-profit sectors agree that all children (0 - 18) shall have a sense of belonging to a respectful and diverse community; a quality of life that ensures their basic needs are met; and a supportive, caring, safe and protective environment.

All children in Nipissing & the Blue Sky Region are entitled to:

- A standard of living adequate to ensure healthy physical, intellectual, emotional and social development, well being and a good quality of life
- Adequate, nutritious food on a consistent basis
- Housing that that is safe & reflects the normal standards of our community
- Safe water and clean air
- Protection from physical, psychological and sexual abuse both in and out of the home
- Time with their families and/or other nurturing and positive role models throughout their childhood
- High quality early education opportunities to meet their best interests
- Highest attainable level of health and the assurance that the resources necessary to ensure life-long good health are available
- Receive primary, secondary and higher education to enable them to achieve their full potential
- Readily accessible participation in recreational and leisure activities, in the form of play, creative expression and skill development opportunities
- Protection from racism irrespective of the child's ethnic, cultural, spiritual, and/or religious identity; and discrimination including discrimination based on their age
- The right to be served by governments which acknowledge their responsibility to improve the health and well-being for children and work cooperatively to ensure adequate and equitable funding for children's programming

AND THAT these assurances will follow children as they progress through life's stages into adulthood.

DATED in North Bay, Ontario,
this 19th day of November, 2004.



Mayor Victor Fedeli, City of North Bay

¹ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, as adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, November 20, 1988, Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1990, pg1