

## 19th Awareness Week for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in Val-d'Or: A First Justice Forum

**Val-d'Or, March 20, 2019** – Yesterday, the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ), the Table locale d'accessibilité aux services en milieu urbain pour les Autochtones de la Vallée-de-l'Or and the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre held the first Justice Forum at the First Peoples Pavilion at the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue, entitled ***La cohabitation d'une justice étatique avec une justice communautaire autochtone : Sur le chemin de la réconciliation*** [cohabitation of state and Indigenous systems of justice: on the path to reconciliation].

This event was the first to unite local and provincial partners with a view to improving the delivery of public services to Indigenous people. This first Justice Forum fit perfectly into the 19th Awareness Week for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Over 115 people gathered in Val-d'Or for the event. Its aim was to create, in a spirit of consultation and complementarity, a forum for discussion on justice in general and on the role of Indigenous justice in particular. Focus was put how to position Indigenous justice in regard to the different social and cultural realities Indigenous people face, and reflection was launched on alternatives to the state system that would be respectful of Indigenous realities and views of justice.

Several major speakers took part in this first Justice Forum to address various issues, including Indigenous legal systems, the judicialization of homelessness, social justice and cultural equity, Indigenous justice in Quebec and the role of justice committees. A space was provided for discussion on Indigenous realities among the various public services (Directeur des poursuites criminelles et pénales, DPCP; the Programme d'accompagnement justice, PAJ; the First Nations Community Mixed Police Station, NFCMPS; and the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones (SAA)). Keep an eye out: more Justice Forums will be held in 2019–2020 in various cities across Quebec!

The Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec groups 11 member Native Friendship Centres in Chibougamau, Joliette, La Tuque, Maniwaki, Montréal, Québec City, Roberval, Senneterre, Sept-Îles, Trois-Rivières and Val-d'Or. The mission of the Native Friendship Centres of Quebec is to improve the quality of life of urban Indigenous people, promote culture and build bridges between peoples.

-30-

Source: Chantal Cleary, Communications Advisor  
418-842-6354 ext. 238

